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Community members send 'taste of home' to troops overseas

By Capt. Anthony Deiss
SDNG Public Affairs Office

HOWARD — Community members and organizations sent a holiday treat to South Dakota Army and Air National Guard members serving overseas Saturday, Dec. 17, in Howard.

Mark Geib, of De Smet, the Jensen family, of Howard, along with the Sky's the Limit Youth Foundation and the Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls, teamed up to send nearly 750 pounds of donated beef jerky sticks to South Dakota troops serving abroad this holiday season.

"It's a great way to support our troops overseas. I think they're getting a little taste of home," said Brad Jensen, donor and veteran. "I was over there (Iraq) last time and got some of this meat, and it's a great feeling knowing this stuff is coming from home."

More than 500 Soldiers and Airmen will receive the beef treats by the New Year.

"I think it gives them (service members) the reality of knowing people back home are thinking of them, and just for a moment – when they can chew on one of these beef sticks – they can think of back home," said Les Cummings, Operation Cares member, who partnered with the Sky's the Limit Youth Foundation.

A cow, donated by Geib for a second year, was processed at the Howard meat processing plant, while beef processing costs were donated by the Diocese, and postage costs were covered by the Jensen



Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general for the South Dakota National Guard, thanks Mark Geib, center, and other community members for donating beef jerky sticks to South Dakota troops serving overseas Dec. 17, 2011, in Howard, S.D. Also pictured, from left, are Brad Jensen, Les Cummings, Mark Jensen and Tim Glanser.

(SDNG photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss)

family.

The donation was a way for these community members and organizations to say thank you and to give back to the troops.

"I appreciate our military and everything they do," said Mark Geib. "The reason I'm able to wake up in the morning and have all that I have is because of our military. I just like to be able to give a little something back to them."

"We are here to support our military families in need this holiday season," said Jerry Klein, of the Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls.

"It warms my heart, because so many times people forget that there is still a war going on and we forget about our Soldiers and Airmen," said Cummings. "By them doing what they are doing – going around the world to defend democracy – you and I get to live in freedom."

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