



OPERATION TOASTY TOES

WHAT IS OPERATION TOASTY TOES?

Originally, only knitted slippers were made. Now, there are Knit and Crochet patterns for dickeys; headbands; helmets, watch caps and wristlets (a.k.a. fingerless mitts). These are mailed to our Armed Forces stationed overseas. Grass roots way to assist in America's fight against terrorism.

WHAT DOES IT ACCOMPLISH?

Besides warming the service persons feet, the message that a stranger would take the time to make a comfort item, shows that many care. It enables community participation.

World War II had Rosie the Riveter. We have TOASTY TOES. Many, who have not knitted or crocheted in years, have found their needles and hooks. Those who can no longer craft have found the perfect solution for bags of yarn, old needles and hooks. These unused skeins have found a project, a very good project. The Armed Forces encourages bright colors for the slippers, considering this a morale booster. To stress the slipper's importance, all one has to do is read the letters the volunteers receive. The slippers need and reputation is growing. To those already making "booties," please continue to do so. Those who never learned to knit or crochet, financial donations are needed for operating costs.

WHAT IS COVERED BY FINANCIAL DONATIONS?

Postage, printing, publicity and yarn purchase. Mrs. Patricia-Lee Pirog, 105 Campbell Dr. Flat Rock, NC 28731, make checks payable to: OPERATION TOASTY TOES, Chapter 7.

WHY MUST ONLY OUR PATTERNS BE USED?

Quite simple, they pack tighter with no spaces, preventing crushed boxes.

LOGO TAG:

A happy dog on its haunches, with a pair of slippers in its mouth, in color printed on card stock. The tag serves two purposes: 1) keeps the pairs together 2) the crafters name and address is given, with an encouraging note. It represents our items are made with love.

PROGRAM HISTORY:

The initial goal was to send a box of 100 slippers in answer to grandson David's request for slippers. It was founded by Mrs. Irene Silliman of Madison Ohio, now 80 years' old grandmother. Being at loose ends in Dec. 1997, the first Xmas after losing her husband Bob, Irene received a letter from her grandson, David Ward, who is a U.S. Navy cryptologist stationed on the U.S.S. Carney. In this letter, he thanks his grandmother for some homemade brownies she'd sent him. This letter's request was a perfect remedy to use up time.

Her husband Bob had a pair of these slippers with him, while being a POW for two years in Korea. Irene's slippers were well known amidst her family and friends.

In 1997, the U.S.S. Carney was in the Persian Gulf. David tells his grandmother how cold his feet are, could she make him and a few buddies her famous slippers, like grand dads. She and two friends sent the original 100 pairs.

The box was dropped on the deck via a helicopter. The officer of the deck had no idea what this box labeled OPERATION TOASTY TOES was. He tells of seeing a young sailor, jumping up and down yelling "There here, the booties are here." The 100 pairs were gone in no time at all.

David contacted Irene again asking for 220 more pairs for the remaining crew. Irene went into action, enlisting the aid of 50 family and friends to knit. These ladies made the commitment to send 1000 pairs to Bosnia by the end of January, six weeks away, they did it.

To quote her friend Mary Snyder "This silly pair of slippers isn't so silly when you're far away, homesick and some old lady sends you slippers" I wish I was 25 instead of 78.

There have been times, when Irene didn't know where the next skein of yarn was coming from or how the next box was going to get mailed. Somehow, they always got sent. From the original three ladies, there are now 14 chapters.

PROGRAM in HENDERSON COUNTY, NC:

Chapter 7 was formed February 2002. A Monday morning workshop developed, 10:00 A.M. to noon. The ladies arrive not knowing what's to be done, packing out yarn comfort items, sorting through yarn donations or having discussion on how to improve the program.

Varied projects: Sewers joined the efforts to make fleece dog coats for K-9 Units deployed overseas. A knitting club has started at Hendersonville Middle School called "Knit One, Purl Too." Presentations are being requested by community clubs or organizations.

The committee holds "WELCOME RECEPTIONS" for returning military. They vary from cake and coffee to a meal. It allows an opportunity for all to meet and say thank-you.

Store in the Blue Ridge Mall, Four Seasons Blvd. Hendersonville, NC.

WHY IS THE STORE NEEDED: .

The store donated by the Blue Ridge Mall management allows us to raise funds. Each chapter is responsible for its financial costs. It provides the venue to see and examine the yarn comfort items. The store permits interaction between the community and committee members. It is a drop off and pick-up location for patterns and yarn. The yarn articles offered are made from donated yarns in colors not appropriate for military use. We are accepting crafts from the community to sell. Store hours vary throughout the year, mostly Saturdays from 12:30 to 3:30. We need non knitters to be with a knitter for safety reasons.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT: TOASTY TOES needed to progress into the 21st century. The reason for participating in OPERATION TOASTY TOES varies, but one reason remains constant "as Americans we must do what we can to support our military." Winters are cold in Afghanistan, in Korea, in Japan, in Alaska. These yarn comfort items are sent to land bases and to ships. The "bootie" physically warms their feet, but it is the unwritten message they carry that warms their hearts. That an American stranger though she may be, would take the time to knit, says it all. There is an invisible bond that forms and travels with these items.

The message these items take to the troops is "WE CARE."

Please spread the word. Please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for anything you do for this program that supports our troops overseas, in whatever way you choose.

For God and Country,

OPERATION TOASTY TOES, Chapter 7

Mrs. Patricia-Lee Pirog, Chairlady

E-mail: Info@operationtoastytoes.org

Website: www.operationtoastytoes.org

revised March 2007