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Lehigh Acres Woman Sending Comforts Of Home To U.S. Soldiers in Iraq

January 2, 2007

By [Maya Rodriguez](#)

Bonita Springs -

These may seem like simple playing cards, but Candy Gareiss knows their real value.

"When they're not out on patrol or doing something that they have to do, they kill time by playing cards," she said.

One picture of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: playing cards during down time. Poker chips are an added bonus. The Naples-Fort Myers dog track is stepping in, to donate the needed items.

"I mean, this isn't about politics or policy," Gareiss said. "It's about supporting guys that give up an awful lot just to defend this country."

It's not the first time Gareiss is sending soldiers a small comfort of home. She started sending care packages after stumbling across the website www.anysoldier.com. An army captain told her playing cards would help entertain the soldiers and keep their morale up.

"I started shipping and it just kind of grew from there," she said.

The website puts ordinary citizens in touch with soldiers serving overseas, Gareiss has sent snacks, toiletries and other items they've requested. Now, it's playing cards and poker chips.

"They're going to be excited and not only because they're getting poker chips, but because people care. that's what really gets them-- the fact that people over here still care," Gareiss said.

Gareiss and her husband will travel next week to fort hood to meet some of the soldiers just back from Iraq that they've helped. If you would like to help a soldier in the U.S. Armed Forces, you can go to www.anysoldier.com

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