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## Yokosuka children spread cheer to GIs in harm's way

By [Allison Batdorff](#), Stars and Stripes

Pacific edition, Thursday, December 1, 2005

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Not everyone gets heaps of mail from home. Some active-duty military never see a care package. Holidays are hard on these folks.

But this year, someone will get a goody box from Milton Rodriguez. The 8-year-old packed up a bunch of things a soldier in harm's way might need this Christmas.

"There are dolls for the soldiers to give to the sick children," he says shyly. "Some food. Toothpaste."

Milton, along with the other Sullivans Elementary School third- and fourth-graders in Randi Dalton's English-as-a-second-language class sent out eight boxes and 35 letters Tuesday. The idea comes from Anysoldier.com — a Web site started in 2003 to bring smiles to active-duty servicemembers who are in harm's way and don't receive a lot of mail.

"We know they can't come home for the holidays," Dalton said. "We want to show our support and thank them for keeping us safe."

Dalton plays Santa every year through the Web site. Her family always sends half a dozen boxes around the holidays, she said.

"Then my students wanted to do it, so we added more boxes. The ESL third- and fourth-graders asked me to do it again this year."



Allison Batdorff / S&S  
Alexis Orellano and Cary Fontanez pack Christmas care packages on Tuesday at Sullivans Elementary School on Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.



Allison Batdorff / S&S  
Sullivans Elementary School students prepare to send eight care packages and 35 letters Tuesday to military personnel in harm's way.



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Each child chooses their box's recipient from a list on the Web site. Some base their decision on geography, others on the military branch, others for different reasons.

Momo Breyette addressed her letter to "any female airman."

"I saw on the Web site that there were females, and I wanted one of those," said the 10-year-old girl.

A sailor will get Chris Amberger's letter.

"My dad is on the Blue Ridge — that's where he goes on duty," Amberger said. "I also like to go fishing."

And Yuji Frazer picked a soldier because "my grandpa served in Vietnam," he said.

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