

Make thank you cards for the U.S. Troops Overseas



Boy making cards for 180,000 troops

Ten-year-old Stephen Goodman, a fifth-grader in Surprise, Arizona, wants to send a thank you card to all military personnel. Not to one platoon, or to just one division, but to every actively deployed service member in the U.S. military. Stephen said he thought of the idea while spending the summer with his grandparents in Phoenix. "My grandpa went to Vietnam and didn't get any cards, and he felt forgotten," he said. Stephen started locally, creating and hand-delivering 218 Fourth of July cards for patients at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center in Phoenix. The feedback was so thrilling and positive that Stephen started thinking: Why not send one to everyone deployed? He began paying attention to news reports. Somewhere, he gleaned the number of overseas troops to be 180,000. "I was really taken aback when he said he wanted to do one for all the troops," said Stephen's father, Steven Goodman. "I explained to him it was a big project, and because of what his intentions were, he would have to carry it out." Each thank you card is handmade, using "construction paper and scissor designs and markers and stickers and my imagination and that's it," according to Stephen. The entire family pitches in. So far, they've made about 15,000 cards. Vice President Joe Biden happened to catch Stephen's story while traveling through Phoenix last August. Stephen got his own thank you in the mail. "It just said thank you for what I'm doing, the soldiers will appreciate it," he remembered. The letter made Stephen's summer. "It made me feel very excited to know that the vice president sent me something," he said. When all 180,000 cards are done, the Goodmans plan to take them to Luke Air Force Base where they will be delivered overseas all at once to make sure no soldier is overlooked. – Original story by Amy B. Wang, writer for The Arizona Republic.

Help Scrapbook Your Story support Stephen's plan to thank all our troops with a handmade thank-you card.

- 1) Create a thank you card using your ideas and creativity.
- 2) Sign the card – Stephen can't sign all 180,000+ cards!
- 3) Return completed cards to Scrapbook Your Story by Friday, May 20th

Thank you so very much for all your help. Any questions, please call (217) 529-7701.