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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Family of Brighton Marine collecting socks for troops overseas

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 5, 2011 04:29 PM

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(Courtesy: Laffey family)

The Laffey family of Brighton are collecting tube-style socks, or "anything over the calf," to send to military members serving overseas.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The family of a 20-year-old Marine from Brighton is collecting socks for military members serving overseas, where the pairs of basic foot apparel often become worn out quickly and replacements can be hard to come by.

"Who knew that it was such a big need," said Lance Corporal Scott Laffey's father, Don.

The Marine's 18-year-old Boston Latin School alumna and Boston College-bound sister, Taylor, started the family's "Socks for Servicemen" campaign that includes a [Facebook page](#).

His mother, Eleanor Laffey, explained that soldiers on the front lines overseas often travel by trudge through canals and trenches in order to avoid roadways

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and dry land where enemy improvised explosive devices (IEDs) can be common.

Even when they're walking on dry land, the weather in Afghanistan, where Laffey is currently deployed, and Iraq can be treacherous. In both countries, temperatures can dip well below freezing during the winter and during the summer the mercury can soar to the 120s. Each country has a rainy season and parts of each can receive significant snowfall.

"People don't really know a lot of what's going on over there," said Eleanor.

"These kids, in the winter their socks get wet and they have no place to dry them." "In the summer, the socks get sweaty, they dry them out in the sun and the socks turn as hard as a rock," said Don Laffey, a 56-year-old veteran mail carrier who [told Boston.com earlier this summer](#) that when his job involves putting up with taxing elements like 100-plus degree temperatures, he remembers his son is enduring.

"They're changing their socks at least once a day," Eleanor added.

The constant moisture causes the socks to wear faster and, aside from general discomfort, can cause blisters and cuts which can lead to infection.

The family said by phone Friday they began collecting socks shortly after Scott deployed in January and have shipped more than 7,000 pairs thus far. They learned about how soldiers struggle to find useable pairs from online connections for Marine mothers from Massachusetts.

Because packages sent to troops must be addressed to an individual in order to reach a platoon, the family has used those online connections to track down the names of other Marines and Army soldiers to ship the boxes that are filled with around 120 socks a piece.

"It was easy for us to find Marines that needed them," Eleanor said.

Shipments aren't mailed directly to platoons, however. Instead, the boxes are sent to the domestic base each soldier was deployed from.

The family said they spray paint the outside of each box with "Socks for Servicemen," because the military will send care packages from their U.S. bases faster than less essential items like letters.

But, inside the sock boxes, Eleanor said the family also includes support letters of their own and other messages they receive from donors or various organizations.

"I think they enjoy that, too," she said.

The Marine mother said donated socks must be tube-sock style, or "anything over the calf," because shorter socks aren't useful for the servicemen and women who almost exclusively wear boots.

Aside from sock donations, the family also collects monetary donations to help pay for postage, which can be \$16 to send to a base in North Carolina or \$28 to ship to a base in California.

They run the operation from their home in Brighton, where the family has lived their entire lives. They said there's a spare room filled with bags of socks and shipping supplies and some of their work spills over to their living room.

The family will welcome their son back home this month when his platoon arrives back at their North Carolina base. He's expected to be deployed for a

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To learn more about the Socks for Service campaign, visit [this Facebook page](#) or e-mail socksforservicemen@gmail.com.

The family said that not all of the drop-off locations on the campaign's Facebook page are currently active. Below is a list of sock drop-off spots that are still accepting donations:

- The Elks Lodge #2199, 326 Washington St. Brighton
- Engine 50, 34 Winthrop St. Charlestown
- Johnnies Foodmaster (Bunkerhill Mall), 50 Austin St. Charlestown
- Warren Prescott School, 50 School St. Charlestown
- The Boys and Girls Club, 60 High St. Charlestown
- Kingston Police Dept., 244 Main St., Kingston
- Kingston Fire Dept., 105 Pembroke St. Kingston
- Kingston Town Hall, 26 Evergreen St. Kingston
- Doughboy Police & Fire Supply (RK Crossing), 187 Summer St. Kingston
- VFW Solomon Post, 12 Phiney St. N. Billerica
- Rogers Pharmacy, 923 Main St. Waltham

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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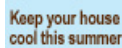
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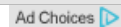
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