

## Operation Pillowcase Brings Piece of Home to Airmen

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Supporting the war on terrorism can take on many forms. Some choose to serve in the military. Then there are more subtle ways, such as one community on the home front found.

The town of Concord, California, has created and donated 500 patriotic pillowcases to members of the 886th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron stationed at Camp Bucca, Iraq. The 886th ESFS is an Air Force unit working on the front lines in jobs traditionally done by Army Soldiers.

Spearheading the project was Deborah Burrow, mother of Airman 1st Class Paul Beasley and an 886th ESFS member. Operation Pillowcase started as a simple project for her son and his friends, but quickly evolved into much more.

"My original idea was simple -- send nine patriotic pillowcases to my son, Paul, and his close friends to show my love and support," Mrs. Burrow said. "But somehow, my mother decided to take this project a step further and asked our community to participate in this huge undertaking. They jumped right in and have dedicated many hours of sewing, shopped for yards and yards of material, collected donations and wrote cards of thanks. Our community was so thankful and grateful to have a project that showed their support of our troops."

"This is another example of the support America has for its troops in harm's way," said Lt. Col. Paul Scholl, the commander of the 886th ESFS. "The fact that this comes from the families and community of one of our Airmen makes these pillowcases even more extraordinary."

"Colonel Scholl and I wish to express our gratitude to you and your community of Concord," said Chief Master Sgt. Deno Mackin in a letter to Mrs. Burrow.

"It truly is a blessing knowing we have such great Americans supporting our Airmen performing such an important mission within the war on terrorism," said Chief Mackin, the 886th ESFS security forces manager. "We all have family members back in the United States that we miss dearly. What may seem like a small token on your part to organize such an undertaking as Operation Pillowcase, is huge in our eyes. Such actions go a long, long way in bringing a piece of America right here to Iraq."

"It is amazing what a simple gesture such as a pillowcase can do to lift the spirits of our fellow Airmen," said Master Sgt. Randy Bridenthal, the 886th ESFS first sergeant.

Operation Pillowcase was such a success that the community of Concord is not stopping with Camp Bucca.

"These lovely ladies do not want Operation Pillowcase to end," Mrs. Burrow said. "They have decided to continue sewing and will donate their beautiful pillowcases to my Chapter of the Blue Star Moms 'Wounded Warriors' program. So, what was started as a nine pillowcase project will continue on its bigger mission of supporting our troops."



Members of the 886th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron hold up pillowcases made and donated by the community of Concord, California, April 24 at Camp Bucca, Iraq. Operation Pillowcase gave members of the 886th ESFS a reminder of home. The project was spearheaded by Deborah Burrow, mother of Airman 1st Class Paul Beasley who is an 886th ESFS member. (U.S. Air Force photo/Elias Ibay)