

Thousands of Christmas cards en route to soldiers thanks to community

Written By BROCK WEIR

Dianne Harrison spends this time of year filling her car with precious cargo.

They are often festively decorated with colourful wrapping paper. Some bear hand-written labels. Most sport patriotic Canadian flags for that all-important finishing touch.

Each box is taped, secured, and taken to the local post office bound for all corners of the world.

This year, however, presented some challenges but, despite some initial doubts, she knew she could make it work somehow ? and thanks to the community, she made it work and then some.

Nearly 6,500 Christmas and Holiday cards, carefully inscribed and filled in by members of the public from the Greater Toronto Area and beyond are making their way to Canadian soldiers stationed around the world.

Soldiers in Goma, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait ? and even Japan ? will soon receive messages of love and gratitude from citizens here at home.

?This year was absolutely phenomenal and heartwarming,? says Ms. Harrison. ?We have been able to send to 31 bases around the world this year and we have never been able to do that before. We were also able to send cards to Sunnybrook Hospital, which we did because kids wrote letters to veterans and talked about the war.

?We live in a great community and it is the community that made it happen. I hope [the soldiers who receive the cards] realize we really care for them. It's not just at Christmastime that we care and respect them, we know how much they are giving up for their families, but their families too are giving up so much for our country. We want them to know that we care, that we respect them, wish them well, and hope they are home safely very soon.?