

Courier News

With Operation Sweet Dreams, soldiers overseas rest just a little bit softer



PHOTO COURTESY OF FABRICLAND

Alton Harper, left, Nate Heyman, center, and Isaac Prince Jr., members of Fabricland's warehouse staff, pack up boxes of donated fabrics that will be sent to Adopt-a-Platoon's "Operation Sweet Dreams" effort.

About a month ago, Bruce Heyman, owner of Fabricland Interiors in North Plainfield, received an interesting e-mail from the organization called "Adopt-a-Platoon." This nonprofit Texas-based group — which is managed by volunteer mothers in about 20 states — was seeking fabric donations so its volunteers could sew small travel pillows for soldiers serving in Iraq.

The group, which provides morale-lifting care-packages and mail, said that the deployed soldiers usually had no pillows and needed comfortable, soft ones to keep in their backpacks.

Dubbed "Operation Sweet Dreams," the project began with Adopt-a-Platoon volunteers sewing pillows that featured a pocket for picture and letters. Their e-mail requesting fabric arrived at Fabricland at just the right time.

"Every Labor Day Weekend for the past five years, we hold a Fabric Trade-In," said Heyman. "Customers bring me their unused remnants and pieces and I pay them 50 cents per pound. All the fabrics received are then donated to local charities. It's a total 'win/win' situation."

This year, Heyman estimated that his customers brought in more than 8,000 pounds of fabric.

When Isaac Prince Jr., manager of Fabricland's warehouse, packed up the Adopt-a-Platoon fabric donations earmarked for "Operation Sweet Dreams," it stirred his patriotic feelings and made him feel proud that these boxes were going to an excellent cause.

"Our men and women serving in Iraq need to be remembered and supported. It is our pleasure to provide this small token of comfort for those who serve our country."

Adopt-a-Platoon is a grass-roots effort that is seeking New Jersey support for deployed soldiers in Iraq from families, churches, schools, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, 4-H Clubs, civic organizations and companies within the state.

For more information on how to help, contact www.adoptaplatoon.org.

— By Cathy Guterman for Fabricland