



## **Niagara Cares and Operation Gratitude Join Forces with Fort Liberty's 82nd Airborne Division to Support Troops**

Volunteers Assemble 500 Care Packages to Send to Deployed Service Members

**Fayetteville, N.C. (Nov. 13, 2024)** – Today, **Niagara Cares**, the charitable division of [Niagara Bottling, LLC](#), the family-run beverage company that has hydrated America since 1963, partnered with [Operation Gratitude](#) and the Army's **82nd Airborne Division** at Fort Liberty to assemble **500** packages for deployed military personnel.

As part of Operation Gratitude's signature volunteer activity, Niagara volunteers from North Carolina and South Carolina and from the headquarters in California all came together to assemble care packages filled with snacks, hygiene essentials, entertainment items, and handmade tokens of gratitude for deployed service members. Through the Niagara Cares grant, each package provides an opportunity for volunteers to personally thank those who serve, honoring their dedication with heartfelt gestures from home.

"Our partnership with Operation Gratitude is one way we show our service members gratitude and how much they are deeply valued by the community," said Ann Canela, director of corporate giving at Niagara Bottling. "At Niagara, we are committed to supporting those who sacrifice so much for our freedom, and we are honored to play a role in this heartfelt mission."

Operation Gratitude's Deployed Troop Care Package Program is designed to bring comfort, gratitude and encouragement to service members stationed far from home. Since its inception in 2003, Operation Gratitude has assembled and delivered over 4 million care packages to U.S. troops worldwide, driven by the inspiring mission to lift the spirits of those who serve.

Operation Gratitude was founded by Carolyn Blashek, who was inspired to start the organization after a conversation with a soldier during the Iraq War who expressed feeling forgotten by those he served to protect. This encounter inspired Blashek to create care packages filled with meaningful items, heartfelt

letters and reminders of home, symbolizing the enduring support of a grateful nation.

"At Operation Gratitude, our mission is deeply personal—it's about forging connections and letting our deployed service members know they are seen, valued, and supported," said Meg Barron, executive director of Operation Gratitude. "Partnering with Niagara Cares and the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Liberty embodies this spirit. Together, we've created not just Care Packages, but tangible reminders of gratitude and community for those who serve far from home."

Niagara Cares and Operation Gratitude have been supporting local first responders, military service members and veterans in multiple states across the country since 2023, with Niagara volunteers assembling nearly 6900 care packages and kits to date. The two organizations are dedicated to fostering positive change, supporting and honoring our nation's military.

**Niagara Cares** is the heart of what we do and who we are at Niagara Bottling. For more than 60 years, we have been making a difference for our Team Members, consumers and communities through philanthropic giving, volunteering, water donations and disaster relief. As a family-owned business, we are committed to creating meaningful change for our communities through a spirit of giving back both big and small. For more information, visit [niagarawater.com/niagara-cares](https://niagarawater.com/niagara-cares).

**Niagara Bottling, LLC** has been family owned and operated since 1963. Headquartered in Diamond Bar, Calif., Niagara operates bottling facilities throughout the U.S. and Mexico. As a leading U.S. beverage manufacturer, Niagara Bottling works closely with some of the largest retailers, grocers, club and convenience stores throughout the country. Niagara produces a variety of beverages including bottled water, sparkling, vitamin and flavored water, teas, sports drinks, ready-to-drink coffee, protein drinks and non-dairy milk products. For more information, visit [www.niagarawater.com](https://www.niagarawater.com).

**Operation Gratitude** is a nationwide nonprofit whose mission is to lift spirits, say Thank You to our Military and First Responder communities and honor their service by creating opportunities for all Americans to express their gratitude through hands-on volunteerism. Since sending its first Care Package in March 2003, Operation Gratitude has delivered over **four million Care Packages** to Deployed Troops, Recruit Graduates, Veterans, Military Families, and First Responders. The Volunteers of Operation Gratitude are a generous and spirited grassroots network of Americans united in a common cause to say "Thank You" to all who serve our great nation. **For more than two decades, Operation Gratitude has been making a difference in the lives of our nation's heroes, and with your help, we can continue to show our gratitude to those who serve.** For more information, visit [OperationGratitude.com](https://OperationGratitude.com) or follow us on social media.

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