

## Weston Volunteer Fire Department and students adopt Army platoon — so can you

Written by Patricia Gay

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As part of the “Weston Supports Our Troops” program, the Weston Volunteer Fire Department has “adopted” the 3rd platoon of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment of the 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division, known as the “Regulars By God!”

Volunteer firefighters Joe Rainone and his son Philip are spearheading efforts to collect comfort goods and items within the fire department to send to the 30-50 members of the platoon.

They are being assisted by students in Shelia Cooperman’s sixth grade language arts class at Weston Middle School.

On Monday, Nov. 29, the fire department dedicated Engine Three to the Regulars of the 3rd Platoon. The Regulars are on the front lines in Kandahar, Afghanistan, serving a 12-month deployment.

The Rainones got the idea to adopt the platoon from Gil Sanborn, organizer of the Weston Supports the Troops program.

The fire department recently sent out its first shipment to the platoon, which included a Play Station 3, video games and small toys for the troops to give out to children in Afghanistan.

The department was assisted by members of Ms. Cooperman’s class, who collected other comfort items for the platoon, including popcorn, hot chocolate packets, beef jerky, holiday

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candy and playing cards.

In addition, the class made paper stars with messages such as “Thank you for fighting for us.” The stars were assembled onto a flag, rolled up in a tube, and sent with the comfort items.

The department plans to send a shipment every month. The platoon is deployed until July 2011.

### Get involved

The fire department is urging others in Weston to help support the troops.

There are four ways people may get involved: By adopting a unit deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan; supporting activities of families of deployed troops; supporting Wounded Warriors; and supporting recently discharged veterans as they re-enter civilian life in Connecticut.

Families may team up to adopt platoons. Youth and adult organizations may also join to collect items to mail to troops or collect funds to support the activities and needs of families while their soldiers are deployed.

For more information about supporting the troops or adopting a platoon, visit [www.westonsupportsthetroops.org](http://www.westonsupportsthetroops.org).

