



**Walter Reed Army Medical Center
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Walter Reed Army Medical Center, DoD, Red Cross Partner to Deliver Holiday Cards to Wounded Warriors; Unsolicited Mail Sent to WRAMC Returned to U.S. Postal Service

WASHINGTON – America’s support of its wounded warriors is as strong as ever this holiday season, and Americans are expressing that support by sending holiday cards to patients in military hospitals. Due to DoD security policies that are unavoidable in the post 9-11 world, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and other military medical centers cannot receive mail addressed to “any soldier” or “a recovering patient.”

However, with the support of the U.S. Department of Defense and Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and with help from Pitney Bowes Government Solutions, the American Red Cross will collect, review and distribute holiday greeting cards to wounded military personnel.

Holiday cards and letters, but not packages, may be sent to the following address until December 27:

We Support You During Your Recovery!
c/o American Red Cross
P.O. Box 419
Savage, MD 20763-0419

Red Cross volunteers will receive and bundle the cards, which will be shipped by Pitney Bowes. Then, Red Cross volunteers at the medical facilities will distribute the cards throughout the holiday season.

Cards must be received no later than December 27, and must have adequate postage. Cards received after this date will be returned to sender. Again, senders are reminded that "care packages" are not part of the program--send only cards and notes. Also, please refrain from using glitter or any other inserts that would not be appropriate in a hospital environment.

This collaborative effort began recently, and cards that were sent earlier to “A recovering soldier, c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center”, have been returned.

Because their cards were returned, many people have objected to our adherence to the policy that has been in effect since 2001. But we would rather be criticized for excessive care in protecting our patients than for negligence should something terrible happen. Military patients have on rare occasions received hate mail because of their participation in the Global War on Terrorism. And while thankfully rare, the use of the mails to send harmful substances to terrorize people is an all too familiar scenario.

Walter Reed Army Medical Center encourages as many patients as possible to spend the holidays at home with friends and family. Patients who are not yet well enough to leave the hospital for the holidays have family and friends who visit, and have extensive support (gifts, entertainment, holiday meals, and religious services) provided by hospital staff and by volunteers from the Red Cross and other volunteer organizations.

CORRECTION: Recent media coverage indicated "Any soldier" holiday cards received at Walter Reed last year were returned to sender or destroyed. No cards were destroyed by Walter Reed. Cards with return addresses were returned to sender, and cards without return addresses were returned to the U.S. Postal Service.

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