

The U.S. Military Family Grows With Every Dedicated ASBP Volunteer

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By Maja Frigelj, Staff Writer

"It doesn't matter how good the doctor is; if the blood's not there for them to use, a soldier may not be coming home," explains Donna Smith about why hosting blood drives is so close to her heart. As a dedicated wife and mother of two, Donna knows the importance of doing everything she can to provide for her family. Similarly, she treats all soldiers as her extended family members, supporting them at home as well as overseas by being an Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) volunteer.



D. Smith at an annual welcome home parade for soldiers in McGregor, TX

Donna started her quest to help our soldiers after seeing a commercial for an ASBP blood drive at Fort Hood, TX. "I always thought we needed to support our military. They do things for me that I can't do. I can't go over there and fight, but I can certainly donate blood!" reasons Donna. She decided to contact the local ASBP blood donor recruiter, Perry Jefferies, at Robertson Blood Center at Fort Hood, TX to see how she could help. A few weeks later, Donna organized her first ASBP blood drive with Perry and the blood collecting team from Fort Hood.

A humanitarian at heart, Donna didn't stop there. She now collaborates with both the ROTC Young Marine Program at McGregor High School and the Veteran's Administration Hospital to hold annual blood drives. "The blood we collect might not seem like much but it's much more than I can personally donate; there is no telling how many more lives may have been saved so far because of everyone's generous donations" comments Donna and adds that approximately 100 people donated at each of the annual blood drives.



Texas Military Family Foundation soldiers, volunteers, and D. Smith (right) at a supply drive for the TMFF.

In addition to hosting blood drives, Donna, Coach Jerry Lynch, and his students at G.H. Isbill Junior High in McGregor, TX, hold supply drives to collect snacks, t-shirts, puzzle books and other non-perishables for the Texas Military Family Foundation (TMFF), a housing unit for wounded soldiers.

Finally, Donna and her friends deliver baked goods to the volunteers and wounded soldiers at Ft. Hood any chance they get. This Valentine's Day they dropped off treats, snacks, cards, and

cheer at local military hospitals.

Although Donna may never speak to nor see many of those that receive the benefit of her efforts, she continues to do everything she can to support her “extended family members”. She goes above and beyond for our service members but she can’t do it alone. Find out where you can donate blood or become an ASBP volunteer like Donna, by visiting www.militaryblood.dod.mil for scheduled blood drives and more information about the ASBP.