

Calling All Elves,

It is indeed that time of year again and we are once again recruiting for elves to participate in Operation Covert Santa VII – 2013.

As with the previous six years, Operation Covert Santa remains a very simple idea. Christmas is a very difficult time for recently injured service members and their families. They are dealing with so many stressful issues in an unfamiliar setting away from home. Providing gifts for their loved ones is often too difficult or impossible under the circumstances. We approach these recently injured service members and their families and ask them to give us their "Santa List" and to leave the rest to us. Many of them are reluctant at first. It might sound to them as if we are offering charity and they are too proud to even consider that prospect. Our response is to ask them, "Don't you believe in Santa Claus?" This isn't charity. This is simply Santa Claus doing his job.

We then take these lists, remove the individual names and anything else that would uniquely identify them and assign a number to each list and include a very brief general description of the service member or family member.

This is where you come in. Each elf can choose to provide the gifts from a Santa List for a whole large family (typically a husband, wife, and 2 or more children, a whole small family (a husband and wife and one or no children), an individual service member or family member, an individual gift, or make a cash contribution towards these gifts. You buy the gifts, wrap the gifts and deliver them to us. We deliver them to the service member and their families from Santa Claus in the true spirit of Christmas giving. Keep in mind that families come in all shapes and sizes to include moms and dads, brothers and sisters, and other significant others.

As one of the elves from a previous year pointed out this is the purest form of giving. A gift given and received anonymously.

Last year over 225 elves provided a wonderful Christmas for 94 severely injured service member and their families. This year we think there could be as many or more who need to leave it to Santa to take care of their Christmas lists so we will need that many or more elves to step forward. So we are asking each of you to consider being an elf again this year and to send this email to your friends and families. Tell them about your experience last year and see if they want to become an elf.

While the delivery date for all gifts is NO LATER THAN December 15th PLEASE consider delivering your packages AS SOON AS POSSIBLE as Husky Elf is getting on in years and avoiding the last minute rush is greatly appreciated. Also most questions from previous years are answered below in "THE DIRECTIONS" so check them out first. New questions are always welcome.

If you would like to become an elf and help fulfill these Santa lists or have any questions please send me an email at huskyelf@cox.net

*Thanks,
Husky Elf
(AKA Ed Meagher)*

Here is how this works also known as "THE DIRECTIONS". Please Read!

We can start assigning families this coming week but first I need each of you to reply to this email ASAP with one of the following five levels of participation.

1. CASH - If you are going to make a cash donation please respond to this email with the notation in the subject line "Cash Donation".

Then please send your tax deductible check made out to "Aleethia Foundation" and put a note in the memo "Operation Covert Santa VII".

You can also go to the Aleethia Foundation (<http://www.aleethia.org/support/index.php>) website and donate electronically.

Please select "Ed Meagher's Covert Santa Program"

You can mail the check to:

**Aleethia Foundation
Operation Covert Santa
1718 M Street NW Suite 1170
Washington DC 20036**

2. SINGLE GIFT - If you are going to buy a single gift please respond to this email with the notation in the subject line "Single Gift". I will send you the information on the service member or family member and their request for a single gift by return email. You can then go shop for the gift, wrap it, put the number you were provided on an attached "TO: " card and get it to (deliver in person, ship, or mail) ***As soon as possible but no later than December 15th.***

**Operation Covert Santa
453 Walker Road
Great Falls, Virginia 22066
(703) 759-9014**

3. INDIVIDUAL SERVICE MEMBER- If you are going to buy gifts for an individual service member please respond to this email with the notation in the subject line "Individual service member" . I will send you the information on the service member and their gift requests by return email. You can then go shop for the gifts, wrap them, put the number you were provided on an attached "TO: " card and get it to (deliver in person, ship, or mail) ***As soon as possible but no later than December 15th.***

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4. SMALL FAMILY - If you are going to buy gifts for a small family (service member, spouse and no more than one child) please respond to this email with the notation in the subject line "Small Family". I will send you the information on the service member and family members and their requests for gifts by return email. You can then go shop for the gifts, wrap them, put the number you were provided on an attached "TO: " card and get it to (deliver in person, ship, or mail) ***As soon as possible but no later than December 15th.***

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5. LARGE FAMILY If you are going to buy gifts for a large family (service member, spouse and two or more children) please respond to this email with the notation in the subject line "Large Family". I will send you the information on the service member and family members and their requests for gifts by return email. You can then go shop for the gifts, wrap them, put the number you were provided on an attached "TO: " card and get it to (deliver in person, ship, or mail) *As soon as possible but no later than December 15th.*

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A few Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Can we take care of more than one family?

A: Yes

Q: Can a group take a family?

A: Absolutely! Work, friends, families, neighbors, and church groups are welcome. However we do need a single point of contact who is responsible for organizing the group, assigning the gifts, wrapping and getting them to us.

Q: Can we meet our service member and/or his family or get pictures, etc.?

A: No! Unequivocally NO! This is COVERT Santa.

Q: Can we find out more about our service member?

A: No. There are very strict military rules and what we tell you is all that is allowed. If we were to violate the rules the operation would be terminated.

Q: Can we put personal messages in with our gifts?

A: No, but you can channel Santa Claus. Please keep it short and light and from Santa. No names, emails, phone numbers or requests to contact.

Please remember that a simple, however well intended violation of the rules can put the whole program in jeopardy.

Q: Are we restricted to exactly what they asked for?

A: NO! This is Christmas. Surprises and generosity are encouraged especially when it comes to the kids.

Q: Are there any restrictions on gifts?

A: No not really just a few common sense things to consider.

For the most part, these service members and their families are currently living in very tight quarters so very large things can cause storage and transportation issues. If what you want to get them is large consider a gift certificate with a picture of the gift.

We do not put any restrictions on their Santa Claus lists. However, if you are uncomfortable with or unable to accommodate any given gift just let us know and we can adjust.

Q: Can we send the gifts to you early?

A: Yes, Yes, and Yes. Husky Elf highly encourages early delivery.

Q: What is a standby Elf?

A: That is an elf who in addition to volunteering to take care of a family or service member volunteers to take care of a late arriving injured service member and family. If you can also be a standby elf put that in your response.

Q: What is a Shopping elf?

A: That is an elf who can take a shopping list and a provided debit card and go shopping for gifts, wrap them, and get them to us.

Q: What about gift receipts?

A: If you are not sure of a size or color you can include a "Gift receipt" to facilitate a gift exchange. Otherwise no receipts. Keep them for your records.

Q: What are the perks and benefits of participating in Operation Covert Santa VI?

**A: First, You get to assign yourself an elf name. I am Husky Elf.
Second, on Christmas Day you get to go off by yourself and take a moment to appreciate what a good thing you did and that you did it for all the right reasons.
Third, Actually there is no third perk or benefit.**

Q: What if we have other questions?

A: Just send them to Husky Elf at huskyelf@cox.net

*Thank you again !
Husky Elf*