



Offensive Support

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Broncos Offensive Linemen Help Promote Operation Pillow

By Mike Sarro

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Many of us are quick to dismiss the value of sleep. There are numerous factors that work against us to steal time from which we could be enjoying a deep slumber. But proper sleep is a key element to being a productive person, whether you play professional football or are a member of the United States military.

How many of us have that favorite pillow to wrap our arms around and provide comfort and support for our head? It's a basic possession that most of us take for granted and fail to realize its full value until we no longer have one.

Now imagine trying to rest peacefully -- without a pillow or proper bedding -- as a member of the United States military in a foreign, war-torn nation where split-second decisions could mean the difference between life and death. This is currently a way of life for many of our servicemen and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan while working to establish democracy.

Operation Pillow is dedicated to help ease this situation by providing pillows and other items of comfort to American troops overseas to assist in an area so many of us don't even give a second thought to.

"Operation Pillow is a non-profit charitable organization that was started following a lunch meeting that we had with my classmate, the commander of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, Colonel HR McMaster, which is based in Ft. Carson," said organizer Steve Epling. "He gave us a list of things that we could send them that would help and the one thing that he mentioned that hit home was pillows. We thought we'd start this organization to raise money to provide pillows and other items to support our soldiers, sailors and Marines in

Iraq and Afghanistan."

It is an effort that Denver's offensive linemen -- Cooper Carlisle, George Foster, Ben Hamilton, Matt Lepsis and Tom Nalen -- wanted to help.

"It's a good cause because, they're trying to send the soldiers things that we take for granted like pillows," said Foster. "It's essential to get a good night sleep if they want to be effective during their time there."

"We contacted the Broncos organization and asked if they'd like to get involved," said Epling. "We specifically asked for the offensive linemen because they don't get much press and we're very, very pleased that they offered their assistance."

Epling and his fellow coordinators in this effort -- Andrew Albarelle, John McGrail, Harry Shea, and Michael Sullivan -- are all former military officers (three from West Point) who now are involved in various local businesses.

Having researched all of the military units that are in Iraq and Afghanistan, the organization plans to distribute something to every member of the Marines, Army and Air Force in those nations.

Donations to this cause can be made online at operationpillow.org or via mail at:

Association of the United States Army
Attn: Operation Pillow
PO Box 13579
Fort Carson, CO 80913

Checks should be payable to:
Association of the United States Army
- Operation Pillow.



Jackie Shumaker



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Organizers of Operation Pillow with Denver Broncos offensive linemen Cooper Carlisle, George Foster, Ben Hamilton, Matt Lepsis, and Tom Nalen.

Operation Pillow is a non-profit organization that is affiliated with the Association of the United States Army, the largest non-profit group devoted to serving military members.

"We wanted to know what we could do to help," Epling explained. "They're fighting terrorists, murderers and thugs all day long and we're here trying to decide what to have for lunch. There's no comparison."