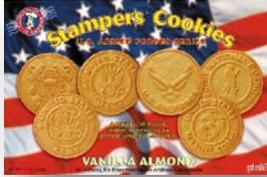


Cookie Club of America – Press Coverage



Washington DC Fox News



Entrepreneur Supports Troops Via Military-Themed Cookies

By Gerry J. Gilmore / American Forces Press Service

A California businessman is supporting the U.S. military through his line of special cookies featuring emblems of the armed services.

Cliff Smith of San Diego, founder and president of the Cookie Club of America Inc., launched Stampers cookies this spring. The vanilla-almond cookies bear embossed emblems of the branches of the military.

"I'm a private citizen who has a passion for the country and for those who serve," said Smith, a restaurateur who has worked for major hotel chains over the past 25 years.

Smith's family has a history of military service; one brother is a lieutenant colonel with the Army's 82nd Airborne Division and another served in the Marines. And, Smith noted, his father, Harold, is a World War II veteran who fought in Europe with Gen. George S. Patton.

The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States and the ensuing war against global terrorism prompted Smith "to do something to support the troops." It took two years to get the Cookie Club off and running, he said, noting he'd secured permission from the armed services to make the military-themed cookies.

There was some trepidation, Smith said, that military members might take offense at having their service's emblem stamped on a cookie, "but that never happened."

The intricate Army emblem was especially difficult to reproduce in cookie dough, Smith recalled, but the challenge was surmounted. The cookies have proven to be extremely popular, he said, noting, "everyone flips" over them.

Five percent of cookie sales are earmarked for the National Military Family Association, a nonprofit group dedicated to supporting service members and their families. Smith said the cookies officially debuted here at a May 2004 NMFA event.

President Bush and Joint Chiefs Chairman Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers have both received a box of the cookies. And, Smith said, the president sent him a letter of thanks.

Since November, the cookies can be found at 2,000 Kroger- and A&P-affiliated grocery stores in many parts of the United States, as well as on the Internet. The cookies' store displays feature dog-tag cards so that customers can fill out messages for deployed troops. The messages are mailed to Smith's business and then are forwarded to troops serving overseas.

Smith's cookies may one day also be sold in military commissaries. "That's where we ultimately want to go," Smith said, noting he's conducting research "to make that happen."

Smith said his cookie initiative represents "a quiet showing of gratitude" for service members and helps military families.

And, as Americans count their blessings over the holidays, Smith said, they should also thank the many U.S. service members who are spending the holiday season "in Fallujah (Iraq) or Kabul (Afghanistan)."

Cookies Put Your Support for the Troops Where Your Mouth Is

By DRU SEFTON

Businessman Cliff Smith wanted to do something to show support for the troops in Iraq. Something simple and tasteful -- literally.

He created a unique cookie. Because, as he put it, "we all eat cookies, whether we admit it or not."

They're called Stampers U.S. Armed Forces Series Cookies, and they feature insignias of each of the four branches of military service, as well as the Coast Guard and National Guard. Part of the profits benefits the National Military Family Association.

Working from his San Diego apartment and financed by his credit cards, Smith has practically single-handedly put the crunchy vanilla-almond treats into grocery stores, including Kroger and A&P, in 23 states. He's also doing a steady online business at www.cookieclubofamerica.com.

Alesha Jones, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said the golden cookies are under consideration for mention on the Defense Department's America Supports You Web site (www.americasupportsyou.mil), which recognizes what citizens are doing to show support of armed forces at home and abroad.

And they are arrayed on the buffet at Fran O'Brien's Stadium Steak House in northwest Washington, D.C. Walter Reed Army Medical Center is up the street, and on Friday night's restaurant co-owner Hal Koster brings in 40 or 50 wounded soldiers for dinner.

"We've had a real positive response from them about the cookies," Koster said. "They dig around to find their branch of the service. And they're just very, very good cookies!"

For Smith, 45, getting the cookies this far has been a challenge. His previous venture, a mailable CD of multimedia promotions, was set to launch during the third quarter of 2001 -- right around Sept. 11. The terrorist attacks "crushed the business," he said.

But Smith was left with a licensing agreement with the U.S. Postal Service. He used that to open doors into the byzantine world of the military bureaucracy.

Getting separate approvals to use each branch's insignia took nearly two years, Smith said. The symbols "are very highly guarded," he explained; only carefully selected items may bear them.

Meanwhile, Smith was developing the cookie. He scoped out the snack aisles of local markets.

"I was looking for something different, and vanilla almond wasn't a flavor that was readily available," he said. "I'm a dunking kind of guy, and it had to go with coffee, tea, milk or hot chocolate."

Smith wanted to sell the cookies through an interactive display, to get shoppers involved. Dog-tag-shaped cards hang from each cookie rack, enabling patrons to pen personal messages to troops.

"When someone orders cookies online to be sent overseas, we include those dog-tag greeting cards," he said.

Food historian Andrew F. Smith said that to his knowledge, "nothing has ever been done quite like this."

This Smith is editor-in-chief of the new two-volume Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America, and teaches culinary history at the New School University in New York City. He said while he's never heard of military insignias on food, military themes have been used to sell products, such as the Cracker Jack box: "During World War I, a sailor in uniform was put on Cracker Jacks as a way to promote the war. It's one of the few symbols developed during wartime that survive."

One person especially impressed with the cookies is Kathleen Burke, director of development for the National Military Family Association, a nonprofit advocacy group supporting service members and their relatives.

"We're inundated by people trying to develop something for military families," Burke said from her Alexandria, Va., office. "I could tell Cliff's heart was in the right place. And he'd done his research. He had all services represented, including the National Guard, which is a huge component of our fighting force."

Smith pledged the association 5 percent of his profits, and has already delivered a check, Burke said.

"The idea was to garner exposure for the NMFA as well," Smith said. The association's logo and Web site (www.nmfa.org) are on each box, and an NMFA insignia cookie is inside.

Now Smith is in talks with the Defense Commissary Agency, which approves products for the military's nearly 300 base markets worldwide. His goal is to sell the cookies on all those bases.

"Nobody supports the military like those already involved," he said, and joked: "I can just picture a Marine with kids at home: 'Son, you're going to eat these Marine Corps cookies and LIKE them!'"



Stores introduce Stampers Military Emblem Cookies

By Julie Alterio

Shoppers at A&P and Food Emporium stores in the northern suburbs may notice a new display in stores this week as Stampers Military Emblem Cookies are introduced. The two-and-a-half-inch round vanilla-almond cookies are embossed with the emblems of all seven branches of the U.S. armed forces: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Army National Guard, Air National Guard and Coast Guard. New Jersey native Cliff Smith, who now lives in California, started the company in 2003 as a way to thank soldiers for their service.

"We all eat cookies, and it's a way to show respect," Smith said. The 45-year-old entrepreneur, who never worked in the cookie business before, comes from a military family. His father served in World War II, his youngest brother was a Marine and another brother is a lieutenant colonel in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. Smith said he wrote separately to each unit of the armed forces to gain permission to use their emblems. "This was quite an undertaking. The military service emblems are very highly guarded," he said. Smith, who said he invested \$120,000 of his own money in the venture, plans to donate 5 percent of profits

to the National Military Family Association. A&P has the cookies in more than 450 stores and Smith has a second contract that will put the cookies in 1,000 Kroger stores starting in two weeks. A dog tag-shaped greeting card hangs from a chain on each Stampers store display.

Shoppers are invited to write messages to troops on the card. "That sealed the deal with A&P because shoppers can write a note to soldiers," Smith said.

A batch of military emblem cookies will start selling in 459 grocery stores today, including some in the Washington area.

Stampers cookies, which started selling on the Internet in May, are part of the Cookie Club of America Inc., a San Diego cookie company.

The cookies, at \$3.99 for a box of 18, are being sold on a trial basis in 459 stores owned by the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., a Montvale, N.J., supermarket chain.

A&P stores in 10 states and the District of Columbia that will sell the cookies include A&P, Super Fresh, Waldbaum's, the Food Emporium, Food Basics USA, Sav-A-Center and Farmer Jack. The crunchy morsels, flavored with almond and vanilla, also will be available in about 1,500 Kroger stores by the end of the month, in time for the holiday season, said Cookie Club President Clifford J. Smith.

Mr. Smith started the cookie company as a way to rally support for the U.S. military. All of the military branches approved their emblem use for the cookies, and 5 percent of the cookie profits go to the National Military Family Association, an Alexandria nonprofit organization that assists military families.

Kathy Hopta, category manager for A&P U.S., said the chain ordered an initial 32,870 packages. "If they are successful, we'll certainly look at reordering," she said.

What sealed the deal for the cookies, aside from donating to a patriotic cause, were the dog-tag greeting cards Mr. Smith created for the cookie displays, Mrs. Hopta said. The display stand has two dog-tag cards hanging on the side, allowing store customers to write to troops serving abroad.

Once the cards are full of messages, they will be sent back to the Cookie Club and forwarded to soldiers overseas.

Mr. Smith said the transition to retail will be a major boost for his fledgling business.

"The sales on the Internet were OK, but not great. Really, the big push was to get these boxes into stores so that people would not have to pay shipping charges," Mr. Smith said.

The Cookie Club has posted about \$5,000 in Internet sales since beginning in May, he said.

Once the cookies show success on supermarket shelves, Mr. Smith said, he plans to sell individual branch cookies to commissaries and exchange posts on military bases. He is about to negotiate with the Defense Commissary Agency, the Fort Lee, Va., government agency that oversees the military's 284 supermarkets worldwide. "If all goes well, we could start selling the cookies to branches early next year," Mr. Smith said. The agency had said the cookies would need to be in at least two retail chains before they are considered for commissaries, Mr. Smith said.

The cookies already have stirred up much-needed advertising for the National Military Family Association, said Kathleen Burke, development director.

"If we never receive a dime, it will still be a good thing for the association just in the feedback we have received," she said. "Cliff has his heart in the right place, putting the military families on the forefront."

The organization has yet to receive any profits from the cookie sales, which Mr. Smith says have been small. He said he plans to send the organization a \$500 check in the next week.



Show You Care—With Cookies

Cliff Smith, a San Diego entrepreneur, wanted to show his appreciation for the sacrifice and service of the men and women of the armed services. And so he chose—cookies.

Smith, whose family has a long history of military service, including a father who served in World War II, has created Stampers cookies, round vanilla-almond cookies that look like military medals. The cookies are stamped with the seals of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Army and Air National Guards, and U.S. Postal Service. They are made from all-natural products and contain no hydrogenated oils or trans fats.

Smith debuted the cookies at the National Military Family Association's (NMFA) 35th anniversary celebration in Washington, D.C., where he handed a box to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard Myers. After the event, Smith dropped off the remaining 36 boxes of cookies at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center for recovering servicemembers to enjoy.

Smith, who has worked in hotel and restaurant management, is donating 5 percent of the sales profits to the NMFA. He also has sent some 1,100 boxes to troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The cookies retail for \$7.99 for two boxes; each box has 18 cookies. Visit www.cookieclubofamerica.com to purchase the cookies; you also can pledge a box for American troops stationed overseas. The cookies also will be sold at retail stores and military base commissaries worldwide.



Cookie Club Offers a Taste of Patriotism

By Lisa Kovach

One local businessman spent his Fourth of July holiday treating the men and women of the military to milk and cookies.

Cliff Smith, the president and owner of **Cookie Club of America**, shipped about 1,200 boxes of cookies to military posts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

The cookies, imprinted with the emblems of the U.S. military branches and the U.S. Postal Service logo, retail for \$7.99 for two boxes. Each box has 18 cookies.

The cookies can be bought online. People can also pledge boxes to American troops stationed overseas.

The Cookie Club of America premiered in May its vanilla almond cookies, which were developed as a way to honor and support the military.

"This was done out of my love of country and my family," said Smith, 44, who comes from a military family. "I've had this idea for many years and I wanted to help support the efforts of the country."

A portion of the proceeds from cookies sales is donated to the National Military Family Association.

For information, go to www.cookieclubofamerica.com.



Baker Gives Armed Forces Just Desserts

By Diane Bell

Cliff Smith has come up with a patriotic way of making dough. The San Diego entrepreneur, who has two brothers and a sister-in-law in the military and a father who served in World War II, is marketing cookies that bear military emblems, as well as images inspired by U.S. postage stamps. Smith, 44, has nurtured the idea for years, but 1½ years ago he earnestly sought permission from the U.S. Postal Service. With that in hand, he took his idea to military officials.

The result is displayed on his Internet site: www.Cookieclubofamerica.com. His round vanilla almond cookies look like edible military medals. They are stamped with the seals of the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Army and Air National Guards, Coast Guard, U.S. Postal Service and depict images of the American flag, the Statue of Liberty and various postage stamps. While sales are only over the Internet now, Smith hopes to see his cookies in stores before Veterans Day.

Smith says the cookies are his way of showing support and appreciation to those in the military. Five percent of his sales profits are earmarked for the National Military Family Association. "I wish to give back to the armed forces in a unique way," says Smith, who had a lengthy career in hotel and restaurant management. Oh, and he proudly points out his cookies are baked using whole-wheat flour and contain no artificial ingredients or Trans fats.



New Cookie Debuts at NMFA Dinner, Auction

By Courtesy of the National Military Family Association

The Cookie Club of America debuted "Stampers" cookies at the National Military Family Association's 35th Anniversary Dinner and Auction, May 1 in Washington, D.C.

More than 350 distinguished guests, including senior leadership of the Department of Defense, Congressional staffs, representatives of the American Logistics Association, DoD contractors, and 30 NMFA volunteer representatives from all over the world, were on hand to help celebrate NMFA's 35 years of service to military families.

Each guest received a box of cookies to take home, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard B. Myers.

Cliff Smith, a native of San Diego, developed the concept of Stampers as his way of showing his support and appreciation for the men and women of America's Armed Forces.

Mr. Smith, whose family has a long history of military service, combined patriotism with entrepreneurial spirit and obtained authorization from each branch of the United States military services to emboss the emblems of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the Army and Air National Guard on the cookies.

For 35 years, NMFA has steadfastly worked to improve the quality of life for the families of the seven uniformed services including active duty, National Guard and reserve components, widows, retirees and veterans.

"We are very proud to be associated with the Cookie Club of America and thank them for their support of our Armed Forces and their families," said Candace Wheeler, President of the NMFA. After the event, 36 boxes of "Stampers" cookies were dropped off at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for recovering servicemembers to enjoy. A portion of all proceeds from cookie sales will be donated to the NMFA.

Consumers who purchase the cookies online at <http://www.cookieclubofamerica.com> can pledge a box for American troops stationed overseas.

The NFMA is a national nonprofit membership organization whose sole focus is the military family. NMFA's mission is to serve the families of the seven uniformed services through education, information and advocacy.



Article below appeared in both print and online in each of these Military Times Publications.

Sink your teeth into this

Clifford Smith has been testing his military cookies on a soldier who served in Iraq and two former Marines — his brothers and sister-in-law.

They give a "thumbs up" to the crispy vanilla-almond Stampers cookies, he reported.

Stampers are baked in the shape of each service's official emblem, with the permission of all the branches, to include the Air National Guard and Army National Guard.

Smith, of San Diego, sells the cookies on his Web site, www.cookieclubofamerica.com, which also gives customers the option of buying and pledging cookies for troops overseas. He's also hoping to get his product into military commissaries and exchanges.

Smith is donating 5 percent of his profits to the National Military Family Association, and has its permission to use its logo on his cookie boxes.

The boxes include combinations of cookies from all services. Smith said he'll also offer service-specific boxes.

Prices on Smith's Web site start at \$7.99 for a two-box set, each with 18 cookies.



Military Series Cookies Debut At 35th Anniversary Celebration Of The NMFA

How do you show your appreciation to the men and women of the Armed Forces for their sacrifice and service? If you are Cliff Smith of San Diego, California, you say it with cookies!

The Cookie Club of America deputed Stampers cookies at the National Military Family Association's (NMFA) 35th Anniversary Dinner and Auction, Saturday May 1, 2004 at the Capital Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. More than 350 distinguished guests, including senior leadership of the Department of Defense and the Services, Congressional staffs, representatives of the American Logistics Association, DoD contractors, and 30 NMFA volunteer Representatives from all over the world, were on hand to help celebrate NMFA's 35 years of service to military families. Each guest received a box of cookies to take home, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers. Mr. Smith had the opportunity to meet with General Myers and personally present him with a box.

Cliff Smith developed the concept of Stampers as his own unique way of showing his support and appreciation for the men and women of America's Armed Forces. Cliff, whose family has a long history of military service, combined his patriotism with his entrepreneurial spirit and obtained special authorization from each branch of the United States military services to emboss the emblems of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the Army and Air National Guard on the cookies. Mr. Smith is producing them through his new company, Cookie Club of America (CCA).

At the invitation of NMFA to showcase his Stampers cookies at their 35th Anniversary event, Cliff accelerated production to ensure the cookies' timely arrival. Not only were they on time, they were an enormous hit with the attendees. "We could not have been more pleased with Saturday night's NMFA event," Smith said. "This was the perfect audience for us to introduce our Stampers Commemorative Military Series cookies. We received very positive feedback from everyone. We are delighted to be associated with the NMFA, as they have proven themselves to be true champions of the American Military and their families."

For 35 years, NMFA has steadfastly worked to improve the quality of life for the families of the seven uniformed services including active duty, National Guard and Reserve components, widows, retirees, and veterans.

The debut of the cookies at the NMFA 35th Anniversary event could not have been more appropriate since both NMFA and Stampers jointly represent all the Armed Forces, which is a quality NMFA looks for when choosing to partner with a company or organization. "We are very proud to be associated with the Cookie Club of America and we thank them for their support of our Armed Forces and their families," said Candace Wheeler, President of the National Military Family Association. After the event, 36 boxes of the cookies still remained. At the suggestion of NMFA volunteer Ms. Sydney Hickey, Cliff dropped the boxes off at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for the recovering servicemembers to enjoy.

A portion of all proceeds from cookie sales will be donated to the National Military Family Association, and consumers who purchase the cookies online (www.cookieclubofamerica.com) can pledge a box for American troops stationed overseas. Smith also plans to deploy Stampers cookies to retail stores and military base commissaries worldwide.

Military Cookies Offer Taste Of Sweet Home

By Marguerite Higgins

The military just got its own cookies. San Diego cookie executive Clifford J. Smith tonight will introduce a batch of cookies printed with the emblems of the U.S. Armed Forces. The aptly named "Stampers" cookies will debut at the National Military Family Association's 35th annual dinner at the Capital Hilton Hotel.

The cookies are vanilla almond, though Mr. Smith plans to add more flavors. They are part of a patriotic business Mr. Smith, 44, cooked up after the September 11 terrorist attacks and anthrax-laced letters killed a technology business venture he was starting with the U.S. Postal Service. "The idea was to have something to rally around our troops in a simple way," said Mr. Smith, who has spent 25 years in the hospitality and food industries.

Mr. Smith regrouped and invested about \$120,000 in the two-year period to form the cookie company, Cookie Club of America Inc., of which he is president.

He won a licensing agreement with the Postal Service in May 2003 to use its emblem on the cookies, then he asked the seven military branches and the National Military Family Association Inc., an Alexandria nonprofit that assists military families, to use the emblems. "It's amazing how quickly the branches wanted to get on board when they saw what I was doing," Mr. Smith said.

All seven branches gave their approvals within a few weeks of the initial request for the emblems to be used, he said. Part of the proceeds from the expected cookie profits, about 5 percent, will go to the National Military Family Association.

"I wanted to align the company with a charity that doesn't just serve one branch of our Armed Forces, but all of them," said Mr. Smith, who has several family members who served in the military. One of his brothers, Steven, serves in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. Kathleen Burke, development director at the association, said the approval to team up with Mr. Smith was the quickest granted by the group's board of governors, taking only a few days to get a unanimous vote.

"We often get solicitations from people wanting to get close to military families to make money off them. But this tie-in was fun and very appropriate," Ms. Burke said. She received about 50 product-placement calls like Mr. Smith's in the past year. Cookie Club will start selling the cookies online at www.cookieclubofamerica.com by mid-May. Mr. Smith said he hopes to have the cookies in a national retail store later in the summer, adding that he is negotiating with two retail chains.

The cookies have 65 calories apiece. With no trans-fat or cholesterol, they could be touted as "low-fat" under the Food and Drug Administration guidelines, but Mr. Smith said he is more focused on emphasizing the slight hint of cinnamon sugar wrapped in the crunchy morsels.

"Cinnamon sugar is one of those common flavors you have at holidays. That taste can bring a little bit of home to a soldier eating it over in Iraq or Afghanistan," he said. He is in the midst of trying to send some



free boxes to Iraqi children and U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Smith admitted some of the Stampers' success will hinge on tonight's reception by government officials and military personnel at the dinner.

He speeded up production time by two months to have 3,500 boxes available to guests at the dinner, marketers and the press. "But we've already gone through the biggest challenge of going through the red tape, so now it's just keeping up with the demand we'll hopefully get," he said.
