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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, NYC SERVICE AND MAYOR'S OFFICE OF VETERANS'
AFFAIRS ASSEMBLE CARE PACKAGES FOR RETURNING SOLDIERS**

*Part of "Support Our Troops" Initiative that Delivered 3,400 Packages to New York City
Soldiers Serving Overseas Last Year*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Chief Service Officers Diahann Billings-Burford and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs Terrance C. Holiday today joined *NYC Service* volunteers to assemble care packages for soldiers that have recently returned home from service overseas. Returning service members and their families often need temporary assistance to help them adjust during the transition home. The care packages include everyday items that can help ease the transition, such as gift cards, food, toiletries and DVDs. The initiative is a part of the City's "Support Our Troops" program, which sent 3,400 packages to troops serving in Afghanistan last year. As a part of honoring a friendly wager with Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl on the New York Jets vs. Pittsburgh Steelers AFC Championship game, some of the care packages assembled will be mailed to members of the First Battalion, 110 Infantry Pennsylvania Army National Guard, who recently returned home to the Pittsburgh area after serving in combat zones in Afghanistan. Honoring those soldiers and the wager, the Mayor wore a Pittsburgh Steelers jersey while assembling packages. All items included in the care packages were generously donated through the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. New Yorkers interested in assembling packages for soldiers or other volunteer opportunities should visit www.nyc.gov or call 311.

"I wish I was doing this in a Jets jersey, but this is great opportunity to highlight the need to volunteer and give back to help the men and women who volunteer to put their lives on the line to keep us safe," said Mayor Bloomberg. "This is only a small token of our gratitude for their service and we hope it can make their transition home a little easier."

"One of the best ways New Yorkers can give back is to support those who protect our freedoms," said Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings-Burford. "*NYC Service* salutes the dedication and sacrifice of our nation's most heroic volunteers. We hope that our gifts can be part of a great welcome home."

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