

# Operation Cookie Drop

by Meadow Merrill  
Coastal Journal Contributor

Rather than sitting around enjoying the sunshine this past Memorial Day weekend, Cookie Chef Marnee Robinson was hard at work in her Bath bistro along with dozens of volunteers who baked and packaged cookies to send to Maine troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It started out with, 'Let's do something for the soldiers' and it took on a life of its own," said Robinson, who often volunteers her shop and talents to serve the community.

She and her employees solicited community help for Operation Cookie Drop—a five-day event at Marnee's Cookies, which wrapped up Tuesday.

Boy Scout Troop 621 from Bath got in on the action, setting up four tables at the American Legion hall on a recent Tuesday night and measuring, mixing, and baking more than 30 dozen chocolate chip cookies.

"I think it's a great way to show our appreciation to people who've risked their lives to protect our freedom," said Kevin Thibodeau, 13, a Star Scout who attends Bath Middle School. "I think they'll be happy that we're showing our gratitude."

Sullivan Boyd, 11, a Tenderfoot from Woolwich, also thought the troops would be thankful for the treats. "I've eaten the MRE's," he said of the pre-packaged meals with which soldiers are often supplied, "and they are disgusting!"

Scout Master Carl Young helped supervise the sheets of cookies coming in and out of the Legion's ovens, saying, "This is all part of serving our veterans. They serve our country, and we serve them."

By Saturday afternoon, people throughout the community had brought more than 130



dozen cookies to Marnee's. One woman drove 20 dozen all the way from Saco. Another called to say she'd be bringing cookies from Augusta.

"We've had Boy Scouts, grandparents, and veterans," said Robinson, whose own father fought in two wars including serving as a Navy test pilot. "Who knew everybody would like this idea?"

Robinson set aside one corner of her bistro to serve as a staging area. Plates and tins lined a stainless steel cooling rack. Nearby, volunteers packaged the treats—peanut butter, molasses, M&M, oatmeal raisin, and more—into bags of six, tying each with red, white, and blue ribbons.

"I'm not a baker," said Kimberly Gates, who dropped in with her husband, Bill, and two children to help package.

"So, I said, 'We'll give you the man hours.'"

People also came to make cards.

"Yay! You have been taking good care of us," said one written by the Gate's 7-year-old daughter, Hannah.

Another, written by an adult read, "I pray for you every day."

Those who helped signed their names in chalk on one of the Bistro walls under the headline, "Operation Cookie Drop Reporting for Duty." Robinson plans to take a photo of the wall and send it to President Obama.

"It's unbelievable," Robinson said of the outpouring of support. "It makes me want to cry."

As soon as the treats are ready to go, Robinson will mail them to a P.O. box in New York. From there, they'll go in separate transports to the 375 active Maine reservists currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Robinson expects the cookies to arrive in seven to ten days. She is also accepting donations to cover the cost of shipping.



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