Sister Soldiers' Hair-Raising War Stories

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When it comes to war, hair care may be a non-issue for many. But for black female soldiers, hair concerns while on military duty only add to their daily struggles. Enter the Sister Soldier Project, a relief effort started in 2006 by Myraline Morris Whitaker.

Whitaker, a California businesswoman, learned that the military requires women to wear their hair sleeked back and "tucked in." Without the proper training (and a special-issue ration of ethnic hair products) black women's hair texture makes this mission all but impossible. "The military expects a certain look, and [black women] just can't comply," Whitaker said. "Without the proper products, their hair cannot be pulled back into a ponytail, not even close."

Then Whitaker's inner entrepreneur kicked in. To help these women meet their basic hair care needs while stationed overseas, she brought in the reserves. Whitaker began sending small health, hygiene and hair product packages to her sister soldiers.

Soon Whitaker's relief effort mushroomed. The small project boomed into a full-time organization. Whitaker sensed there were many more people who might want to help but didn't know how. As a result, she created the Sister Soldiers website. Now there was a way for others to get involved. (What better way to support these sister soldiers than send them products from those who could relate?)

Here's how it works: Whitaker's website collects information from African-American female soldiers about the products they need. Then Sister Soldiers posts these needed products on their website, from shampoos and conditioners to root stimulators and relaxers. Visitors to the website can pick a package or packages they'd like to sponsor then either identify a specific soldier to ship it to or let Sister Soldier ship to a soldier who has made a request. In a just a few days sister soldiers in a foreign land can get a health and hygiene care package from home to help them meet hairdo regulations, and you've shown your gratitude for their time and sacrifice.

Check out SisterSoldier.com to view pictures of packing parties, read thank you notes from soldiers stationed oversees, or make a donation to the cause.

Did you know you can also help the environment by going green in your health care routine? Click here to find out more.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Sister-Soldier-Project-19543-9594