

Alpaca provides ideal fiber for harsh conditions.

When Barbara Coleman asked her son, Army Sergeant Micheal L. Coleman, what he would like in his next care package to Iraq in January 2007, his request was simple: alpaca socks.

Barbara and Randy Coleman own Wings & A Prayer Alpacas in Amity, Ore., so the request was one she could easily fulfill. Their son went on to explain that since the troops were on their feet all day and had to withstand freezing temperatures at night, he would appreciate as many pairs of socks as she could send so that he could share the comfort of alpaca socks with his platoon.

Why Alpaca?

Because of its soft texture, alpaca fiber is sometimes compared to cashmere. Making the fiber even more coveted, it has the luster of silk.

Alpaca is one-third the weight of wool, yet just as warm, ensuring warm feet for the soldiers during the cold desert nights.

Containing no lanolin, alpaca fiber is also naturally hypoallergenic. Most people who are sensitive to wool find that they can wear alpaca without the itching or irritation they feel from wool because alpaca fiber is smooth.

Additional performance characteristics include: stretch, water repellency, and odor reduction. For travelers, clothing made from alpaca is desirable because it is wrinkle-resistant.

These characteristics are what made alpaca socks ideal for troops in harsh climates.

The Colemans sent out a plea to alpaca farms across the country for the 24 necessary pairs of socks to provide a pair for each member of Micheal's platoon. In a short time, over 1,000 socks were donated.

This began the Sock Brigade.

Through the BentStar Project Ltd, a California non-profit corporation formed to further the education of the public to the efforts of recovering POW/MIAs, the Sock Brigade has shipped over 9,000 pairs of alpaca socks to our deployed troops, and that number continues to grow.

The Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA) has partnered with the Sock Brigade to help give soldiers warm feet, and more importantly, the reminder that they are not forgotten.

Local alpaca farms are encouraging customers to donate a pair of socks to our soldiers during this holiday season.

To further promote this wonderful cause, Lamb Chop now serves as the official "spoke sock."

Lamb Chop and Mallory Lewis, daughter of the late Shari Lewis, are helping spread the word that everyone can send socks—and comfort—to our troops!

For more information about how you can help, visit [www.alpacainfo.com](http://www.alpacainfo.com)