




# Diplomatic Security Service keeps Toys for Tots tradition alive during COVID

## DSS ARTICLES

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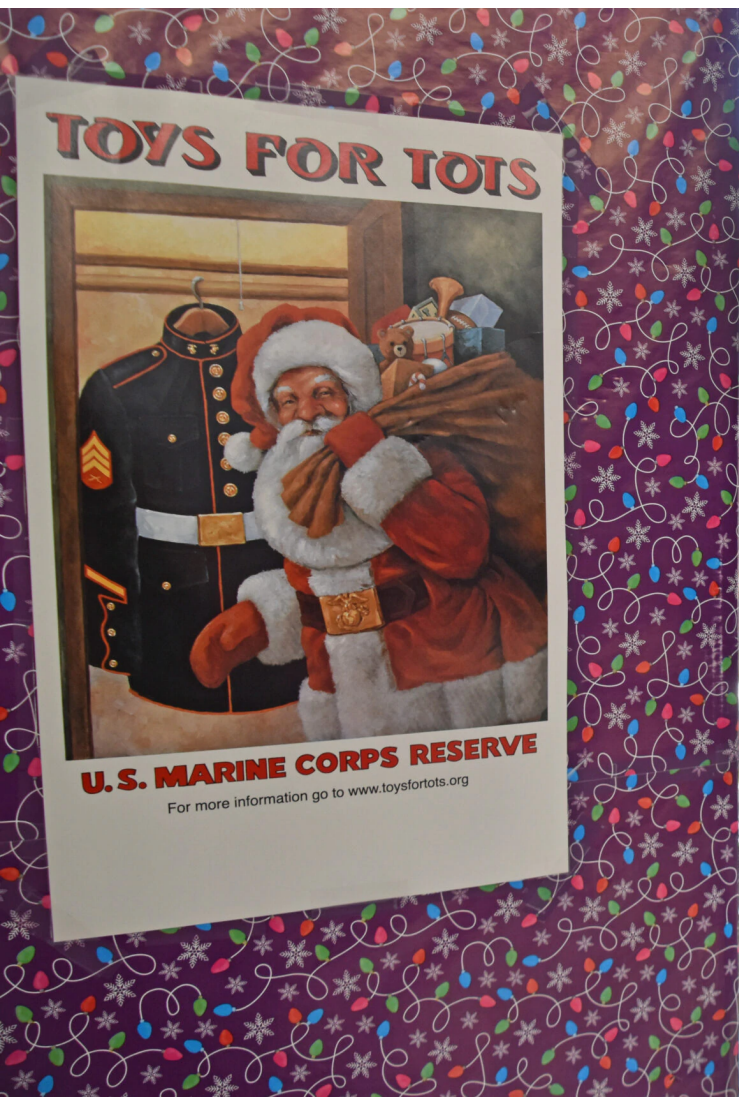
Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) special agents and investigative assistants stand by cars loaded with toys bound for the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Toys for Tots program, Portsmouth, NH, December 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

This year has been difficult for those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) employees stepped up to help make this holiday season a little more special for children in need.

Over a three-week period, employees of the DSS Portsmouth Resident Office (PSRO), National Passport Center, and National Visa Center collected over 500 toys in support of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Toys for Tots program. The effort was spearheaded by DSS Investigative Assistant Jessica Taliaferro, who joined PSRO staff on a blustery December morning to load up their “sleighs” – large, black SUVs – and headed to Bravo Company, 1/25 Marines, located in Manchester, New Hampshire. Smiling Devil Dogs happily accepted the special delivery, which will benefit over 30,000 children throughout New Hampshire.

“The staff of the Portsmouth Resident Office are proud to support the long history of cooperation between the Department and the USMC, and even more proud knowing that local children will have a happy holiday season during these most difficult times,” said PSRO Resident Agent in Charge Charles Shannon.





Toys wait patiently in the lobby of the Department of State Harry S Truman Building before DSS uniformed guards pack and deliver them to the USMC as part of its Toys for Tots program, December 17, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

COVID-19 also did not stop the DSS Office of Domestic Facilities Protection (DFP) from coordinating the Department of State's annual Toys for Tots collection drive in the National Capital Region (NCR).

"DSS has coordinated the department's Toys for Tots drive for 20 years, and this year was critically important for supporting families in need," said DSS Security Officer Byron Harley.

DSS uniformed security officers distributed and collected donation boxes to/from State Department annexes in the NCR and the DSS Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) in Blackstone, Virginia. Despite fewer employees coming into the workplace during COVID, department staff in the NCR and at

FASTC donated nearly 1,000 toys and countless more toys were donated online through the Toys for Tots website.

Uniformed officers displayed the toys in the lobby of the Department of State's Harry S Truman Building prior to packing and donating them to the toy drive coordinated by the 2nd Civil Affairs Group, Force Headquarters Group, Marine Forces Reserve at Joint Base Anacostia/Bolling in Washington D.C. The toys donated at FASTC went to support the toy drive coordinated by Battery H, 3rd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve in Richmond, Virginia.

"COVID may have prevented us from holding the usual ceremony with speakers, guests, and Marines in full uniform, but the spirit of giving was stronger than ever," said DSS Physical Security Specialist Allen Finley. "Thank you to everyone who bought toys and volunteered this year."





A DSS uniformed guard packs toys collected from Department of State employees and provided to the USMC Toys for Tots program, December 17, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)







A DSS uniformed guard packs toys collected from Department of State employees and provided to the USMC Toys for Tots program, December 17, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)



A DSS security officer packs toys collected from Department of State employees and provided to the USMC Toys for Tots program, December 17, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)





A DSS uniformed guard packs toys collected from Department of State employees and provided to the USMC Toys for Tots program, December 17, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

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