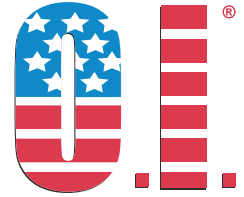


# Operation Interdependence®

Real People Sending Real C-Rats®  
To Real Heroes



[www.endicia.com](http://www.endicia.com)  
800-576-3279,140

How can a small staff of dedicated volunteers literally serve an army? Operation Interdependence (OI®) does it with Endicia.

Founded in December 2001 by Albert R. Renteria, a United States Marine of 26 years, OI is the fastest growing volunteer organization and premier Civilian-to-Military Delivery System® in the United

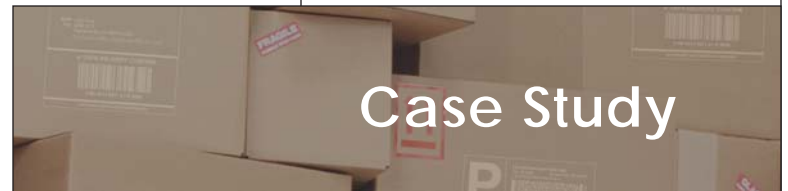
States. OI enables people stateside to send personal notes and treats to those on the frontlines, without impacting military resources. For some, these notes and treats are the only communication that they receive from home.

**Background.** Boxes of civilian rations® (c-rats®) are shipped once a week, with the c-rats themselves designed as “grab-n-go” so as not to impact military resources. Rather than 100 boxes reaching 100 servicemen and service-women, they reach 5,000, thus streamlining delivery and conserving resources.

In the post 9-11 environment, where for security purposes one can no longer send mail to an unspecified troop abroad, OI provides a safe and efficient way to do so. Its civilian-to-military delivery system is secure, with all participants having to register and be security checked before they can proceed. Additionally, all c-rats are packed and inspected by OI and screened before shipping.

Each OI participant encloses a note and treats in a quart-sized Ziploc bag, together with \$1 for postage when possible, and gives the bag to an OI coordinator. Once 50 bags are collected, the OI coordinator packs them in a box and sends the box to an OI Area Manager for inspection and screening at a designated location. The box is then forwarded to a platoon when it drops.

OI has grown from shipping to one platoon to over 50,000 and hopes to serve 250,000 deployed personnel overseas. In terms of c-rats, OI – via 13 US distribution centers, with more to come – currently ships 50,000 c-rats per month. Since its launch, OI has delivered over 1 million c-rats.



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**endicia™**

Comments Command Sergeants Major Lawrence W. Holland, 7th Senior Enlisted Advisor to Assistant Secretary of Defense:

*"The boxes and the small packages, C-rats, are great. The most important piece for the Military Personnel is the note from the civilian community. They are very happy to know that the people in the US support them. The direct contact with the Leadership on the ground makes the distribution very easy and no cost to the Military or the Supply Chain. Thanks to OI for what they do."*

OI, even in cases of natural disasters, provides much-needed comfort and support. It has – and continues to – support deployed troops overseas, their families, and others who have suffered the effects of the hurricane disasters of 2005. OI has used its civilian-to-military delivery system to bypass the stockpiles of donated goods and directly provide those in need with items of comfort and emergency supplies.

Due to the "grab-n-go" packaging of these items and supplies, they efficiently reach the victims. As a case in point, at the end of November 2005, after being designated the charity for the NACS Show '05 and receiving six semis of goods left for the troops overseas and hurricane survivors, OI used its delivery system to deliver most of the goods in time for Christmas.

**Endicia's Role.** OI employs 13 Endicia Premium accounts to print customizable shipping labels for its shipments of c-rats and an enterprise account, provided free of charge, to oversee the accounts. It utilizes Endicia's e-mail notification to alert the leadership of deployed units of the shipment of c-rats and, via replies from units whose deployment is ending, learn of cancellations. In so doing, OI has become the civilian-to-military delivery system of choice. With Endicia, OI volunteers benefit from a paperless environment, no longer needing to prepare shipping labels manually nor drive to the Post Office and wait in line to mail packages.

According to Jane Schwartz, Vice President of Operation Interdependence,

*"Endicia has reduced the time to prepare packages of c-rats for shipment by 600%, saving 83% in cost."*

Endicia affords OI portability, too, enabling it to ship directly from conferences; in fact, during OI's 2004 Christmas Rush, it used Endicia during a seven-day span to ship boxes of c-rats from 19 cities in 18 states. Endicia's online package lookup creates added efficiency, and its label customization increases OI's visibility and that of its sponsors, reducing even more the cost of doing business. Lastly, OI's enterprise account further decreases administrative costs by letting national organizers view spending and shipments of each of its locations from one consolidated reporting system, thus helping them manage the entire operation without having to log into each account.

**The Future.** OI is well on its way to achieving its goal – to supply each deployed serviceman and servicewoman with some treats and a letter from home each month. It will continue to promote the concept of interdependence to children and youth, considering them the guardians of the future and suppliers of the most meaningful, uplifting, and beautifully decorated letters to troops abroad.

To learn more about OI, visit [www.oidelivers.org](http://www.oidelivers.org).

