Military Appreciation Day highlights gratitude for service, includes collection efforts for troops

The sound of 600 boots stomping down Liacouras Walk toward Speakman and Alter halls punctuated the opening of the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management’s recent Military Appreciation Day, which featured 300 cadets and color guards from the Philadelphia Military Academy.

“I’m kind of overwhelmed right now,” Assistant Dean Jeffrey Montague said as he scanned the crowd of STHM students, faculty, staff and Military Academy members in Alter Hall. The Nov. 8 event was held during Temple’s Military Appreciation Month. “To see this many people here honoring military veterans, it’s a special day.”

In fall 2012, STHM Administrative Specialist Patricia M. McFadden initiated a collection drive to send care packages to troops overseas in memory of a friend’s son, Pfc. Johnny Kihm, who was killed in Afghanistan on April 19, 2011. This first effort resulted in 25 to 30 boxes of items being sent to an Air Force group in Afghanistan.

A second shipment of 30 packages benefited a platoon including Spc. Jacob Luis Escobar, a medic and Kihm’s best friend from high school.

“It was like Christmas for us,” Escobar said of receiving the care packages during his deployment. —Brandon Lausch