

# It's a Small World After all

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*"It's a world of laughter, a world of tears, It's a world of hopes and a world of fears. There's so much that we share, that it's time we're aware. It's a small world after all." — Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman*

Air Force Maj. Donna Pilson's current assignment as Defense Contract Management Agency Irvine's commander has its challenges. She bears responsibility for more than 50 personnel spread across 40 square miles of California and contract support to more than 250 government contractors. The contractors produce such key parts as actuators for the F-22 *Raptor* and F-35 *Lightning II* joint strike fighter, external fuel tanks for the F-18 *Hornet* and parachutes for our troops.

Despite her challenging assignment monitoring more than 5,000 contracts valued at more than \$3.8 billion, Pilson still finds time to lead a Brownie Girl Scout troop for 15 girls in Irvine, Calif. "My daughter, Kiana, is on her fourth year as a Brownie Girl Scout. I was a Daisy [Girl Scout] leader one year and a

Brownie co-leader for one year in Woodbridge, Va. Here in California I [have been] a Brownie co-leader so far for a year," said Pilson.

Pilson's troop of second- and third-grade girls all attend College Park Elementary School in Irvine. Throughout the year, the troop participates in various activities, including several community service projects voted on by the girls. "We focus our activities on helping children, making new friends, learning math and getting along and working together," said Pilson. Selling Girl Scout cookies is one

of the best-known fundraising activities worldwide, but did you know that you can still support this effort without actually eating all those cookies? The "Cookie Share" program allows patrons to purchase cookies and donate their boxes of cookies to a specific activity chosen by the troop. "Our troop decided on donating cookies to deployed DCMA personnel in Kuwait and Iraq after they heard my story of receiving Girl Scout cookies when I was deployed," said Pilson.

The girls sent 86 boxes of cookies to DCMA personnel, exceeding



Army Capt. Chris P. Hornsby received cookies from the Brownie Girl Scout troop Maj. Donna Pilson, DCMA Irvine commander, leads.



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their initial goal of 75 boxes. Each case included handwritten notes and cards to DCMA men and women expressing their appreciation for the deployees' work. "The girls were ecstatic to get letters, cards, certificates and photos in return from our folks for the cookies," said Pilson. "It felt really good getting a letter because that meant they cared about the cookies and really liked them," said Kiana.

Pilson gave a presentation to the Girl Scout troop highlighting her experience on her recent deployment as executive officer to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander and Combined Joint Task Force 76 Air Component Coordination Element in Bagram, southeast of Charikar in the Parwan province of Afghanistan. "During one of my

presentations to them, I explained the military's role in Afghanistan and how our efforts helped remove the Taliban. One of the results was that more schools were opened and girls could attend schools now. The troop thought this was cool and wanted to help," said Pilson. The girls purchased and sent school supplies for 50 girls attending school for the first time in Afghanistan.

The Girl Scout Troop also selected to study Afghanistan as part of the annual International Day activities. Again, Pilson was able to share her experience with the girls. "One of the most interesting items to the girls was the wearing of the Afghan Burka. They found it so interesting how it hid the

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women's identities and feminine characteristics." Another highlight was learning the Arabic alphabet, basic words and phrases and serving traditional "khatai" cookies. **C**



DCMA Irvine Commander Donna Pilson, left, with the members of the Brownie Girl Scout troop she leads in Irvine, Calif.