

Operation Gift Cards

For our wounded and injured troops in Walter Reed and Bethesda Military Hospitals

Web site:
www.ctveterans.org

Press Release

April 30, 2006
Contact: See below

Connecticut veterans present \$3,000 in Gift Certificates to our wounded and injured troops in Walter Reed and Bethesda Military Hospitals on behalf of four Connecticut veterans' organizations



Photo: Dick Goessinger

Left to right: Mike Kupson, Buffert Brooks (Commander of DAV Stamford Ch. 13), Al Comeau, Eric Muth, Walter Reed escort officer SFC Kombet, and Dick Goessinger (Jr. Vice Commander of DAV Milford Ch. 15).



Photo: Milford DAV Chapter #15

Leaders of Milford Disabled American Veterans Chapter #15 at a chapter meeting.

Since October 2005, Connecticut's Operation Gift Cards program has distributed 950 "Thank You" kits, including \$19,000 in PX (military store) gift certificates, to wounded and injured troops at Walter Reed and Bethesda Military Hospitals in Washington, DC.

On the last visit, representatives from four units of Connecticut veterans' organizations visited wounded soldiers and personally thanked them for their service to their country and for their sacrifice for freedom. Each soldier was presented with four "Thank You" kits (each kit from a different organization). Each kit contained a custom-designed thank you card with a group picture of the sponsoring chapter or post, a \$20 or \$40 gift certificate for the military store (\$100 total in gift certificates), a personal letter from the sponsoring chapter or post, and flyers about programs the sponsoring service organization has developed that may be of interest to the patients. At least one "Thank You" kit was left for each of the other wounded or injured patients.

Operation Gift Cards also delivers items that are on the Walter Reed Medical Family Assistance Centers "Wish List", which have been donated by other groups and individuals. The "Wish List" can be viewed by clicking on the Operation Gift Cards link on the www.ctveterans.org Web site.

Operation Gift Cards was started jointly by the Military Order of the Purple Heart Shelton/Derby Chapter #1 and the Disabled American Veterans Stamford Chapter #13. MOPH Ch. #1 and DAV Ch. #13 are trying to enlist other Connecticut chapters and posts in veterans' organizations (e.g., AL, DAV, MOPH, VFW) to join the program so that it can continue for at least 12 months. The goal is to have a different group of chapters or posts collectively purchase each month between \$2,000 and \$4,000 in gift certificates in order to present all wounded patients in Walter Reed and Bethesda hospitals with at least one "Thank You" kit containing a \$20 gift certificate that they could use in their PX. So far, two American Legion posts, six Disabled American Veterans chapters, three Military Order of the Purple Heart chapters, two Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, and the Connecticut Department Headquarters of the Disabled American Veterans and the Military Order of the Purple Heart have participated in at least one visit. Many have participated multiple times.

To participate in Operation Gift Cards or for additional information, contact Al Meadows (203) 929-3357 (e-mail: al.meadows@snet.net) or Tim Kelly (203) 937-3420 (e-mail: kellytmthy@aol.com). Or read the Operation Gift Cards summary page or the Operation Gift Cards press releases (all can be downloaded from the Web site: ctveterans.org). Operation Gift Cards will be an ongoing project; check our Web site (listed at top of page) for future events and our progress reports.