

Operation Gift Cards

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

Web site:
www.ctveterans.org

Press Release

May 23, 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 several Connecticut veterans' organizations



Left to right: Steve Kupecky*, Ed Orio*, escort officer Sgt. 1st Class Johnny Oliver, Ken Hagen and Al Meadows (not shown) represented 5 units of veterans' organizations from Connecticut. *Past State Commander

Leaders of the Shelton Sutter-Terlizzi American Legion Post #16

Since October 2005, Connecticut's Operation Gift Cards program has distributed 1,100 "Thank You" kits, including \$22,000 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 units of the Disabled American Veterans, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the American Legion visited wounded soldiers and personally thanked them for their service to their country and for their sacrifice for freedom. Each patient was presented with three "Thank You" kits (each from a different organization) containing a custom-designed thank you card with a group picture of the sponsoring chapter or post, a \$20 gift certificate for the military store (\$60 total in gift certificates), and flyers about programs the sponsoring service organization has developed that may be of interest to the 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.