

Operation Gift Cards

For our wounded and injured troops in Walter Reed and Bethesda military hospitals

Web site:

<http://www.ctveterans.org/pages/OGCFlyer.html>

Sponsored by **VETERANS And Their Supporters** in 60 units of the:

American Legion: Fairfield Post 74, Shelton Post 16, Fairfield Post 143, Derby Post 24, Milford Post 196, Seymour Post 10, Wallingford Post 187, Orange Post 127

AMVETS: Dannielson Post 45, Derby-Shelton Post 43

Disabled American Veterans: Stamford Ch. 13, Fairfield Ch.19, Enfield Ch. 52, Greater New Haven Ch. 2, Derby Ch. 4, Milford Ch. 15, Manchester Ch. 17, Bristol Ch. 5, West Haven Ch.18, Middletown Ch. 7

Marine Corps League: Stamford Detachment 910

Military Order of the Purple Heart: Shelton/Derby Ch. 1, Greater New Haven Ch. 103, New Britain Ch. 51, Darien Ch. 1932, Enfield Ch. 552

Veterans of Foreign Wars: Fairfield Post 9427, Derby Post 10585, Ansonia Post 597, Huntington Post 10466

Also sponsored by: **State HQ of CT: American Legion, AMVETS, DAV, MOPH, & VVA**

And: Vietnam Combat Vets Mon. & Tues. Evening Groups from the New Haven Vet Center, Employees of Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., Vietnam veteran Gary Plassman, Actress Ellen Muth, Order of Sons and Daughters of Italy in America West Haven Lodge 2832, the Affinion Group, Vets Who Care Committee, Naugatuck Valley with Derby Boy Scout Troop 3, the Westport Fire Department, No Vet Left Behind, Milford Knights of Columbus, Vietnam veteran Ken Bundy, the Tues. Morning Group of the West Haven VA Hospital, Union Memorial Church, the Adam Leapley family, Massachusetts AMVETS, Veterans of Korean, Vietnam, and Saudi Wars, the Connecticut GTO Club, the Fairfield Fire Department, District 1 AMVETS, the Beau Keen Family, the St. Joseph High School Boys Lacrosse Team, the Laborers' Union Bridgeport Local 665, and Teamsters Union Local 1150.

Press Release

July 18, 2011

Contact: See below

Connecticut veterans present \$5,000 in Gift Certificates to our wounded and injured troops in the Walter Reed and Bethesda military hospitals on behalf of four July co-sponsors



Photo: Operation Gift Cards

Left to right: SSgt. Tom Kowolenko, Lynne Bashura, George Bashura Jr., Steve Frank, Larry Adams, and Al Meadows represented four July co-sponsors.

Since October 2005, the Operation Gift Cards' 72 monthly/bimonthly visits have presented 11,360 thank you kits which contained \$227,200 in military department store gift certificates to our wounded troops. An additional \$148,210 in other gift certificates and special group product donations (Girl Scout cookies, corporate gift certificates etc.) have been delivered to the Soldier Family Assistance Center, the Fisher Houses, the Mologne House, the Navy Lodge, the Red Cross, and the Bethesda Casualty Affairs Office, along with over \$50,000 worth items on the "wish list" (listed on the right) for both the wounded troops and their families.

On the last visit, representatives from the Disabled American Veterans, the AMVETS (American Veterans), the employees of Sikorsky Corp., and the Teamsters Union Local 1150 visited wounded soldiers and personally thanked them for their service to their country and for their sacrifice for freedom. Each patient was presented with 3 "Thank You" kits containing a custom-designed thank you card with a picture of the co-sponsor's members, a \$20 gift certificate for the military store (\$60 total in gift certificates), and, if appropriate, flyers about benefit programs the co-sponsor has developed that may be of interest to the patients.

Sixty groups and individuals have co-sponsored Operation Gift Cards. The program goal is to have 3 to 5 co-sponsors collectively purchase, each month, between \$3,000 and \$5,000 in gift certificates in order to present all visited wounded patients in Walter Reed and Bethesda hospitals with at least three "Thank You" kits containing between \$60-\$120 in gift certificates.

For more information contact Al Meadows (203) 929-3357 (e-mail: al.meadows@snet.net). 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 for future events and our progress reports.



Photo: AMVETS Dept. of Connecticut

AMVETS State Executive Committee

OPERATION GIFT CARDS ALSO DELIVERS THE FOLLOWING WISH LIST ITEMS:

All items must be NEW & UNUSED for health & safety reasons. They DO NOT accept homemade items for health and safety reasons.

ELECTRONICS: Ipod Touches, Gaming systems such as DS Nintendos or the Portable play station, Portable DVD players (preferably ones that also play CDs), DVDs, Digital alarm clocks, Digital watches, Electric toothbrushes, Electronic games for the Xbox, Wii, DS Nintendo, Portable play station, Lap tops, iPads, Prepaid cell phones and recharge cards.

CLOTHING ITEMS: Bleach markers or Shout sticks, Tennis shoes in a variety of sizes, Clothing in various sizes (but mostly larger) – plain t-shirts, socks, boxers and boxer briefs, pajama pants, slippers, hoodies, rain jackets, winter coats, stocking caps, flip-flops (shower shoes) etc, Breakaway pants and shirts in a variety of sizes, Sports bras in a variety of sizes.

CANTEEN/WELCOME ITEMS: Individually bottled water and soda, Individually packaged chips, cookies, crackers, etc, Candy (they seem to like chocolate and suckers).

GIFT CARDS: International Phone Cards. Recommend major brand (AT&T/Sprint/Verizon) of 300+ min., Gift cards for the NEX, Commissary and any other stores in the area (not Wal-Mart/Kmart as they are very hard to get to), Movie passes, iTunes Cards, Variety of restaurant gift certificates (\$40+ each so they can feed more than 1 person).

TOILETRIES: Chap stick, q-tips, Nail clippers, Band aids, etc, Full sized body wash, Shampoo, Conditioner, Lotion in a variety of brands, Boxes of tissues like Kleenex or something else soft, Feminine hygiene products.

OTHER: One golf cart with a top so occupants protected from sun, Sheet Sets - A variety of twin, twin extra long, full and queen sized, Subscriptions to a variety of magazines (suggested: People, Readers Digest, Motorcycles, Smithsonian, outdoor magazines, something for kids/teens, general magazines that won't offend easily – avoid those about war or guns), small amounts of babyfood, diapers, wipes, etc, Rolling duffel bags, Plain black backpacks, Crossword puzzle and sudoku books.