

# Operation Gift Cards

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

Web site:  
[www.ctveterans.org](http://www.ctveterans.org)

## Press Release

June 24, 2006  
Contact: See below

Commissioner Linda Schwartz leads 4 other veterans' representatives in presenting \$3,500 in Gift Certificates to our wounded and injured troops in Walter Reed and Bethesda Military Hospitals



Left to right: Charles Gallagher, Walter Reed esort officer Lt. Smith, Commissioner Linda Schwartz, Ron Orszag, Joe Bender, and Al Meadows (not shown) represented 4 units of veterans' organizations.



Leaders of the Fairfield Sgt. Thomas J. Nelson Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9427

Since October 2005, Connecticut's Operation Gift Cards program has distributed 1,275 "Thank You" kits, including \$25,500 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, Commissioner Schwartz, who served 16 years in the Air Force including service as a nurse during Vietnam, represented the Department of Connecticut for the Disabled American Veterans, of which she is a life member. The other 4 veterans represented units of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They 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 (each from a different organization) containing 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 (\$60 to \$80 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](http://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, AMVETS, DAV, MCL, 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. Two American Legion posts, seven Disabled American Veterans chapters, one Marine Corps League detachment, three Military Order of the Purple Heart chapters, two Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, and the Connecticut Department Headquarters of the American Veterans (AMVETS), Disabled American Veterans and the Military Order of the Purple Heart have participated in Operation Gift Cards. Many have participated in multiple visits.

To participate in Operation Gift Cards or for additional information, contact Al Meadows (203) 929-3357 (e-mail: [al.meadows@snet.net](mailto:al.meadows@snet.net)) or Tim Kelly (203) 937-3420 (e-mail: [kellytmthy@aol.com](mailto: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](http://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.