



NATIONAL AMPUTATION CHAP. NO. 76

PRESS RELEASE

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(516) 887-3600

VIETNAM VETERAN AMPUTEES VISIT IRAQI VETS AT WALTER REED ARMC, WASHINGTON, D.C.

John Devine, Commander of DAV Chapter No. 76 recently announced the re-activation of the Chapter's highly successful Amp-to-Amp program. During the Vietnam conflict, chapter members from World War II visited young amputees from Vietnam at hospitals along the east coast that included Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Bethesda Naval Hospital, Philadelphia Naval Hospital (now closed) and the Army's Valley Forge General Hospital (now closed). While the staffs at the hospitals were all providing excellent medical care and physical rehabilitation services, the members of Chapter 76 felt that there was something missing! None of the staff were amputees! They couldn't know how the young soldier amputees were feeling. They couldn't answer the questions of self-doubt:

- Will I ever walk again?
- Will I be able to date and get married?
- Can I have children?
- Can I drive a car?
- Can I hold a job?
- Will I be able to participate in sports?
- What does the future hold for me?

The World War II amputees traveled on a continuing basis to visit the Vietnam conflict patients, to talk to them, to introduce their families, to show them that they can be successful, that is, there is life after amputation.

The Vietnam vets in Chapter 76 felt that now was their time to give something back. Recently, a contingent of Vietnam era amputees visited Iraqi War Veteran amputees at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (ARMC). The contingent of Long Island Amputees included John Devine (USMC Retired), Commander; Don Sioos, (USA Retired) Past National Commander; Paul Bernacchio, (USA Retired) NYS Junior Vice commander;

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John Behan, (USMC Retired) former NYS Assemblyman and George Sullivan, (USMC Retired) Southold Tax Collector.

At the time of their visit, there had been approximately 58 amputee casualties as a result of combat operations in Iraq. They were able to visit 12-14 of the young men at Walter Reed ARMC in Washington, DC. They spent time with each one, sharing experiences and providing information on what to expect, what they could do as amputees and the benefits that were available to them.

Commander Devine states: “We plan to return to Walter Reed ARMC on a continuing basis until all of our troops are home!” However, the Chapter does have one problem – funding. The cost to travel to Washington D.C. and stay overnight is a strain on their small checking account. They have been seeking funding and donations, which to date, have just about covered the cost of their initial trip. But more funds are necessary to keep the visits coming. If you would like to help, donations may be made to:

National Amputation Chapter. No. 76
Disabled American Veterans
40 Church Street
Malverne, NY 11565