

Michigan VFW Posts Give Troops a Ride Home

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Troops in the 1434th Engineering Unit training for overseas deployment at Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin, received a three-day leave that started yesterday. The group of about 160 soldiers from northern Michigan were allowed to visit their family with a few days off before their deployment to Iraq, but had to provide their own transportation from Ft. McCoy back to northern Michigan. Difficult for many of them, VFW Post 2780 out of Traverse City, Mich. offered to raise the funds to cover the cost for buses to take the troops on the 500-mile trip home.

Post 2780 asked for other Posts to also help in raising the necessary funds.

Kicking off the campaign, Ohio Veterans Charities pledged \$2,000.00. The bill for the two buses added up to \$10,998, so Post member Jack Pickard and his wife agreed to pay the bill up front, confident the funds would be raised.

More than 30 VFW Posts and Auxiliaries in Michigan helped with the effort to give the troops a few days with their family. The Post exceeded its goal and put the extra money in its Military Assistance Program fund it uses to ship packages to troops overseas. The Post has shipped 1,886 boxes to troops during the last seven years, costing more than \$28,000 in postage.

When the bus coming from Ft. McCoy arrived at Camp Grayling in Michigan, Jack Pickard and his wife Cecelia were there to greet them. “The troops could not thank the VFW enough. Their families hugged me and Cecilia,” Jack said. “What a great inner feeling we had.”

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