

## **Major Player: Patriot Foundation Expands Aid for Military Children**

BY HOWARD WARD: GOLF WRITER

Chuck Deleot is a serious man on a serious mission. A retired Naval Reserve captain, he heads a group dedicated to making The Patriot Foundation a major player in the benefit of children placed in need by the death of a parent serving with the 82nd Airborne or the six brigades reporting directly to the 18th Airborne Corps.

Additionally, the Patriot has supported children of current, former, and retired U.S. Army Special Operations soldiers.

The Patriot presented the 82nd Airborne and Special Operations charities with a \$50,000 check each after last fall's Patriot Soldiers Appreciation Dinner held at National Golf Club, and Deleot and other event organizers are determined to double that amount this year.

The Patriot Foundation works year round to raise this money, and continues to come up with other ways to aid those serving in the military.

The latest contribution has come in the form of 800 boxes, or Care Packages, that were shipped to soldiers in Afghanistan last week. The packages were filled by the Forsythe Country Day School in Winston- Salem; the box fabrication and shipping was paid by Jim Einstein of the RockTenn Co., a paperboard manufacturer.

" Jim is an old friend," Deleot explained, "and he wanted to help our deployed troops. The packages contained nail clippers, toothpaste, toothbrushes and the things our soldiers need out in the field. Plus, there was a handwritten note in each box from a student at Forsythe Country Day thanking the troops for what they do.

" It's phenomenal that this is being done by a North Carolina company and school to thank our military for their service. We in the Patriot Foundation had contacts with the 82nd Airborne that enabled this great gesture to be delivered to soldiers and marines serving in Afghanistan. This is a perfect example to me of how people in the state of North Carolina are completely behind our troops."

During Patriot Soldiers Appreciation Weekend, October 24-26 this year, the Patriot Foundation holds a golf tournament, composed of a 54-hole Sunbelt Senior Tour event that includes a 36-hole pro-am. This weekend serves primarily as a celebration of the culmination of another fund-raising year for The Patriot Foundation.

" We've enjoyed our relationship with the Sunbelt Tour," Deleot said, "and Don Barnes is a great guy to work with because when he tells you something you can bank on it. But it's not really a money-maker for us anymore. The event is really about thanking our contributors and publicly honoring our troops and their families.

" We're working on a couple of different things to raise more money," he said. "We're negotiating with the Patriot Golf Day organizers for a plan that would have us help raise funds for the program in the Carolinas, with the expectation that many of these dollars would benefit Patriot Foundation charities at Fort Bragg.

The Carolinas PGA, the governing body of golf professionals in North and South Carolina, is a strong supporter of Patriot Golf Day, which involves a fund-raising event at various courses during the Labor day weekend.

" We have a lot of contacts in the Carolinas and we feel that our personal contacts here can create more contributions during the Patriot Golf Day fundraiser," Deleot said.

Deleot is thinking big. "Our overall goal this year is to be able to donate a total of at least \$200,000 for our charities," he said. "We want to expand our benefits and help different factions of the 82nd. We're talking with the USO, trying to work out something to attract some big-name entertainers and hold a function either in Fayetteville or Raleigh."

The Patriot Foundation has come a long way since Pinehurst resident Spike Smith came up with the idea in 2003.

" Spike began talking to his neighbor, Neal Jarest (owner of Opulence and The Mews in Southern Pines, and a former Army special operator) about doing something to help

support military dependents," Deleot said. "He invited half a dozen of us to dinner to discuss how to do it and it evolved from that.

" We think this can become huge, that we can reach a goal of presenting the charities with \$1 million each year. These are tough times, but we're raising more than ever this year. If we can get a name golfer -- someone like Craig Stadler -- to get involved, that will help us in a number of ways."

Deleot sees nothing but growth and success ahead for The Patriot.

" We have a great set of volunteers serving as officers and board members including Spike Smith, Pat Butcher, Gene Ward, Joe Beck, Tom Deleot, Mike Girimont and Major General Chuck Swannack (U.S. Army Ret.)," he said. "Also, General Buck Kernan (U.S. Army Ret.), our military advisor, has been very helpful.

" We'd like to have a few more people who are interested in supporting our soldiers' families to help us. If you have an idea for raising money, we'd like to talk with you. The Patriot has three big things going for it -- supporting the military, kids and education.

" This is something that's worth doing right, so you do what you need to do to make it happen. I can't think of anything more important that I could be doing."

To make a contribution or to obtain more information, write to Patriot Foundation, P.O. Box 5069, Pinehurst, N.C., 28374, or visit the Web site at [www.patriotscholarships.com](http://www.patriotscholarships.com). The Patriot is an IRS 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.

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