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# PARAGLIDE

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## **Business leaders meet Soldiers, learn Army life**

**By Emily Sussman**

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Since 2004, the Patriot Foundation has brought both supporters and potential supporters to Fort Bragg on a biannual basis.

The visits are intended to connect benefactors to the community they are aiding.

“The primary reason we bring these corporate leaders over here is so they can see how the Army lives and trains and prepares to fight and win,” said Retired Capt. Chuck Deleot, U.S. Navy, president and chairman of the board, Patriot Foundation.

The group began their introduction to Army life at Fort Bragg by meeting with representatives of the Fort Bragg community and hearing some words from Lt. Gen Stephen J. Townsend, commanding general of Fort Bragg and the XVIII Airborne Corps.

Visitors also met with Gold Star Families at Survivor Outreach Services, spent time interacting with 82nd Airborne Division Soldiers who explained the use and function the UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter, and Infantry, Sniper and Medical static displays.

“We have had a great experience this morning,” said Deleot.

Attendees interacted with Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div. to ask questions about their experiences as Soldiers and to learn about the functions of equipment set up in static displays.

Paula Heller, an award-winning documentary film maker, commented on the planes participating in Operation Toy Drop as they made the descent overhead to land at Pope Army Airfield and spoke about the live range fire that could be heard in the distance, noting the difference in the feel of being on a military installation.

“I am so new to the military... but this has been wonderful,” said Heller who is at the beginning stages of making a documentary about the All-American Chorus.

Static displays were set up in Pike Field and included a range of weapons and equipment chosen to display the range of capabilities managed by the 82nd Abn. Div.

The second half of the day for the Patriot Foundation involved lunch with representatives of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School and a visit to Range 65, where an Operational Detachment Alpha conducted a close quarter battle drill. The day closed for the Patriot Foundation business leaders with a visit to the Joint Special Operations Command memorial to meet with members of the JSOC command team and a social at McKellar’s Lodge.

Faison Keuster, owner, Keuster Commercial Properties is a military veteran formerly serving with the 101st Airborne Division, and was accompanied by his two sons, Brian and Shaw, during the Patriot Foundation visit.

“It’s humbling. It’s incredible to be able to be here with my military experience, and the unspoken truth in this country is that less than two percent of the population ever, ever, serve and so I think about that and it puts it in perspective and makes you appreciate what it takes to serve in the military and for my kids to see this, the thing is, this is a real special day,” explained Keuster.

For Ed Battle, president, Grins Enterprise, who has been contributing to the Patriot Foundation for five years, the importance is on giving back to those who do so much for America.

“I appreciate what the Soldiers are doing for us; keeping us safe, sound, free and I think we should help them in return,” said Battle.