

Two very touching photos honored by THE TROOPER JOURNAL



When 2nd Lt. James Cathey's body arrived at the Reno Airport, Marines climbed into the cargo hold of the plane and draped the flag over his casket as passengers watched the family gather on the tarmac.

During the arrival of another Marine's casket last year at Denver International Airport, Major Steve Beck described the scene as so powerful: 'See the people in the windows? They sat right there in the plane, watching those Marines. You gotta wonder what's going through their minds, knowing that they're on the plane that brought him home,' he said 'They will remember being on that plane for the rest of their lives. They're going to remember bringing that Marine home. And they should.'



The night before the burial of her husband's body, Katherine Cathey refused to leave the casket, asking to sleep next to his body for the last time. The Marines made a bed for her, tucking in the sheets below the flag. Before she fell asleep, she opened her laptop computer and played songs that reminded her of 'Cat,' and one of the Marines asked if she wanted them to continue standing watch as she slept. 'I think it would be kind of nice if you kept doing it,' she said. 'I think that's what he would have wanted.'

Credits: Todd Heisler, The Rocky Mountain News



Bush Visits Troops, Families at Walter Reed

Tuesday, December 23, 2008

President George W. Bush paid a call to Walter Reed Army Medical Center Dec. 22 to visit with wounded warriors, extend holiday greetings to them and their families and check up personally on the care and support they are receiving. "Every time I come here, I get amazed at the quality of care, the professionalism and the courage of our troops," Bush told reporters after the visit.

"I can say with certainty that the health care that our troops get in military medical facilities is excellent," the president said. "I am so pleased to hear from spouses and other loved ones about the care they get, as well, when they come to visit their ... wounded child or wounded husband or wounded spouse."

Noting that the visit is likely to be his last before leaving office, Bush said he took "great pleasure" in thanking those who serve at Walter Reed and other military medical facilities.

He reiterated his sentiment that he'll miss his role as commander in chief more than any other part of the presidency. "The military is the thing I'll miss the most, and coming here to Walter Reed is a reminder of why I'll miss it," he said.

Bush said in a *Washington Times* article published today he considers the time he spends with wounded troops and families of the wounded and fallen an important—and highly emotional—part of his job.

"This is my duty," he said. "The president is commander in chief, but the president is often 'comforter in chief,' as well. It is my duty ... to try to comfort as best as I humanly can a loved one who is in anguish."

Comfort can come in many different forms, the president said. "Comfort means hug, comfort means cry, comfort means smile, comfort means listen," he said. "Comfort also means, in many cases, assure the parent or the spouse that any decision made about troops in combat will be made with victory in mind, not about my personal standing in the polls or partisan politics."



President George W. Bush shakes hands with U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Kyle Stipp of Avon, Ind., after presenting him with two Purple Hearts Monday, Dec. 22, 2008, during a visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center where the soldier is recovering from wounds suffered in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Looking on are his wife, Megan, and father, Mitch Stipp. White House photo by Eric Draper