



New England Warrior Extension

By Ann Jensis-Dale, DCMA Public Affairs

The saying, “Once a Marine, always a Marine” certainly applies to Dwight Nelson, a program integrator for turbo shaft engines at Defense Contract Management Agency General Electric Lynn, Mass. He is cofounder of New England Warrior, a new non-profit group helping Massachusetts Marines in need.

Nelson and his son, Marine Staff Sgt. Matthew R. Nelson, conceived the idea for the organization at a neighborhood pub before Matthew’s deployment to Iraq in 2006 with the 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment. “We wanted a way to provide some comfort items — like waterproof cases, reading material and magazines,” said Nelson. Nelson is quick to point out that the Marine Corps also was conceived in a pub in 1775 — Philadelphia’s Tun Tavern.

What began as a small gesture of appreciation for the Marines of Matthew’s unit grew to helping other Massachusetts Marines in need. Family and friends spread

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the word of the group’s efforts. “You know those Marine [spouses], they’ll just pitch in and help in any way,” said Nelson. When Nelson’s son returned from Iraq, he informed his father that the troops really appreciated the packages and the effort should continue. Nelson began fundraising for the cause. “We held meat raffles, spaghetti suppers, and we are currently working on getting a Hummer to raffle off,” said Nelson.

Last December, Marine Lance Cpl. Alex F. Briere and his extended family lost nearly everything when fire destroyed their Marshfield, Mass., home. Although the family had insurance, it did not cover their losses. “What a terrible thing to happen right before the holidays. Our hearts went out to Lance Cpl. Briere and his family. We really needed to do

something, anything, to help them out,” Nelson said. Nelson and the organization raised contributions totaling \$5,795 to assist the Briere family. But they did not stop there and continued working with other support organizations in assisting the family. “Word spread throughout the Marine community and funds started coming in,” said Nelson. “We received a check for \$5,000 from the organization Freedom is not Free and another check for \$10,000 from the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation.” Nelson also received funds from the Jeff Coombs Memorial Foundation begun by the family of Jeff Coombs, a passenger aboard a commercial airliner crashed by terrorists Sept. 11, 2001. The total amount donated to the Briere family as a result of Nelson’s efforts is more than \$21,000.

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Matthew Nelson’s friend, Marine Staff Sgt. Billy Callahan, was killed in Iraq in 2007. Callahan left behind a wife and a son whom he never met as he was born while Callahan

ds a Helping Hand



Marine Lance Cpl. Alex F. Briere, second from left, receives a check from Dwight Nelson, second from right, of the New England Warrior organization on behalf of the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation Dec. 22, 2007. Also pictured are Marine Cpl. Adam S. Briere, far right, Alex's twin brother, and Peter Fleming, left, the Brieres' uncle. Donations were made to the Briere family from many patriotic organizations and individuals after the family home was destroyed in a fire on Dec. 11, 2007. (Photo courtesy of New England Warrior)

was deployed. New England Warrior raised \$2,500 for the Marine's wife, Amy, and his child. "Eleven of my son's friends died in Iraq. Most of the deaths were by [improvised explosive devices], roadside bombs. I went to four funerals," said Nelson.

Nelson is working to establish New England Warrior as a tax-exempt corporation and has many ideas for future fund-raising efforts. "This is a small way to recognize the service and sacrifice of the troops, families and friends. We need to help and show our

Profile – Dwight Nelson

Dwight Nelson has been employed with the Defense Contract Management Agency for 19 years. His first position was with the former Naval Plant Representative Office Sikorsky, which, through realignments, became Defense Plant Representative Office Sikorsky under DCMA. In 1994, Nelson transferred to a position at DCMA General Electric Lynn, Mass.

Nelson's Marine service began in 1971. He served more than 10 years as a helicopter crew chief for CH-46 *Sea Knight* helicopters, including two Western Pacific deployments, and as a VH-3D *Sea King* crew chief in Presidential Helicopter Squadron One, supporting the White House.

appreciation for what they do," said Nelson. "We could not operate without the support of friends, family and fellow Marines and are extremely thankful to those who care. I guess I have a strong sense of public service. I really feel we need to see what we can do and try to go above and beyond." **C**

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(U.S. Marine Corps photo)