

I have been abundantly blessed. I had a great career in the United States Marine Corps. After that I was fortunate enough to have had some very good jobs. For about seven years I was up on the beautiful Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana. Yes, it is a rough place with many of the social ills that accompany the reservations we serve. Homeless people. High Unemployment. Poverty. I was employed as a director at St. Labre Indian School. Truly a beautiful place.

Now we serve another mission—Helping Native American Veterans. I am a Marine Officer and a great deal of responsibility and authority came with leading Marines. Marine Officers lead from the front. That is the same approach I have taken with Native American Veterans Assistance (NAVA).

We love and care about all military veterans. We signed on the dotted line to put our lives on the line to defend this country. I am a Native American. I am a Military Officer. We all volunteered. Now we do every thing we can with an **absolute passion** to help Native American Veterans. Many are cold in the winters. Many are hungry. Many are homeless. Suicide is a real threat always.

We cannot be everything to everyone, but we do a lot. That is possible only with your help. Thanks!!!!



NAVA Board member Charlotte Moore USMC, Major Ramsey, and another Disabled Marine.



A few of the products delivered on this trip.

A very interesting point related to that is, Native Americans serve at the highest per capita rate of any demographic in America. We are warriors who serve with great pride. Many young men and women in our military come from the poorest counties of America with great hope. Oglala Lakota County in South Dakota has the **unfortunate** distinction of being the poorest county in America year after year. Occasionally another county from another reservation in South Dakota will take that horrible distinction.

I am sorry for the long introduction. Please forgive me if sometimes I get a little carried away telling you about our mission or those we serve. We at NAVA take this mission very seriously. The work is very necessary to help people.

A few weeks ago we were up on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. It was a long, long day of driving over 500 miles in one day while still making the rounds to deliver valuable, new products and more, to help struggling veterans. We left South Dakota early in the morning. Drove through the corner

of Wyoming to get to Montana. For me it was like going home to St. Labre since that is on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. We had a busy agenda for the day.

We were meeting with the Tribal Veterans Program to deliver items to help the homeless and struggling veterans. We visited the medical facilities. We were at the tribal headquarters to meet with a tribal councilman. And most importantly we delivered much needed supplies to a homeless shelter in Birney, Montana.

I really want mention the Wilson, Cheeseman and Cashman Families who have provided hundreds of pounds of fresh hamburger to be distributed to programs who serve meals to veterans, whether it is a nutrition center or a homeless shelter or housing complex. Much thanks to the retired Colonel from that family who has helped so much. It was a very good trip taking backpacks, sleeping bags, water, snacks, blankets and some other assorted items. We also got to drink water from a historically, very important spring on the road to Birney. Life saving water!

We were also fortunate to be visited by one of our board members on this trip. **Charlotte Moore, USMC** was there to check on what we were doing. Then there were a few veterans who stopped by to say hello. It was really a great day.

Before we left up there, for the long drive home, we stopped by Father Emmett's Heritage Center and St. Labre in Ashland, Montana. Both truly beautiful facility serving students, children and elders on that reservation. We partner with all of those programs to help veterans and their families.



Ed drinking from the spring of life on the road to Birney, prayer ties in background.



Ground beef donated to Native Veterans by the Wilson, Cheeseman and Cashman Families.



Homeless shelter in Birney, Montana. Just being indoors in the frigid winter months saves lives.