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Dick 'Red' Warner Update - June 2002

For those of you who heard my status report at the mini in Pensacola this is clearly an update.

I would like to thank Ed Linkiewicz and his wife Marilyn for visiting Red recently and providing us with the below report. It says it all.

The new news is that the VA has come through with some financial support, in addition to providing the care at The Highlands. As we work to further understand the amount and timing of future support I think it is safe to say that the need for our class financial support is now minimized. We are working with Red's family on the details of administering the money the VA has provided. Understand that we are only involved as "friends of Red" and have no legal standing or say in the matter. I will report on the outcome as things are decided.

For those of you who have been involved, and to those who might want to get involved in this class support, the need now shifts to moral support from financial, at least for the foreseeable future. Cards, notes, and visits are still appropriate. Red truly does enjoy getting mail and having visitors, even if he may not remember you and may have trouble expressing his thanks.

I have suggested to Stan Bacon several options for the disposal of the funds we have on hand (a little over \$100), and those who have made recent contributions will be advised on what we think we ought to do.... Joe Schwar

ED LINKIEWICZ'S VISIT TO DICK/RED WARNER, JUNE, 2002



**Dick, Aka Red, Aka
Bucko**



Other Wall



**Marilyn Talking to Dick
in Commons Room**



Dick and Ed Outside

Our (my wife and I, since she has accompanied me on all previous visits) overall impression is that Dick has deteriorated since we last saw him. It is like what we saw in our mother after she had been in a nursing home for a year or so. The life there is somewhat like something we experienced way back then. Very regimented. Days of dull boredom with periods of feverish activity interspersed. Except that Dick is much older now and may not appreciate fully what is happening. Also, "way back then", it was our choice; it certainly is not Dick's now!

Marilyn spoke at length with Dick's primary care giver, a Dawn Bohensky. Deb Wertz is the charge nurse for the second and third floors and she is very cognizant of what is going on with Dick. It appears that Dawn, however, is more involved with the day to day in depth care given to Dick. Marilyn feels that Dawn is very professional and quite competent. They spoke at length. Dawn, of course was not able to really go into a great amount of detail regarding Dick as, after all, we have no standing other than "friend of family".

Dawn did offer, however, that they feel Dick's dizziness, vertigo, whatever, is not really that; but rather disorientation. Example, when he goes to sit in a chair, he sees the chair not really where it is, or picking something up, he sees the object a little displaced from where it actually is. This is "normal" progression of the effects of his stroke. My wife accepted this explanation. It affects his ability to walk also, when he is distracted by something or someone while walking. We have visited with Dick three or four times and this was the first time he did not run down the hall for me. We also felt that we had to assist him in walking, whether or not we did is something else. Dawn offered that Dick likes his plate at meals set a certain way and that he gets upset when it isn't set just that way. She feels this is further indication of disorientation and his attempt to combat it.

We sat for awhile in the 2nd floor common room and "chatted". I was quite pleased that Marilyn was able to understand him much better than I. We spoke of Beast Barracks for a bit and when I mentioned one of our squad leaders he got very animated, laughing and chatting a mile a minute. My wife laughed with him. She said he was saying what a great guy he was and that he ran across him while he was in the Air Force. Once he snorted and made some remarks which were quite apparent as not nice. My wife laughed when I asked her what he said. She said, "Dick called this one a rotten son-of-a-bitch." And she said she thought he said "sadistic". I, of course, disagreed that we had any of that type. Did we? We chatted about his life at the nursing home. He doesn't like it there, but we think he realizes that he can't go anywhere else.

We finished with a walk outside. The day was beautiful. Deb Wertz and one of the other residents

went with us. Dick kept trying to walk to the cars in the parking lot. I think he wanted to leave and I can't say as I blame him. We met some of the people who care for Dick. They all like Dick and I think it is genuine that they do like him. I took pictures of those who were on duty during our visit. Deb and Dawn I spoke of. There were Angie Sheets and Penny Benjamin, both nurses aids. Paula Sharp, the Activities Assistant. Carol Jaques, the receptionist (the first person we met on our visit. She is at the desk as you enter. She knew Dick and commented on what a nice guy he was). Shirley Taffe a nursing assistant. All of these people were great. Pleasant and very hospitable. They all knew Dick. They were all gracious and very, very appreciative of our visit to Dick. They were overjoyed and could not stop thanking us.

The Highlands is just about as pleasant as a nursing home could be. Clean and airy. Right now there are 77 residents while the home has capacity for 150. For a Sunday afternoon, there was a good number of staff on duty. Marilyn and I are planning on visiting Dick again in July. We want to call the activities director and see if he/she has any suggestions as to what we could do to make our visit more worthwhile to Dick, and to us. I said that we "chatted" but I want you to know that it was frustrating and MUCH MORE of what was said was NOT understood than was.

By the way....we had a nice sandwich lunch in the "business district" of downtown Laporte. The Pavilion is not yet open, but looks to be a very nice place. They are planning a nice restaurant which will sell spirits. I hope our visit did some good. Whether or not it did, we DO intend to go back. Both Marilyn and I encourage anyone in the area to visit Dick often.
