

Nick and Drew Buehring, sons of LTC Charles Buehring, make a pencil rubbing of their father's name on the Special Operations Forces Memorial at the headquarters, U. S. Special Operations Command.

Family of Army LTC Chad Buehring

by Alicia Buehring

It's always been known that the government works slowly. That is not the case with Special Operations Warrior Foundation. My husband, LTC Charles H. Buehring (Chad) was killed in Iraq on Oct 26, 2003. We had been told someone from Chad's unit had been in contact with the SOWF. We were greeted with compassion and patriotism by everyone at the Foundation.

Chad's unit would be proud to know the degree and the measures they have gone through to care for us and make us feel like part of the family.

I am Alicia Buehring, Chad's wife, and this is the story of how the Special Operations Warrior Foundation has become an important part of our lives. In March of 2004, we were invited to a New York Yankees spring training game in Tampa. My first reaction was "Why do I want to go to a baseball game?" Keep in mind the only sports

team we had any affiliation with was the Citadel. Chad was an '85 grad. Nick had just turned 13 and Drew's 10th birthday was days away and the idea of a three hour drive to Tampa was not at the top of my list of fun things to do. I thought it over and decided I had to give the boys every opportunity to experience the good things this nation has to offer. We went and had an awesome time. I returned home with a sense of relief knowing there was a group out there to help.

A few months later, we were invited to New York City and Yankee Stadium where Chad's name was splashed across the score board, the Golden Knights parachuted onto the field, we sat in the owner's box, met George Steinbrenner, Yogi Berra, toured the stadium, met Derek Jeter, Alex Rodriguez and Hideki Matsui. How awesome! It was a weekend the boys will remember for the rest of their lives. When we met Mr. Steinbrenner, he looked the boys up and down, he said "Those boys aren't dressed right,

Joe. Take those boys and get them dressed." They came back with so many pieces of Yankee apparel they could hardly carry it all.

When I was in nursing school, I learned about the stages of grief and how we move in and out of these stages as we deal with loss. Personally, I can say that I lost a major part of my life, identity and sense of direction. Chad was my best friend and my future. I

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no longer had a clear picture of who I was and where I was headed. My worst nightmare had come true. I was a single parent, with two boys to rear without their father's influence. I know it sounds unusual to say the SOWF gave me back some of my direction

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and identity. We became fast and furious Yankee fans. There was hardly a day that went by that the boys left the house dressed in anything but Yankee clothing. We watched games as a family, read through the sports page to stay informed, started a collection of baseball cards, and the list goes on.

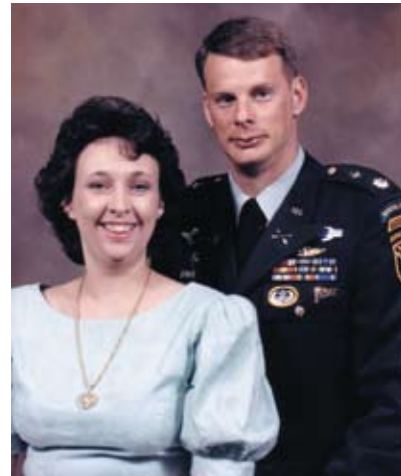
Our first trip to New York was with the Foundation, but this gave me enough exposure to the city to feel like I could make this trip with two teen boys, something I never would have done before. I really do not expect everyone to understand what this group has meant to me but I hope you get some sense of how it gave Nick and Drew a sense of being connected to something larger and knowing that there are people out there who care about what they have lost and who honor Chad's service and memory. It means a great deal to us.

The staff seems to have a psychic ability to know when we have reached a low point in our lives. It never fails that a card, a call, or an invitation to something awesome arrives at just the right time. The invitation to travel to Tampa to participate in a Skeet Shoot with the Hillsborough Sheriff's Office and two Olympic medal marksmen came at a time when both boys were feeling overwhelmed with school, sports and scout activities. It's difficult when we participate in ceremonies and activities where a boy needs a dad and a dad's approval. A skeet shoot with lots of male attention was just what they needed at the time. The display of patriotism and compassion is always overwhelming but also needed during times in our lives.

Nick is currently a freshman at Clemson University, majoring in history with a minor in business administration. The scholarship from the SOWF has given him the ability to choose his college and course of study. His future plans include applying for a commission in the Army after college.

Drew is a sophomore in high school, Life Scout (working on Eagle), Senior Patrol Leader for the Troop, and runs cross country and track with his school. He was the fastest freshman in South Carolina in 2009. His future plans include The Citadel and the Army.

Both boys are grateful for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation and the opportunity to attend college with its help. The feeling of belonging to a group like this is something they cannot get from other groups. The Foundation has been a blessing to our family and has connected us with other survivors and families. Knowing they are there to help these boys with college has been a real relief for me. The entire staff of the Warrior Foundation deserves a standing ovation and will always hold a special place in our hearts. Their compassion and patriotism is astounding.



Alicia Buehring with her husband
Army LTC Charles Buehring