

Published July 20th, 2011

Young Soldier Welcomed Home from Afghanistan

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Doug Kohen

Afghan Nationals. Rendering emergency medical treatment in a combat zone and training the Afghans with the help of an interpreter is not easy.

Lafayette's mayor was out of town, but former mayor and current city council member Brandt Andersson had a special proclamation for Polse from the City honoring his service. He described Polse as modest, compassionate, accomplished and brave. Polse was recognized and thanked by a representative from the County Board of Supervisors; even BART Board Member Gail Murray's office had an envelope full of complimentary BART tickets to use while he's home. The presenter joked that, "If he can handle Afghanistan, surely he can handle local mass transit."

In a poignant moment, a gentleman from the Viet Nam Veterans of Diablo Valley said, "We wanted to make sure that you get the welcome home that we never did." The leather clad Warriors' Watch Riders, whose motto is "They have our backs over there, we have their backs here at home," did double duty - meeting Polse and driving him home from the airport about a week before the surprise event.

All told it was an amazing outpouring of love, support and sincere thanks from a host of groups, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Combat Veterans, American Legion and the Blue Star Moms. All had a gift as a token of their appreciation, symbolic coins and a flag from the Blue Star Moms.

"Thanks you for coming out. I really appreciate it," said Polse, "It's just really good to be home." Parents Frannie and Maury Polse certainly shared that sentiment, adding that they "are so proud of him, and so happy he's home." They, along with David's grandmothers, brothers Jake and Aaron, neighbors, high school pals and a contingent of veterans filled the street and front yard to celebrate his return, safe and sound.



Friends, neighbors and family gather on Serrano Court to welcome HM3 David Polse home. Photos Doug Kohen

With over twenty flag-festooned motorcycles driven by Warriors' Watch Riders honking horns, dolled up cars and trucks, and a very shiny tricked-out blue corvette carrying the guest of honor - it was hard to miss the Welcome Home Celebration for HM3 Corpsman David Polse on a recent Friday evening. Patrons at Chow restaurant were as surprised as Polse when this colorful parade came to escort him to the surprise gala at his home.

Master of Ceremonies and Diablo Valley Flag Brigade Co-Founder Bryan Welden greeted everyone, "They make sacrifices so we can enjoy a free America. We're here to honor our military upon their return." Patriotism was in the air as one of the many Blue Star Moms in attendance sang the Star Spangled Banner to get the party started.

Polse, a graduate of Acalanes High School, was humbled and overwhelmed. He joined the Navy after graduating from Columbia Community College in Sonora with a certificate in Fire Sciences. After stints at Camp Pendleton for corpsman training, and the China Lake Weapons Center, he was able to attach to the Marines Third Division in Kanahoe Bay, Hawaii. Deployed in November 2010 to Kandahar Province in Afghanistan, his unit was assigned embedded troop training at a forward operating base with eight Marines and 30



David Polse being escorted home

Reach the reporter at: cathy@lamorindaweekly.com

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA