

A People Possessed

Their bones lie in the ground – these men and women who gave their lives for freedom. From the battle of Bunker Hill to overthrowing the Taliban in Afghanistan and bringing democracy to Iraq, people have paid the supreme sacrifice in order to preserve a way of life that guaranteed human rights.

Some of these bones lie in America – a dream in the hearts of men who hungered for liberty, but a dream that was born of their blood into reality.

Some of these bones lie at San Juan Hill in Cuba.

Some of these bones lie at Chateau-Thierry in France.

Some of these bones lie at the bottom of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

Some of these bones lie at Pork Chop Hill in Korea.

Some of these bones lie in the steamy jungles of South Vietnam

Some of these bones lie in the deserts of Afghanistan and Iraq.

These are the remains of gallant men and women. They were people who looked at the point of a sword and into the barrel of a cannon and refused to back away. They were individuals who astonished the world with their acts of heroism under fire.

They rode into the jaws of hell itself to fight those who would oppose justice and decency and the right to vote and rule by self-determination.

The world cannot understand such valor. It defies explanation. The courage that these Americans displayed was unnatural. They fought and died like they were possessed.

And, indeed, they were.

They were possessed by a fierce love of independence.

They were possessed by an extraordinary loyalty to a system of government that allowed each person to succeed – or fail – through his own initiative and enterprise.

They were possessed by a determination to preserve the precious heritage that had been entrusted to them.

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Their bones lie in the cold, cold ground. But the men and women are not there.

Their spirits shall live with all men who love freedom and realize that they must fight to preserve it.

The mournful wail of *Taps* – the soldier's farewell – will echo across America in Memorial Day observances honoring veterans.

Let us be grateful for the price they paid for this land. May we always value their contribution on our behalf.

And let us beware that we never cheapen their sacrifices by selling liberty at any price.

--Beecher Hunter