

## *Frozen Bridge Builders*

In his *Legend of the Eagles*, George d'Espartes says that the most heroic piece of self-sacrifice known to history occurred in the building of a bridge.

In the depth of winter, the French army, pressed on all sides by the Cossacks, had to cross a river. The enemy had destroyed all the bridges and Napoleon was almost at his wit's end.

Suddenly the order came that a bridge of some sort must be thrown across the river, and the men nearest the water were the first to carry out the almost impossible task. Several were swept away by the furious tide. Others, after a few minutes, sank through cold and exhaustion; but more came, and the work proceeded as fast as possible.

At last, the bridge was completed and the army reached the opposite bank in safety. Then followed the most dramatic scene, and one of the most touching recorded in the annals of history.

When the men who had built the bridge were called to leave the water, not one moved. Clinging to the pillars, they stood silent and motionless – frozen to death.

Even Napoleon shed tears.

Many are called to be bridge builders, and sacrifice is often required. Consider, for example ...

- American men and women who volunteer to serve in the Armed Forces. They give up time with families, put a temporary halt on careers, undergo physical and emotional stress, even risk life and limb to build bridges across tyranny to freedom and security for our nation.
- Mothers and fathers, who place their own comforts and personal dreams on hold, to have and rear children, building bridges from one generation to the next.
- Health care workers, who freely offer sacrifices of time, energy and, often, their own resources on behalf of those they serve. In the process, they build bridges spanning physical, emotional and mental gulfs. And, at the end of life, they help with the peaceful transition from this life to the next.

Building bridges is noble work, indeed.

And the sacrifices inspire us all.

– Beecher Hunter