

The Song of Patriotism

The public is bombarded by news of atrocities committed by terrorists and the continuing upheavals in Afghanistan and Iraq, in particular – the deaths in combat or roadside bombings, the political winds that swirl around any action, the outrages that arise from the few in uniform who, by their deeds of misconduct, stain the flag under which they serve.

What is not reported are the daily acts of friendship and kindness of American men and women toward children and adults native to those lands. Nor do we hear much about their unwavering love of country that drives them into hell's fury of gunfire and rocketry, or the compassion that reveals God's grace in the hug of a fearful child.

How much do those who serve in our Armed Forces love this nation? Their devotion is written in blood on the pages of history – from Concord in Massachusetts, a preamble to the Revolutionary War, to the struggles in foreign lands today. They have been willing to leave the peace and comfort of home and family to fight in foxholes and desert to preserve the freedoms upon which the United States was founded.

Monday is Memorial Day, the holiday that commemorates U.S. men and women who have died in military service to our country. It began first to honor Union soldiers who died during the American Civil War. After World War I, it was expanded to include those who died in any war or military action. It should also be a time to pay tribute to those still living – the troops who stand between us and those who would destroy us.

The depth of commitment of members of the military is shown in many ways. One such story, simple and yet profound, was shared by Army Reserve Chaplain Jim Higgins from Powder Springs, Georgia. The event took place in May 2007 while he was stationed at Camp Anaconda, a large U.S. base near Balad, one of the largest airbases in Iraq. Chaplain Higgins told about attending a showing of "Superman 3" in a large auditorium used for movies and other large gatherings.

"As is the custom back in the States, we stood and snapped to attention when the National Anthem began before the main feature. All was going as planned until, about three-quarters of the way through the song, the music stopped. Now what would happen if this occurred with 1,000 18- to 22-year-olds back in the States? I imagine there would be hoots, catcalls, laughter, a few rude comments; and everyone would sit down and call for a movie. Of course, that is, if they had stood for the National Anthem in the first place. Here, the 1,000 soldiers continued to stand at attention, eyes fixed forward. The music started again. The soldiers continued to stand quietly at attention. And again, at the same point, the music stopped.

(more)

“What would you expect to happen? Even here, I would imagine laughter, as everyone finally sat down and expected the movie to start. But here, you could have heard a pin drop. Every soldier continued to stand at attention. Suddenly there was a lone voice, then a dozen, and quickly the room was filled with the voices of a thousand soldiers, finishing where the recording left off. It was the most inspiring moment I have had here in Iraq. I wanted you to know what kind of soldiers are serving you here. Remember them as they fight for you. Be ever in prayer for all our soldiers serving us here at home and abroad, for many have already paid the ultimate price.”

Associates of Life Care and Century Park have loved ones in the military. And we serve veterans and families whose loved ones have paid the supreme sacrifice – their lives for their country.

On this Memorial Day, let's thank God for those who have died in the defense of our nation, and for the protection of all of our men and women in military, wherever they may serve.

--Beecher Hunter

