

OPERATION BANDANAS

may 2010

MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

I have had the privilege of visiting two well known cemeteries honoring our fallen heroes of wars past and present. Our Nation's own, Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, DC, and the American Cemetery in Normandy, which is situated on a cliff overlooking Omaha Beach and the English Channel. Normandy has 9,387 graves of our patriots and 1,557 names on the Wall of the Missing, most of whom lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations. Nothing will bring pause like seeing the white crosses, stars of David, and tombstones of these military cemeteries.

A few years ago, as my husband, our soldier son, and I were driving through the countryside of Italy from our son's home base in Vicenza, Italy, before he left on a deployment to Afghanistan, we came upon a sign which directed us to a lesser known cemetery, The American Cemetery and Memorial of Florence. We found 4,402 American patriots laid to rest there and 1,409 names inscribed on the Wall of the Missing. I am thankful we happened upon it. There are other American cemeteries scattered throughout Europe that are memorials to our American service men and women who bled and died on foreign soil fighting for a just cause.

Entering a military cemetery gives one a sense of reverence and awe. A humble hush comes over you as you feel you are treading on hallowed ground.

Inscribed on one of the colonnades at Normandy:

“THIS EMBATTLED SHORE, PORTAL OF FREEDOM, IS FOREVER HALLOWED BY THE IDEALS, THE VALOR AND THE SACRIFICES OF OUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN.”

Two inscriptions from the chapel:

“THESE ENDURED ALL AND GAVE ALL THAT JUSTICE AMONG NATIONS MIGHT PREVAIL AND THAT MANKIND MIGHT ENJOY FREEDOM AND INHERIT PEACE.”

“THINK NOT ONLY UPON THEIR PASSING. REMEMBER THE GLORY OF THEIR SPIRIT.”

I pray that as you spend time with your family on Memorial Day weekend, remind your families, particularly your children and grandchildren, to pause a moment and think of those who so bravely and selflessly shed their blood and gave up their lives on distant shores and here at home having given “the last full measure” to keep America united, safe and free; and for carrying the banner of freedom and democracy to other nations held in the tight grip of tyranny. Remember their families, too, who saw them off with their love and prayers for a safe return, but instead joined the ranks of many other families who were notified of their loved one's valor, courage, and supreme sacrifice.

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Operation Bandanas is a 501(c)3
tax-deductible organization
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IN MEMORIAM / AN APPEAL:

SEE THANK YOU NOTES AT WWW.OPERATIONBANDANAS.ORG

IN MEMORIAM:

Operation Bandanas was notified recently that a unit out of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, whom we had supplied Psalm 91 bandanas to, lost their Command Sergeant Major, CSM John K. Laborde, on April 22, 2010, in Kandahar, Afghanistan. I have singled him out to mention because OpBan had received a kind note from him last year, dated April 21, 2009, almost a year to the day of his death:

Good Day,

Our unit which is an Army Reserve unit in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, are currently preparing for deployment. Our Chaplain, (CPT) William Kneemiller passed out a number of your Bandanas. This is a word of thanks from all of us here at the 649th Regional Support Group, in Cedar Rapids. We have several local organizations that do support the troops and families very well, and this is not our first time to SWA, some of us have multiple tours as do our active counterparts. To see someone like yourselves that pour your time, effort and monies into ensuring that the soldiers know that they are loved, supported, and respected all over our great country does more to improve morale than can ever be measured by graphs or charts. From all of us here, a very grateful, and heartfelt THANK YOU, for all that you do. God bless you and your organization.

Very Respectfully,

*John K. Laborde, Command Sergeant Major
649th Regional Support Group, Cedar Rapids, IA*

We pay our respects to CSM Laborde for the high price he paid on our behalf. We owe him, and all

those like him who have paid such a costly price, a debt of gratitude. CSM Laborde served as a Marine for 10 years and then joined the Army Reserve. He is survived by his wife and five children. Our prayers are with his family.

AN APPEAL:

Operation Bandanas is in great need of donations. As OpBan moves into its 4th year of ministry, the word has spread through the ranks of our military, thereby causing us to receive more and more requests for Psalm 91 bandanas. Currently, we have approximately 15,000 bandanas requested! We hope you will respond with a generous gift for our incredible troops to receive a piece of God's armor, His magnificent, comforting Word, and a reminder to them of His presence with them. The month of May is an excellent time to ask for an offering from your congregation in memory of our fallen heroes and in honor of those who continue to carry the banner of freedom. Involve churches and your community (schools, businesses and organizations) to help provide spiritual encouragement to those who need to be reminded that God is with them. I will be happy to provide brochures for you to share or you may copy the brochure and newsletters off of the website to distribute.

God bless and protect America and those on the front line standing ready to defend her. Cover them with your feathers, Lord, and under Your wings, let them find refuge.

F R E E D O M I S N O T F R E E



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"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' "

- Psalm 91:1-2