

SPEAKING SERIOUSLY

VETERANS DAYS 2009

In the United States, the Veteran's Day holiday is celebrated Tuesday, November 11th (this is also Remembrance Day in Canada). In the early 1970's, Veteran's Day became a "movable" holiday -- the fourth Monday of October. In 1978, at the urging of veteran's groups who realized the sanctity of the date, Congress returned Veteran's Day to November 11th (if on a weekend, it moves to the closest Friday or Monday). Please remember that this day is not to honor war, but rather to honor the sacrifice made by others for our freedom.

What we call Veteran's Day is the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice in the Forest of Compiègne by the Allies and the Germans in 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). This signified the end of World War I and was originally known as Armistice Day. President Woodrow Wilson signed the Congressional Resolution on Nov. 11, 1919, the first Armistice Day.

However, after World War II, the day began to lose meaning and since there were many other veterans to consider, the decision was made to change November 11th to honor all those who fought in American wars. The United States Congress passed an act to change the name to Veteran's Day and in 1954 President Dwight Eisenhower signed the act.

THE VISIT

by Tre' M. Barron

My dad, Angelo, was in the hospital in Tacoma, Washington. A former Marine and veteran of the Korean War, he was having his third knee replacement surgery.

A long and very painful operation was going to be made even worse because dad was going through it alone. There was no one to hold his hand, no familiar soft voices to reassure him. His wife was ill and unable to accompany him or even visit during his weeklong stay. My sisters and brother lived in California, and I lived even farther away, in Indiana. There wasn't even anyone to drive him to the hospital, so he had arrived that morning by cab.

The thought of my dad lying there alone was more than I could stand. But what could I do from here?

I picked up the phone and called information for the Puyallup, Washington Marine Corps Recruiting Station, where I joined the Marines ten years before. I thought that if I could talk to a Marine and explain the situation, maybe one of them would visit my dad.

I called the number. A man answered the phone and in a very confident voice said, "United States Marines, Sergeant Vanes. May I help you"?

Feeling just as certain, I replied, "Sergeant Vanes, you may find this request a little strange, but this is why I am calling." I proceeded to tell him who I was and that my father was also a former Marine and 100 percent disabled from the Korean War. I explained that he was in the hospital, alone, without anyone to visit and asked if Sergeant Vanes would please go and see him.

Without hesitation, he answered, "Absolutely."

Then I asked, "If I send flowers to the recruiting station, would you deliver them to my dad when you go to the hospital?"

"Ma'am, I will be happy to take the flowers to your dad. I'll give you my address. You send them, and I will make sure that he receives them," he replied.

The next morning, I sent the flowers to Sergeant Vane's office just as we had planned. I went to work, and that evening, I returned home and phoned my dad to inquire about his surprise visitor.

If you have ever talked with a small child after that child has just seen Santa Claus, you will understand the glee I heard in my dad's voice. "I was just waking up when I thought I saw two Marines in their dress blue uniforms standing at the foot of my bed," he told me excitedly. "I thought I had died and gone to Heaven. But they were really there!"

I began to laugh, partly at his excitement, but also because he didn't even mention his operation. He felt so honored: Two Marines he had never met took time out to visit an old Marine like him. He told me again and again how sharp they looked and how all the nurses thought he was so important. "But how did you ever get them to do that"? he asked me.

"It was easy. We are all Marines, Dad, past and present; it's the bond."

After hanging up with my dad, I called Sergeant Vanes to thank him for visiting my dad. And to thank him for the extra things he did to make it special: wearing his dress blue uniform, bringing another Marine along. He even took a digital camera with him. He had pictures taken of the two Marines with my dad right beside his bed. That evening, he emailed them to me so I could see for myself that my dad was not alone and that he was going to be okay.

As for the flowers, they hardly mattered, but I was glad for the opportunity to express my feelings. The card read: "Daddy, I didn't want just anyone bringing you flowers ... so I sent the World's Finest. Semper Fi."

As a final thought on my part, let me share a favorite prayer:

"Lord, keep our servicemen and women safe, whether they serve at home or overseas. Hold them in Your loving hands and protect them as they protect us."

Let's all keep those currently serving and those who have gone before in our thoughts. They are the reason for the many freedoms we enjoy.

Remember, we live in the land of the free because of the brave.

SOME OF OUR PATRIOTS THOUGHTS

At a time when our president and other politicians tend to apologize for our country's prior actions, here's a refresher on how some of our former patriots handled negative comments about our country.

When in England, at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of empire building by George Bush.

He answered by saying, 'Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return.'

You could have heard a pin drop.

AND THIS STORY FITS RIGHT IN WITH THE ABOVE...

Robert Whiting, an elderly gentleman of 83, arrived in Paris by plane. At French Customs, he took a few minutes to locate his passport in his carry on.

"You have been to France before, monsieur?" the customs officer asked sarcastically.

Mr. Whiting admitted that he had been to France previously.

"Then you should know enough to have your passport ready."

The American said, "The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it."

"Impossible. Americans always have to show your passports on arrival in France!"

The American senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look. Then he quietly explained, "Well, when I came ashore at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944 to help liberate this country, I couldn't find a single Frenchmen to show a passport to."

You could have heard a pin drop.

I am proud to be of this land, AMERICA

Article by vet 4 loves of a Military veteran.

<http://www.northfloridanewsdaily.com/News/2008/1110/opinion/150.html>