

God and Country

An honor was bestowed on me of such greatness I do not know exactly what to say or where to begin so I am hoping that yet again, His Omnipresent and Omnipotent Spirit will help. I accepted an invitation to attend the graduation of a dear friend's youngest, her daughter, from basic training in the United States of American Armed Forces, Alpha Battery, 1-40th 2nd Platoon "Gladiators", US Army. First there was the 'reunion', of mother and daughter, on 'Family Day' the day before graduation. I witnessed a love between a parent and their youngest offspring of such incredible beauty it filled my soul with the comforting reality such things do indeed still exist and this might be the ultimate example. The following day was 'the ceremony'.

As many of you know, my father was a war hero though that was the last thing he sought or wanted to be. My earliest memories of his service were our summer 'vacations'. For the first eight years of my life we spent those vacations at Camp Perry for Dad's two weeks of annual training with the Ohio National Guard and Army Reserve. He 'retired' as a Major in the Armed Services when I was nine after twenty-one years of service, first in the National Guard, in New Mexico, then in Ohio. He also had four and a half years of active duty during WWII. The conclusion of our 'vacations' involved a closing ceremony.

Boy, did the ceremony of Basic Training Graduation flood me with emotions of nostalgia, memories of a time and place I 'thought' are no more. My perception was 'that way of life' was gone as well. The graduation ceremony proved how wrong I was. The discipline, the obvious evidence that 'All for One' is still a real thing in our country, the genuine and simple but inspiring pageantry filled me with pride, the right kind of being proud.

The speeches were simple yet oh so powerful. I am not totally sure but I think every one began with the concept of the incredible importance of serving God and Country in that order. They spoke of continuing the legacy of all those who served before and serve now. They repeated gratitude for the support of the family.

Suddenly my Dad stood right before me with that smile of his.

All my fears that we were 'losing it' as a nation melted away. We are still strong in the things that really count. We are still dedicated to protecting the vulnerable at all costs, even at the expense of one's own life. Our fellow soldiers too, we will lay down our lives for. I remembered what He, our Master, said...

"There is no greater love, than to lay down one's life for your fellow man."

Yes, our great country, the land of the brave and the free, is still strong. The display of the melting pot we are, a land of immigrants settled by immigrants, was everywhere. One of the major award designees was from Saipan (and still awaiting her US Citizenship). The platoon my friend's daughter trained with had a majority of women versus men. There were folks of every color and every creed. And then there were all the families...

And His Divine Love exploded all around me for the three hours of the event, one hour being the ceremony and the other two the remaining 'family time' before the newly inducted received their orders and went off to points across the country to continue training in every aspect of what we need to protect the old, the widows, the weak, the orphans and even those of us who don't have the trials and tribulations of the vast majority of the world. I spent two hours watching the love between parents, siblings and offspring sizzle, flare and light up the world. There was also the obvious love that developed amongst those who had trained as they greeted one another over and over. Which was followed by the inevitable introductions of family to family to family.

Family.

Yes, it was on full display. Not just our individual family nuclear units, but also unity of family of country and all the women and men of any kind in it. God, country, family. And service to all of the above.

What else is there?

clement