

AMERICAN VETERANS' PRAYERS AND POEMS

"Prayer For Our Veterans and Armed Forces"

"Enjoy Our Freedoms"

"What Is A Veteran?"

"It Is The Veteran"

"What Is A Vet?"

**"A Band Of Brothers" Ron L. Dixon, EM1 USN, April 2006
USS COOLBAUGH DE 217**

"Fourth Of July"

"Old Glory"

"Veteran s Day In United States"

"We Must Never Forget" Father D. O'Brien USMC Chaplain

"He Gave All" Ron L. Dixon, EM1

"I Was A Sailor Once" VADM Harold Koenig USN, MD

"Down To The Sea", Ron L. Dixon, EM1 USN, July 2005

"Old Salts" Author Unknown

**"The Heroes of the USS WHITEHURST DE 634" Max Crow
Memorial Day 2001**

"A Legacy To Remember" Clyde J. Birch GM1, August 2011

"Ode To A Prisoner Of War" by American Prisoner

"Fiddlers Green" (Nautical Adopted)

**"The Lonely and Forgotten" Unknown Eleventh Grade
Austintown-Fitch High School (OH)
Concert Choir, 43 years entertaining
at Veteran and Military Hospitals**

"En Voyage"

**"Our Legacy Must Be Preserved" Milton R. Kochert
CAPT, USNR(RET)**

PRAYER FOR OUR VETERANS AND ARMED FORCES

O Eternal God! Creator of the Universe and Governor of Nations:

Most heartily we beseech Thee, with Thy favor to behold, and bless Thy Servant, the President of the United States, and all the officers of Government, and all who are in authority over us; give them grace to execute justice and maintain truth that peace and happiness, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations.

May the Regiments of the Army, the Fleets of our Navy, the Squadrons of our Air Force and the Battalions of the Marine Corps be guarded by Thy gracious Providence and care. May they not bear the sword in vain, but the Minister of God be a terror to those who do evil and defense to those who do well.

Graciously bless all our veterans, living and dead, who have fought courageously to defend the Principles of Democracy throughout the World. Bless our officers and men of the Armed Forces of the United States. May the love of our country, be engraved in their hearts and may their adventurous spirits and severe toils be duly appreciated by a Grateful Nation; may their lives be precious in Thy sight, and if ever our machinery of war should engage in battle, grant that their struggle may be only under an enforced necessity for the defense of “what is right”.

Bless all nations and people on the “face of the earth” and hasten the time when the principles of Holy Religion shall so prevail that none shall wage war any more for the purpose of aggression, and none, shall need it as a “means of defense”. AMEN!

ENJOY OUR FREEDOMS.....

**I watched the flag pass by one day,
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young Marine saluted it,
And then he stood at ease.....**

**I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud,
With hair cut square and eyes alert
He'd stand out in any crowd.**

**I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years.
How many died on foreign soil
How many Mother's tears?**

**How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many died at sea
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, Freedom isn't free.**

**I heard the sound of taps one night
When everything was still,
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.**

**I wondered just how many times
That Taps had meant AMEN
When a flag had draped a coffin,
Of a brother or a friend.**

**I thought of all the children,
Of the Mothers and the Wives,
Of Fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives....**

**I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea.
Of unmarked graves at Arlington.
NO! Freedom Isn't Freed!**

**ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM & GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS
AND GOD BLESS AMERICA.....**

WHAT IS A VETERAN

A VETERAN is a "man or woman" who "fell in love" with their country,
for BETTER, for WORSE, for RICHER, for POORER, in SICKNESS
and in HEALTH....

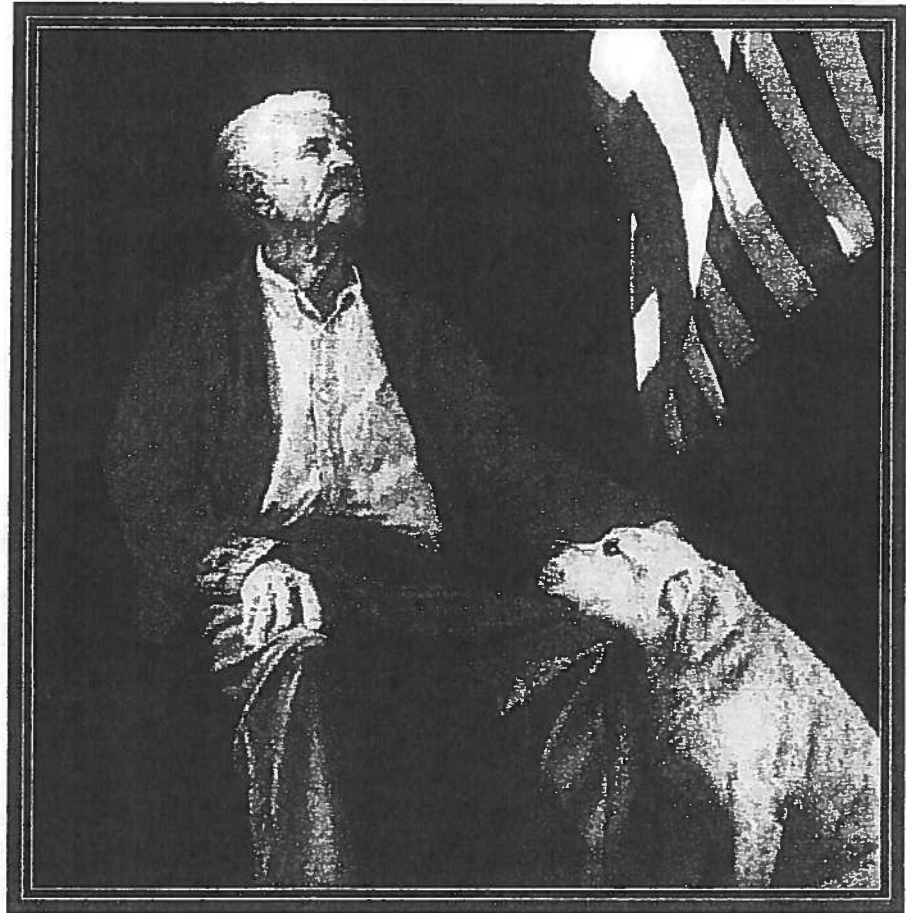
A VETERAN is a "man or woman" who is "willing to lay down their life
For the STATUE OF LIBERTY, so, that HER POOR, HER HUDDLED
MASSES, HER HOMELESS, HER TEMPEST TOSSED
May BREATH FREE & ENJOY LIFE, LIBERTY and the
PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

A VETERAN is a "man or woman" who does WHAT THEY MUST,
"in spite of personal consequences", "In spite of obstacles, dangers
And pressures...."for that is the basis of all HUMAN MORALITY"!

A VETERAN is a "man or woman" who GETS A "LUMP" IN THEIR
THROAT...when they SEE our BELOVED FLAG.
They'll FIGHT TO THEIR DEATH, "To protect our beautiful flag"
from those "who dare to DISHONOR IT"
And "WHAT" IT STANDS FOR.....

A VETERAN is a MAN OR WOMAN "who PAYS THEIR TAXES
WILLINGLY"....SERVES THEIR COUNTRY "HONORABLY," AND
"CHERISHES THEIR FREEDOM"... PASSIONATELY....

A VETERAN is a MAN OR WOMAN...."well deserving OF OUR
APPRECIATION,....OUR LOVE....and, OUR PRAYERS, ALWAYS!!



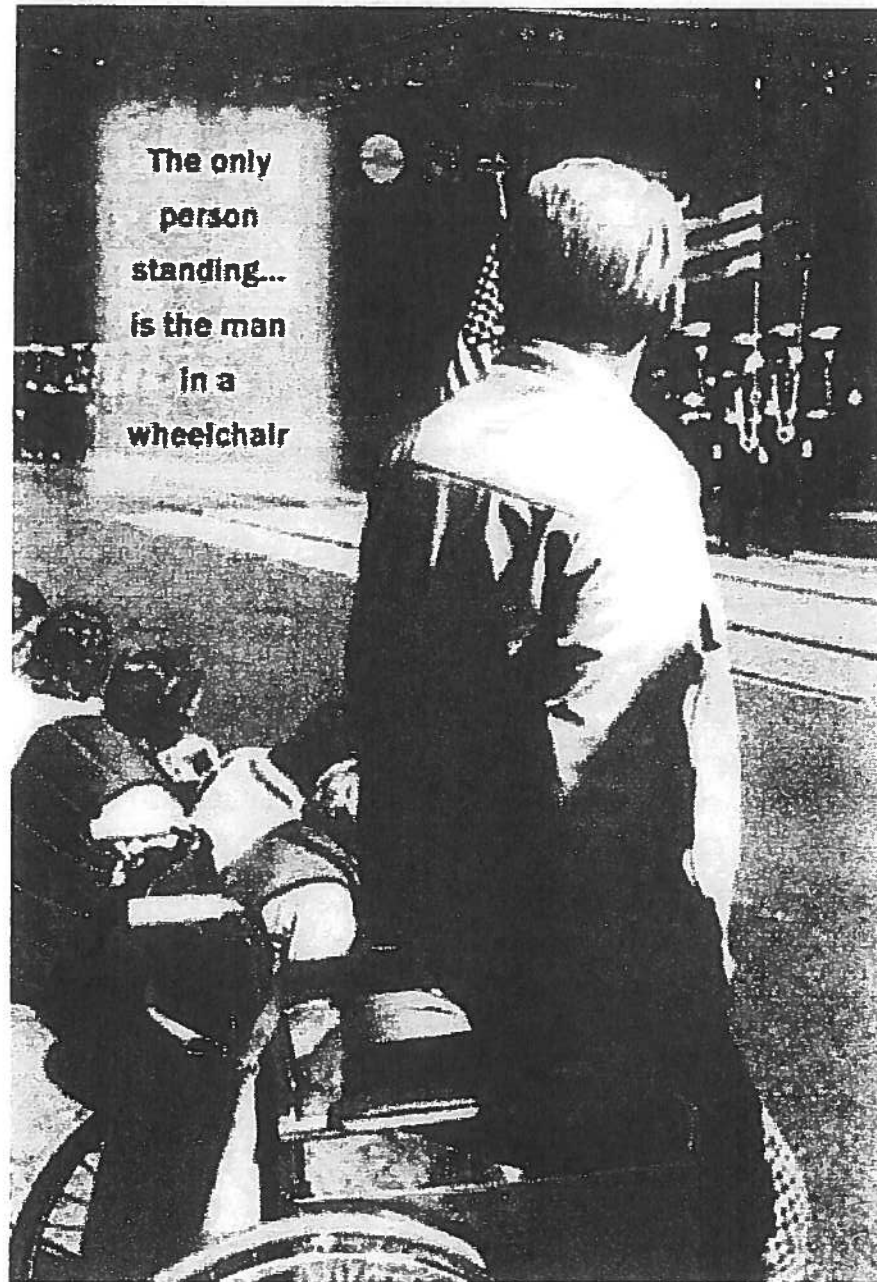
It is the
VETERAN,
not the preacher,
who has given us freedom of religion.

It is
the VETERAN,
not the reporter,
who has given us freedom of the press.

It is
the VETERAN,
not the poet,
who has given us freedom of speech.

It is
the VETERAN,
not the campus organizer,
who has given us freedom to assemble.

It is
the VETERAN,
not the lawyer,
who has given us the right to a fair trial.



The only
person
standing...
is the man
in a
wheelchair

It is
the
VETERAN
who serves
under the Flag,

It is
the VETERAN,
not the politician,
Who has given us the right to vote.



It is the
VETERAN who
salutes the Flag,

What is a Vet?

Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye.

Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg - or perhaps another sort of inner steel: The soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity.

Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking.

What is a vet?

He is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel.

He is the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel.

She - or he - is the nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night for two solid years in Da Nang.

He is the POW who went away one person and came back another - or didn't come back AT ALL.

He is the Quantico drill instructor who has never seen combat - but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account rednecks and gang members into Marines, and teaching them to watch each other's backs.

He is the parade-riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.

He is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.

He is the three anonymous heroes in The Tomb Of The Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep.

He is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket - palsied now and aggravatingly slow - who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.

He/she is an ordinary and yet an extraordinary human being - a person who offered some of his/her life's most vital years in the service of their country, and who sacrificed his or her ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.

He (or she) is a soldier and a savior and a sword against the darkness, and is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say Thank You. That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded.

Two little words that mean a lot, "THANK YOU".

Remember November 11th is Remembrance Day (Canada) / Veterans Day(USA).

A BAND OF BROTHERS

The bugle sounds the military taps
The notes echo around those who here mourn the loss
Causing a sudden chill over their skin

They look at the flag covered casket
With tears
As the preacher says

They will never again know loneliness
For though they died individually
Through their united spirits they cannot be separated
And that brotherhood of the corps will never die
Be they Soldier
Ranger
Marine
Sailor
Or Coast Guard and Merchant Marine
They are now a band of brothers
Brothers who died defending our liberty
And our nation
Let us salute their valor
Let us stand united
And shout hoorahh

As for the ones who bravely fought and made it back
Let us stand united
While we salute their courage
Their battle medals
And shout thank you
And hoorahh

Each one left either a boy or a man
Each came home wiser
Bloodied
A national heritage

Though some came back alive to their homes
While others came back draped in flag to gun salute and taps
They came back a band of brothers

Hoorahh

Ron L Dixon
4 April 2006

MY COUNTRY
MY LIBERTY

FOURTH OF JULY

Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died.

Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons serving in the REVOLUTIONARY ARMY; another had two sons captured.

Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred HONOR.

What kind of men were they?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners; men of means, well educated, but they signed the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE knowing full well that the "penalty" would be death, if they were captured.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his Ships swept from the seas, by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas McKeam was so "hounded" by the British that he was forced to MOVE his family almost CONSTANTLY. He served in the CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, "without pay", and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and POVERTY was his reward!

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of DILLERY, HALL, CLYMER, WALTON, GWINNETT, HEYWARD, RUTTLEDGE, AND MIDDLETON.

At he battle of YORKTOWN, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noted that the BRITISH GENERAL CORNWALLIS HAD TAKEN OVER THE NELSON HOME,

for his HEADQUARTERS. He quietly urged GEN. GEORGE WASHINGTON, to open fire.

A home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

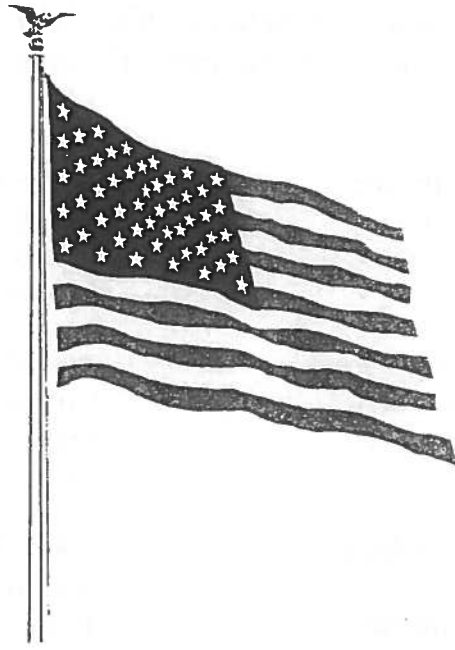
Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his WIFE, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year, he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished.

Some of us take these LIBERTIES so much for granted, but we shouldn't.

So, take a few minutes while ENJOYING YOUR 4TH OF JULY HOLIDAY and thank those PATRIOTS. It's not much to ask for the price they PAID.

REMEMBER: FREEDOM IS NEVER FREE!!



OLD GLORY

Show the flag and let it wave
As a symbol of the brave;
Let it float upon the breeze
As a sign for each who sees
That beneath it, where it rides,
Loyalty to-day abides.
Show the flag and let it fly,
Cheering every passer-by—
Men that may have stepped aside,
May have lost their old-time pride,
May behold it there, and then
Consecrate themselves again.

REMEMBERANCE DAY, is a CANADIAN HOLIDAY honoring WWI & WWI*, and KOREAN WAR VETERANS....on November 11th, same as our VETERANS DAY in US.... REMEMBERANCE DAY.....

He was getting old and paunch,
And his hair was falling fast.
And he sat around the Legion
Telling stories of the past!

Of a war that he once fought in
And the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies;
They were heros, every one.

And ' sometimes to his neighbors,
His tales became a joke,
All his buddies listened quietly
For they knew whereof he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,
For old Bob has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer
For a Soldier died today.

He won't be mourned by many,
Just his children and his wife.
For he lived an ordinary,
Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised family,
Though quietly on his way;
And the world won't note his passing,
Tho a Soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth,
Their bodies lie in state.
While thousands note their passing,
And proclaim that they were great!

Papers tell of their life stories
From time that they were young.
But the passing of a Soldier
Goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution
To the welfare of our land,
Someone who breaks his promise
And cons his fellow man?

If we cannot do him honor
While he's here to HEAR the praise
Then at least let's give him homage
At the ending of his days.

Or the ordinary fellow
Who in times of war and strife
Goes off to serve his country
And offers up his life?

The politician stipend
And the style in which he lives
Are often disproportionate,
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Soldier,
Who offers up his all,
Is paid off with a medal
And perhaps a pension small.

It is not the politician
With their compromise and ploys,
Who won of us the freedom
That our country now enjoys!

Should you find yourself in danger,
With your enemies at hand.
Would you really want some cop-out,
With his ever waffling stand?

Or would you want a Soldier--
His home, his country, his kin,
Just a common Soldier,
Who would fight until the end?

He was just a common Soldier
And, his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us
We may need his like again!

For when countries are in conflict,
We find the soldier's part,
Is to clean up all the troubles
That the politicians start.

Perhaps just a simple headline
In the paper that might say;
Our Country is inmourning
A SOLDIER DIED TODAY!!

WE MUST NEVER FORGET!

AUTHOR: FATHER DENIS O'BRIEN, USMC, CHAPLAIN

NOVEMBER 11TH WAS VETERAN'S DAY, A DAY TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED OUR COUNTRY IN THE ARMED FORCES.

SOME VETERANS BEAR VISIBLE SIGNS OF THEIR SERVICE: A MISSING LIMB, A JAGGED SCAR, A CERTAIN LOOK IN THEIR EYES....

OTHERS MAY CARRY THE EVIDENCE INSIDE THEM; A PIN HOLDING A BONE TOGETHER; A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL IN THE LEG, OR PERHAPS ANOTHER SORT ON INNER STEEL;

EXCEPT IN PARADES, HOWEVER, THE MEN & WOMEN WHO HAVE KEPT AMERICA SAFE, WEAR NO BADGE OR EMBLEM...

YOU CAN'T TELL A VET JUST BY LOOKING.....WHAT IS A VET?

HE IS THE COP ON THE BEAT WHO SPENT SIX MONTHS IN SAUDI ARABIA OR IRAQ, "SWEATING TWO GALLONS A DAY" MAKING SURE THE ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS DIDN'T RUN OUT OF FUEL....

SHE OR HE, IS THE NURSE, WHO FOUGHT AGAINST FUTILITY AND WENT TO SLEEP SOBBING EVERY NIGHT FOR "TWO SOLID YEARS" IN DA NANG.

HE IS THE POW WHO WENT AWAY ONE PERSON AND CAME BACK ANOTHER... OR DIDN'T COME BACK AT ALL.....

HE IS IN THE PARADE..."A RIDING LEGIONNAIRE" WHO PINS ON HIS RIBBONS AND MEDALS WITH A PROSTHETIC HAND....

HE IS THE THREE ANONYMOUS HEROS IN THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN, WHOSE PRESENCE AT THE ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY "MUST FOREVER PRESERVE THE MEMORY OF ALL ANOYMOUS HEROS WHOS VALOR DIES UNRECOGNIZED WITH THEM ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OR THE OCEAN'S SUNLESS DEEP!

HE OR SHE IS AN ORDINARY AND YET, AN EXTRAORDINARY HUMAN BEING ---- A PERSON WHO OFFERED SOME OF HIS LIFE'S MOST VITAL YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY, AND WHO SACRIFICED HIS AMBITIONS SO OTHERS WOULD NOT HAVE TO SACRIFICE THEIRS.....

HE OR SHE IS A SOLDIER AND SAVIOR AND A "SWORD AGAINST THE DARKNESS, AND REPRESENTS THE GREATEST NATION EVER KNOWN...

SO REMEMBER EACH TIME YOU SEE SOMEONE WHO HAS SERVED OUR COUNTRY, JUST LEAN OVER AND SAY...THANK YOU....THAT'S ALL MOST VETERANS NEED, AND IN MOST CASES IT WILL MEAN MORE THAN ANY MEDALS THEY COULD HAVE BEEN AWARDED, OR WERE AWARDED...

THREE LITTLE WORDS THAT ARE VERY MEANINGFUL...THANK YOU, VETERAN!!

HE GAVE ALL

He was only nine years old
Had taken time out from his play
He sat very attentive to every word his
father had to say

His father sat atop the fence that
separated Grandmother's
yard from the one next door
The boy wasn't startled
Or surprised by what he saw
He had seen it before

His father told him how much he loved
him
And missed holding him to his chest
Or going fishing
Hiking
Doing homework
And all the rest

Then his father's voice got soft
And changed tone
Son he said
I want to talk to you about our nation's
flag
While we are alone

I have always been very proud of our
flag
Always called it Old Glory

I heard a poem once that talked about
the white standing for purity
The red for valor
The blue for courage
Or determination to defend our way of
life
It wasn't just some made up story

That medal that the President gave to
you
Had that same blue with its stars
And so did that folded flag given to your
mother

Penned by: Ronald L. Dixon,
EM1, U.S. Navy

Proudly Served Aboard USS COOLBAUGH DE 217, Korean War

It represents a dedication to freedom
and liberty that is mine

Yours
Ours

And it stands for my sacrifice for
my country
For those stars floating in their
field of blue
Sacrifice for my fellow Americans
And you

I must go for now
Never be afraid to proudly say I am
an American
Never miss a chance to wave Old
Glory

As his father's image began to fade
The little boy rose
And gave a very solid like salute
He could hear the echoing tune of
the military taps
Played on ghostly flute

the
He thought young understood what
the President meant
When he said
Son I am very proud to present
your Father's
Congressional Medal Of Honor
I'm sorry that to get it he had to
give his life

Your nation thanks you
His Son
And your Mother
His wife

Your Father loved his country
You can be very proud
And always stand tall

Because for his country
He gave all

I WAS A SAILOR ONCE

(Reflections of a Blackshoe, By Vice Admiral Harold Koenig, USN (Ret), M.D.)

I like the Navy,

I like standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe--the ship beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drive her through the sea.

I like the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the boatswains' pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the 1MC and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I like Navy vessels- nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries, sleek submarines and steady solid carriers.

I like the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea--memorials of great battles won.

I like the lean angular names of Navy 'tin-cans': Barney, Dahlgren, Mullinix--mementos of heroes who went before us.

I like the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the topside speakers as we pull away from the oiler after refueling at sea.

I like liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port. I even like all hands working parties as my ship fills herself with the multitude of supplies both mundane and exotic which she needs to cut her ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there is water to float her.

I like sailors, men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trust and depend on them as they trust and depend on me for professional competence, for comradeship, for courage. In a word, they are "shipmates."

I like the surge of adventure in my heart when the word is passed "Now station the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port", and I like the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pierside.

The work is hard and dangerous, the going rough at times, the parting from loved ones painful; but the companionship of robust Navy laughter and the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea is ever present.

I like the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flit across the wave tops and sunset gives way to night.

I like the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and join with the mirror of stars overhead.

And I like drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that tell me that my ship is alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch will keep me safe. I like quiet midwatches with the aroma of strong coffee - the lifeblood of the Navy—permeating everywhere.

And I like hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed keeps all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

I like the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations", followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transforms herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war ready for anything.

And I like the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I like the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I like the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones.

A sailor can find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent can find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods -the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and messdecks. Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and

↑ a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, they will stand taller and say: "I WAS A SAILOR ONCE. I WAS PART OF THE NAVY, AND THE NAVY WILL ALWAYS BE PART OF ME"

DOWN TO THE SEA

**Our minds go down to the sea of memory
To our younger days
Back to the ships of the US Navy
Those gallant gray garnerers of victory
Their flags blowing in the wind
Recollections of shipmates we called friend**

**The toils
Some liked
Some seemed useless drudgery
Orders given just to annoy me**

**Steaming over the waves
Going where we had never been
Sometimes to enjoyed places
To others we would never see again
Except in memory**

**We served with hidden pride
Ever saluting Old Glory
Some fought
Some died**

**Looking back to our tender years
Serving in those sleek gray ships
Recollections of our tender days
Some with a smile
Some bringing tears**

Our minds go down to the sea of our memory

**Ron L Dixon
July 2005**

OLD SALTS

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Old sailors sit and chew the fat
About things that used to be,
Of the things they've seen,
The places they've been,
When they ventured out to sea.

They remembered friends from long ago
The times they had back then,
The money they spent,
The beers they drank,
In their days as sailing men.

Their lives are lived in days gone by,
With thoughts that forever last,
Of bell bottom blues,
Winged white hats,
And good times in their past.

They recall long nights with a moon so bright,
Far out on a lonely sea,
The thoughts they had as youthful lads,
When their lives were wild and free.

They knew so well how their hearts would swell
When Old Glory fluttered proud and free,
The underway pennant
Such a beautiful sight
As they plowed through an angry sea.

They talked of the chow Ol' Cookie would make,
And the shrill of the bosun's pipe,
How salt spray would fall
Like sparks from hell,
When a storm struck in the night.

They remembered old shipmates already gone
Who forever hold a spot in their heart,
When sailors were bold,
And friendships would hold,
Until death ripped them apart.

Their sailing days are gone away,
Never again will they cross the brow.
They have no regrets,
They know they are blessed,
For honoring a sacred vow.

Their numbers grow less with each passing day
As the final muster begins,
There's nothing to lose,
All have paid their dues,
And they'll sail with shipmates again.

I've heard them say before getting underway
That there's still some sailing to do,
They'll say with a grin
That their ship has come in...
And, the Lord is "commanding the crew".

“The Heroes of USS WHITEHURST, DE 634”

**They were just kids in forty-two, in the eyes of dads and mothers.
Much too young to leave their homes, and go to war like others.
But they were heroes, big already, in the eyes of younger siblings.
Brave men, strong hearts, with courage to fight the battles, willing!**

**They were young men ripe for training in the eyes of Uncle Sam.
With bodies to be muscled, and minds with facts to cram.
They were simply cannon fodder in the eyes of basic trainers,
Who's job it was to take the lot and turn them into sailors.**

**They graduated boot camp, in their own eyes, men,
Sailors ready to brave the storm, to fight the foe and win.
But they came aboard as raw recruits, in eyes of captain and crew,
Then the old salts set to work, to improve them sailors true.**

**They got their sea legs quickly, while sailing west to war.
They manned their battle stations, till it seemed their bones were sore.
For the USS WHITEHURST was an escort, with other ships to guard.
Not there to protect herself, but first protect her wards.**

**In time of war, young men grow fast, and so by forty-four,
These “cannon fodder” raw recruits were sailors fit for war.
They had faced the foe's attackers from the air and from the deep.
They had fought his planes and sank his subs with hardly time to sleep.**

**On April twelve of forty-five, the final fiery hell,
Attacked by three kamikazes, but only two were felled.
Through radar shack and helm house, came the flaming, flying horrors.
And, in the blast, forty-two good men, gave all of their tomorrows.**

**They were still just kids in forty-five, in the eyes of dads and mothers,
Should never have had to leave their homes, and go to war like others.
But they were heroes, bigger than life, in the eyes of younger siblings.
Brave men, strong hearts who's shown, they had the guts and they were willing.**

**They came back home, true heroes, in the eyes of all the nation.
They's given the best of body and heart, for the hope of generations.
But in their eyes, they were just men, who did what they had to do.
They fought the fight they had to fight, for themselves, and for me and you.**

**To those of you too young to go, in our eyes they're heroes still.
We owe them much, for all they gave, and of course we always will
Our admiration and gratitude will ever be the due,
Of these brave men who fought the fight, who did what they had to do!**

Written by Max Crow, Memorial Day 2001, Shipmate of USS WHITEHURST DE 634

A LEGACY TO REMEMBER

It was raining and it felt cold to him. It was not a heavy downpour, more like the category of a drizzle. But the dampness permeated his bones as he sat on the bench under the extended roof of the warehouse along the pier. He had been coming to this bench for several days and gazed across the docking area to where she stood.

He thought of other days when those he knew, many of them gone now, had sat around together. How they joked and laughed, and picked on each other. Yet, there were serious times when they talked of home and loved ones and their plans for the future. They were his comrades and he knew they would continue to be in his thoughts.

He first met her in his teens and he was apprehensive when she appeared to him. What could she expect of him for he was just a young man, really just a boy, and his previous experience seemed so small when compared to others. But he made up his mind that he would do his best and perhaps this was all she required.

So the adventures began, and with her he saw places in the world that he never had expected to ever see. He had experiences that changed his young life and sent him on the journey from boyhood to that of a young man. Yet, all this time, he was not fully aware of how his feeling for her was being strengthened and how the memory of her would remain for all his days. He continued to do his best for her until the day he left her. Now she would be leaving him.

She went through several cosmetic changes during her stay on this earth from 1943 to 1972, But such changes never affected the devotion of those who knew her. And in return, they loved her and served her well.

Now, the moment of parting forever was here. He knew he would never see her again. He understood that all things pass away but it seemed so hard to let her go. Silently, he rose and slowly walked away.

This is the love of a ship, the USS Coolbaugh, DE 217, and the men that served her. May her legacy continue for generations to come.

Clyde J. Birch
31 August 2011

“ODE TO A PRISONER OF WAR” by American Prisoner

**Who are the boys, forgotten now
That have done their share – just ask them how
And are in the enemy's hands today
Awaiting their freedom come what may?**

**Who fought at the front and saw men die
In the slime and mud of days gone by
And bravely surrendered without shame
When superior numbers upon them came?**

**Who battled in the air, when a few lucky hits
Smashed the old crate all to bits
And came down in a flurry of silk and white
Praying to God he'd land alright?**

**Who was fished out of ocean and sea
And allowed to live like you and me
When his ship went down – to rise no more
And he was doomed to a life on shore?**

**We are Prisoners of War, beginning a new life
On a different basis –of patience and strife
Of thinking and worry, of loved ones so dear
And the terrible way, which they all knew so clear.**

**Right after capture, they're hustled about
By all kinds of orders and sentry's shout.**

**It's not a good living, this prisoner way
But they're looking forward to a better day
Of freedom from want – and the end of the strife
In a better land and a grander life!**

FIDDLERS GREEN
(Nautical adopted)

As I roamed the dock-side one evening so rare,
To view the still waters and take on salt air,
I heard an old sailorman singing this song,
Oh - Take me away boys, my time is not long.

Dress me up in my oil skin and jumper,
No more on the docks I'll be seen,
Just tell my old shipmates, I'm takin' a trip, mates,
And I'll see you some day in Fiddlers Green.

Now, Fiddlers Green is a place I've heard tell,
Where sailormen go if they don't go to hell.
Where the weather is fair and the dolphins do play.
And the cold coast of Greenland is far, far away.

The sky's always clear and there's never a gale,
And the fish jump on board with a flip of their tale.
You can lie at your leisure, there's no work to do,
And the skipper's below making tea for the crew.

And when you're in dock and the long trip is through
There's pubs and there's club and there's lassies there too.
Now the girls are all pretty and the beer is all free,
And there's bottles of rum hangin from every tree.

I don't want a harp nor a halo, not me!
Just give me a breeze and a good rolling sea.
And I'll play my old squeeze box as we sail along,
When the wind's in the rigging to sing me this song.

Dress me up in my oil skin and jumper,
No more on the docks I'll be seen,
Just tell my old shipmates, I'm takin' a trip mates,
And I'll see you some day in Fiddlers Green.

Unknown Eleventh Grade AFHS
Concert Choir Member

The Lonely and Forgotten

This poem was written following a series of ward performances by the Austintown-Fitch High School Concert Choir prior to the Christmas Holidays at the Aspenwall and Butler Veterans Hospitals.

**There were sweet old men in every ward
We entertained them and were by all adored.
Some sang along such as the man by the wall.
Jingle Bells his most favorite of all.**

**Tw'as a glorious feeling to bring such beautiful
Smiles to such sad and sullen faces.
As their faces glowed we saw some were black,
white, blinded, some toothless and limbless,
But NEVER lifeless!**

**Most were afraid to soften up and let us into their
world for even five minutes.
They became very frustrated when subconsciously
they found themselves tapping along, and yes,
ENJOYING it!**

**The most mysterious people of all were the ones
we brought to tears.
Did they cry because of their loneliness
during the HOLIDAY SEASON,
the memories of their younger lives,
when they could walk and carol
and spread HAPPINESS instead of pity?**

**Were they caused by the feeling of love and joy
Given to them by teenagers who actually
took time "to shake a hand or wish a happy holiday"
upon them?**

**The saddest sight was the patients for which death
was near.**

**It was a most gratifying sight when a man, not expected
to see Christmas.....sang along for probably the
last time in his lifetime.....HIS SONG WAS WITH US.**

**We have “forced a bit of happiness” upon their
small “enclosed world”,
They have returned this feeling by each and every
one of their most unique responses.**

This is ALL THE THANKS ANYONE NEEDS!

GOD BLESS THEM!!

EN VOYAGE

There's a ship sailing on to a harbor
To a haven of comfort and rest.
It's a ship of God's fashion and making
And the voyage by Him will be the best.

It departed with silence and beauty
With the Master, Himself, in command.
As with dignity truly majestic
It sailed out of sight of the land.

There will always be clear skies above it
There will always be calmness below.
There will never be storms to harass it
For the Master is on it, you know.

And, His wisdom will carry it safely
To the port of His infinite peace.
Where the light of His love will protect it
With a blessing that never will cease.

You have watched it sail onward and outward
With a tear of regret in your eye.
For a loved one was sailing upon it
And there's grief when you're saying goodbye.

But your tears would be tears of rejoicing
And your heart would be happy and free.
If you could look for only a moment
On that ship that is sailing to sea.

For the one you have loved is at leisure
With no worry or trouble or care.
There's contentment beyond understanding
In the way God's passengers fare.

And you'd know from your own observation
That the sailing was joyful - not grim.
For it means a new life and new living
And a sweet closer contact with Him.

Oh, the solace there is in the knowledge
Life is life and it always will be.
And it's simply a change of direction
When we sail on His ship out to sea.

And the tears that we shed for our loved ones
Are in truth for us left behind.
For it hurts to give up to the Master
Tho we know life is gentle and kind.

So believe in His great and good wisdom
Trust in Him as you patiently wait.
On His ship God is ever the Captain
And the one you have loved is His Mate.

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Our Legacy Must Be Preserved!

We, the living and dead, who have served in the United States Armed Forces during war and peace, sincerely hope to leave a lasting legacy to our children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, and to the future citizens of tomorrow. To achieve this mission, we must continuously share our individual military experiences with all those interested in learning about our numerous commitments towards everlasting peace and prosperity for our nation. Realizing and knowing our overall sacrifices to "preserve and protect our nation" at any cost will certainly instill within our youth a more intrinsic feeling of the "true spirit" of achieving and embracing "Americanism and Patriotism"!

To obtain this certainly realistic objective, let us always share with all our youth those available resources, namely, titles of books, personal manuscripts, individual experiences, our service diaries, investigative reports, and, yes, our own "sea stories"! Individually and collectively, if we are asked to speak at private and public classrooms, at school assemblies, at community organizations, or at Sunday school classes, we must willingly accept those invitations and share our personal-experiences with future generations to hear, but most especially to cherish, to admire, and to *remember*! And, we must emphasize throughout our remarks that Family, Duty, Honor, Country, and our own God were all first and foremost in the minds and hearts of those who have served and are now serving. Knowing that those who have given their lives for their Country and our Freedoms, "have not died in vain"!

Over the years, I have been extremely busy presenting numerous Memorial Day speeches, Veterans' Day presentations, talking with middle school students regarding the "Role of the United States Armed Forces" and many more.

Stressing that *our legacy must be preserved*, I have strongly encouraged my shipmates (USS COOLBAUGH DE 217), veterans organizations, and active duty personnel to share their military experiences with our future generations.

As an active member of DESA and past CO of our ship's association, I have strongly encouraged young people to avail themselves of the "DE History and legacy" by logging onto: desausa.org and usscoolbaugh.org for true-life stories about our shipmates and histories of our ships.



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