

TITLE: MEMORIAL DAY MAY 27, 2012

2:30 PM LIMESTONE CEMETERY

RAUCHTOWN, PA

ATTENTION GAINER

WE ARE A YOUNG 236 YEAR OLD NATION (1776-2012). I HAVE LIVED 77 OF THE 236 YEARS (33%), SOME OF YOU HAVE LIVED 80-90 YEARS. AMERICA (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA), HOME OF THE BRAVE AND FREE, HAS COME A LONG WAY IN 236 YEARS DEVELOPING THE MOST ADVANCED NATION ON EARTH. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE A NATIVE CITIZEN OF SUCH A GREAT COUNTRY AND I AM HONORED TO HAVE SERVED IN THE BEST MILITARY SERVICE IN THE WORLD. OTHER COUNTRIES ARE ENVIOUS OF OUR SUCCESS AND WAY OF LIFE.

I SPENT 20 YEARS OF MY LIFE, 1959-1978, AS AN OFFICER IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS IN SERVICE TO MY COUNTRY. I AM LUCKY TO BE ALIVE AND ABLE TO SHARE THIS SPECIAL OCCASION WITH YOU TODAY. MY GUARDIAN ANGEL HAS BEEN WITH ME ALL MY LIFE AND ESPECIALLY WHILE IN HARMS WAY SITUATIONS.

I AM THE PROUD FATHER OF 7 CHILDREN: 1 DAUGHTER AND 6 SONS. THEY HAVE GIVEN ME 14 GRAND CHILDREN: 7 GIRLS AND 7 BOYS. ALL 7 OF MY CHILDREN WERE BORN IN THE MARINES, (1959-1967) IN A NINE YEAR PERIOD: AT CAMP LEJUNE, N.C.; HOLY LOCH, SCOTLAND; QUANTICO, VA. AND CAMP PENDELTON, CALIFORNIA, FOUR (4) HAVE BEEN MARINE OFFICERS: 2 MAJORS AND 2 CAPTAINS; MY DAUGHTER BEING ONE OF THE CAPTAINS, AND ONE AIR FORCE SERGEANT. THREE (3) OF MY SONS WERE IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, OPERATION DESERT STORM, FROM AUGUST 1990-FEBRUARY 1991.

I AM PROUD TO SAY I WAS BORN IN OVAL, PA. AND RAISED IN NIPPENOSE VALLEY WHERE I HAVE MANY ON-THE-FARM MEMORIES. EVEN THOUGH I PHYSICALLY LEFT THE VALLEY ON DECEMBER 28, 1957, IN SPIRIT I NEVER LEFT. WHEN I GIVE UP THE GHOST, I WILL RETURN TO MOTHER EARTH AT THE OVAL CEMETERY WHERE MY WIFE, TERRY LAULER, YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF THE LATE JOHN W. LAULER, M.D. PRESENTLY RESIDES AFTER PASSING AWAY APRIL 30, 1981 AGE 46 FROM CANCER CAUSED BY VINYL CHLORIDE IN THE DRINKING WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. 1959, 1960, and 1961. THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE VALLEY IS UNIQUE. FARMERS ABOUND, PEOPLE ARE FRUGLE, FAITHFUL, AND GOD FEARING.

AFTER GRADUATING FROM OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL IN 1957 AT QUANTICO, VA, I WAS COMMISSIONED A MARINE OFFICER (2ND LIEUTENANT) AND TOOK THE FOLLOWING OATH: I SOLEMNLY SWEAR THAT I WILL SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES AGAINST ALL ENEMIES FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC; THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME; THAT I TAKE THIS OBLIGATION FREELY WITHOUT ANY MENTAL RESERVATION OR PURPOSE OF EVASION AND THAT I WILL FAITHFULLY DISCHARGE THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE ON WHICH I AM ABOUT TO ENTER, SO HELP ME GOD. ALL OFFICERS IN THE MILITARY TAKE THIS OATH UPON BECOMING AN OFFICER.

I SPENT 12 MONTHS IN VIETNAM (SEPTEMBER 1967-SEPTEMBER 1968) DURING THE PEAK OF THE VIETNAM WAR. MY PRIMARY MILITARY OCCUPATION SPECIALTY WAS INFANTRY 0302. MY SECONDARY MOS WAS OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS 0402. AT THE TIME, I WAS A YOUNG MAJOR WHO HAD JUST GRADUATED FROM AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SCHOOL AT QUANTICO, VA ASSIGNED TO THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION, THE 7TH MARINE REGIMENT, THE 1ST BATTALION 7TH MARINES AS THE BATTALION EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SECOND IN THE BATTALION CHAIN OF COMMAND. WE HAD APPROXIMATELY 1200 MARINES IN OUR BATTALION. THERE WERE 4 RIFLE COMPANIES OF 200+ MARINES PER COMPANY, ONE HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY OF 300+ MARINES, 3 RIFLE PLATOONS WITH 40 MARINES IN EACH, AND ONE WEAPONS PLATOON IN A RIFLE COMPANY; 3 SQUADS WITH 13 MARINES PER SQUAD IN EACH RIFLE PLATOON; 3 FIRE TEAMS PER RIFLE

SQUAD. A FIRE TEAM CONSISTED OF A FIRE TEAM LEADER (CORPORAL), RIFLEMAN (PFC), AUTOMATIC RIFLEMAN (L/CPL), AND AN ASSISTANT AUTOMATIC RIFLEMAN (PFC). THE BATTALLION WAS COMMANDED BY A LIEUTENANT COLONEL, COMPANIES BY CAPTAINS, PLATOONS BY LIEUTENANTS, SQUADS BY SERGEANTS AND FIRE TEAMS BY CORPORALS. THE CORPORAL FTL, L/CPL AUTOMATIC RIFLEMAN AND 2 PRIVATE FIRST CLASS RIFLEMEN WERE THE TRUE WARRIORS. THERE WAS NOTHING BETWEEN THEM AND THE ENEMY. THEY ASSISTED BY THEIR SQUAD AND PLATOON LEADERS CLOSED WITH AND DESTROYED THE ENEMY WITH THEIR RIFLES, BAYONETS, AND HAND GRENADES IN A KILL OR BE KILLED SITUATION TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION. THESE ARE THE WARRIORS WHO WIN THE BATTLES. SOME GIVING THEIR LIFE, SOME SURVIVING. THESE ARE THE ONES WHO ARE AWARDED PURPLE HEARTS, BRONZE STARS, SILVER STARS, NAVY CROSSES AND MEDALS OF HONOR FOR GALLANTRY AND BRAVERY UNDER FIRE. THE FOLLOWING PLATOON LEADER/SQUAD LEADER AWARDS ARE EXAMPLES I'M REFERRING TO.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TAKES PLEASURE IN PRESENTING THE NAVY CROSS TO FIRST LIEUTENANT MICHAEL NEIL USMC FOR SERVICE SET FORTH IN THE FOLLOWING CITATION: "FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM WHILE SERVING AS A PLATOON LEADER WITH COMPANY D, 1ST BN, 7TH MARINES, FIRST MARINE DIVISION (REINFORCED) DURING OPERATIONS AGAINST ENEMY FORCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ON 20 DECEMBER 1967. INFORMED BY A SQUAD SIZE AMBUSH PATROL, THAT AN ESTIMATED ONE HUNDRED VIET CONG/NVA WERE MOVING TOWARD HIS POSITION IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE, FIRST LIEUTENANT NEIL QUICKLY ORGANIZED A PLATOON SIZE REACTION FORCE AND LEAD HIS SMALL UNIT TO THE ASSISTANCE OF THE PATROL. DISREGARDING THE INTENSE ENEMY FIRE, HE LEAD HIS MEN ACROSS 300 METERS OF THICKLY FORESTED TERRAIN TO THE MARINE PATROL, CORPORAL SMEDLEY'S, WHICH WAS HEAVILY ENGAGED WITH THE ENEMY FORCE. WHEN THE ADVANCE WAS HALTED BY INTENSE SMALL ARMS FIRE, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, AND RIFLE GRENADE FIRE FROM THE HOSTILE POSITIONS, HE RALLIED HIS MEN AND LED A DETERMINED ASSAULT INTO THE FACE OF THE ENEMY FIRE. THROWING HAND GRENADES AS HE ADVANCED, HE DESTROYED A MACHINE GUN ENPLACEMENT AND MORTALLY WOUNDED SEVERAL OF THE ENEMY WITH HIS PISTOL. BY HIS BOLD INITIATIVES, GALLANT FIGHTING SPIRIT, AND LOYAL DEVOTION TO DUTY, 1ST LT. NEIL REFLECTED GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF AND THE MARINE CORPS".

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE NAME OF CONGRESS TAKES PRIDE IN PRESENTING THE MEDAL OF HONOR POST HUMOUSLY TO CORPORAL LARRY E. SMEDLEY FOR SERVICE SET FORTH IN THE FOLLOWING CITATION: "FOR CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND INTREPIDITY AT THE RISK OF HIS LIFE ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY WHILE SERVING AS A SQUAD LEADER WITH COMPANY D, 1ST BN, 7TH MARINES 1ST MARINE DIVISION IN CONNECTION WITH OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ENEMY IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 20, 1967, CORPORAL SMEDLEY LEAD HIS SIX MAN SQUAD TO AN AMBUSH SITE AT THE MOUTH OF HAPPY VALLEY NEAR PHOUA NINH(2) IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE. LATER THAT NIGHT AN ESTIMATED 100 VIET CONG AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY REGULARS CARRYING 122MM ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND MORTARS WERE OBSERVED MOVING TOWARD HILL 41. REALIZING THIS WAS A SIGNIFICANT ENEMY MOVE TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK ON THE VITAL DANANG COMPLEX, CORPORAL SMEDLEY IMMEDIATELY TOOK SOUND AND COURAGEOUS ACTION TO STOP THE ENEMY THREAT. AFTER HE RADIOED FOR A REACTION FORCE, HE SKILLFULLY MANEUVERED HIS MEN TO A MORE ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION AND LED AN ATTACK ON THE NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR ENEMY FORCE. A HEAVY VOLUME OF FIRE FROM AN ENEMY MACHINE GUN POSITIONED ON THE FLANK OF THE SQUAD INFLECTED SEVERAL CASUALTIES ON CORPORAL SMEDLEY'S UNIT. SIMULTANEOUSLY, AN ENEMY RIFLE GRENADE EXPLODED NEARBY, WOUNDING HIM IN THE RIGHT FOOT AND KNOCKING HIM TO THE GROUND. CORPORAL SMEDLEY DISREGARDED HIS SERIOUS INJURY AND VALIANTLY STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET SHOUTING WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIS MEN. HE FEARLESSLY LED A CHARGE AGAINST THE ENEMY MACHINE GUN EMPLACEMENT, FIRING HIS RIFLE AND THROWING GRENADES UNTIL HE WAS STRUCK AGAIN BY ENEMY FIRE AND KNOCKED TO THE GROUND. GRAVELY WOUNDED AND WEAK FROM BLOOD LOSS, HE ROSE AND COMMENCED A ONE MAN ASSAULT AGAINST THE ENEMY POSITION. ALTHOUGH HIS AGGRESSIVE AND SINGLEHANDED ATTACK RESULTED IN THE

DESTRUCTION OF THE MACHINE GUN, HE WAS STRUCK IN THE CHEST BY ENEMY FIRE AND FELL MORTALLY WOUNDED. CORPORAL SMEDLEY'S INSPIRING AND COURAGEOUS ACTIONS, BOLD INITIATIVE, AND SELFLESS DEVOTION TO DUTY IN THE FACE OF CERTAIN DEATH WAS IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MARINE CORPS AND THE UNITED STATES NAVAL SERVICE. HE GALLANTLY GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY. /S/RICHARD M. NIXON PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES".

CORPORAL LARRY SMEDLEY WAS THE 20TH MARINE TO WIN THE MEDAL OF HONOR IN THE VIETNAM CONFLICT. HE WAS BORN ON MAY 4, 1949 IN FORT ROYAL, VA. HE ENLISTED IN THE MARINES ON APRIL 7, 1966. HE ARRIVED IN VIETNAM IN JULY 1967. DECEMBER 20, 1967 HE GALLANTLY GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY ON THE VIETNAM BATTLE FIELD. CORPORAL SMEDLEY WAS ONE OF LIEUTENANT NEIL'S THREE (3) SQUAD LEADERS. BOTH WERE INVOLVED IN THE SAME ACTION. CORPORAL SMEDLEY WAS AWARDED THE NATION'S TOP AWARD FOR BRAVERY, THE MEDAL OF HONOR. THE LIEUTENANT RECEIVED THE NAVY CROSS MEDAL WHICH IS JUST BELOW THE MOH IN MILITARY PRECEDENCE. TOGETHER THEY NOT ONLY ACCOMPLISHED THEIR MISSION OF PREVENTING A ROCKET ATTACK ON THE DANANG VITAL AREA BUT THEY KILLED VARIOUS VC AND NVA ROCKETMEN AND CAPTURED THE VERY FIRST 122MM ROCKET LAUNCHER TUBE WITH TRIPOD, SIGHT, FUSE, AND FIRING DEVICE. THE TRIPOD HAD NEVER BEEN SEEN BY US EYES BEFORE.

I WAS ON THE FRONT LINE WHERE THE WAR WAS BEING FOUGHT. OUR BATTALION MISSION WAS TO LOCATE, CLOSE WITH, AND DESTROY THE ENEMY IN OUR TACTICAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (TAOR) WHICH WAS 25 SQUARE MILES OR 16,000 ACRES IN SIZE, WHICH WE DID. SPECIFICALLY, THE MISSION INCLUDED PREVENTING ENEMY ATTACKS ON THE DANANG VITAL AREA WHERE THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, 1ST MARINE AIRWING, 1ST MARINE LOGISTIC GROUP AND FIELD HOSPITAL WERE LOCATED. THE ENEMY WAS THE NORTH VIETNAM ARMY AND THE VIET CONG GUERILLAS. DURING THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY – MARCH, 1968, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY ATTACKED MANY U.S. INSTALLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE TET OFFENSIVE. ALL THEIR ATTACKS WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. FROM 7 DECEMBER 1967 TO MARCH 15, 1968, WHILE IN THE 1ST BN, 7TH MARINES, THE 1ST BN 7TH MARINES WAS CREDITED WITH HAVING KILLED 346 NVA/VC AND CAPTURING 46 POWS. THE NVA EVENTUALLY WITHDREW AND RETURNED TO NORTH VIETNAM, THEIR SAFE HAVEN.

DURING THE TET OFFENSIVE ON FEBRUARY 8, 1968, I WAS WOUNDED BY ENEMY MORTAR FIRE WHILE MAKING AN ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION DURING AN ATTACK ON OUR BATTALION COMMAND POST, TAKING A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL IN THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY HEAD JUST BELOW MY HELMET. THE SHRAPNEL WAS REMOVED IN 1969 AFTER RETURNING TO CONUS AT WRIGHT PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE HOSPITAL IN OHIO, WHILE ASSIGNED TO THE NROTC UNIT, MIAMI UNIVERSITY OXFORD, OHIO AS THE MARINE OFFICE INSTRUCTOR (MOI) TEACHING A THREE (3) CREDIT COURSE: TITLED THE EVOLUTION OF THE ART OF WAR; AND SUBSEQUENTLY, WAS AWARDED A PURPLE HEART MEDAL BY THE 7TH MARINES REGIMENTAL COMMANDER COLONAL HALL.

AT THE END OF MY 12 MONTHS IN VIETNAM, A YOUNG 33 OLD MAJOR, I WAS AWARDED A LEGION OF MERIT (LOM) WITH COMBAT V FOR VALOR FOR EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS CONDUCT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF OUTSTANDING SERVICES IN A COMBAT ZONE AS THE BATTALION EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND ACTING BATTALION COMMANDER 1ST BN, 7TH MARINES AND LOGISTICS OFFICER OF THE 7TH MARINE REGIMENT. THE LAST SENTENCE OF MY AWARD READS: "RENDERED DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO HIS COUNTRY AND THEREBY UPHELD THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MARINE CORPS AND THE NAVAL SERVICE" FOLLOWED BY: "FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S." IN MILITARY PRECEDENCE, THE LOM W/V IS BETWEEN THE SILVER STAR AND BRONZE STAR. ALL THREE MEDALS ARE FOR BRAVERY UNDER ENEMY FIRE.

I RECEIVED MY SECOND LOM, WHEN I RETIRED JULY 1978, FOR WORK I HAD DONE AT HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS, WASHINGTON, DC IN THE PLANS AND POLICY DIVISION AS AN ACTION OFFICER ON THE MIDDLE EAST-AFRICA DESK FROM APRIL 15, 1975 THRU JUNE 1978 WHERE I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR

DEVELOPING THE POSITION TO BE TAKEN BY THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS ON ME/AFRICA MATTERS ADDRESSED BY THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF IN THE PENTAGON. THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF CONSISTS OF A CHAIRMAN, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIRFORCE, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, AND THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS. THESE OFFICERS ARE ALL 4 STARS GENERALS OR ADMIRALS.

MOTIVATION

MEMORIAL DAY IS A SPECIAL DAY IN OUR COUNTRY BECAUSE IT IS A DAY WHERE WE PAY TRIBUTE TO SERVICE VETERANS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIFE FOR THEIR COUNTRY MAKING THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE. IT IS IMPORTANT AND FITTING THAT WE ALSO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE SURVIVING VETERANS AS WELL. IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT LOOKING OVER THIS CEMETERY, AS WELL AS OVAL, COLLOMSVILLE, AND BASTRESS CEMETERIES, AND ON EACH GRAVE WHERE THERE IS AN AMERICAN FLAG, THE VETERAN WOULD COME TO LIFE AND STAND AT ATTENTION ALONG SIDE HIS OR HER GRAVE MARKER AND FLAG IN HIS OR HER MILITARY UNIFORM. THEN IMAGINE GOING TO EACH ONE, THANKING THEM FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY AND AS YOU LOOK INTO THEIR FACES YOU WOULD SEE PRIDE, COURAGE, HONOR, DIGNITY, PATRIOTISM, AND LOVE OF COUNTRY.

WHEN THE RESURECTION OF THE DEAD HAPPENS, I WOULD IMAGINE THAT THE FIRST CALLED BY OUR LORD AND SAVIOR WILL BE THE FALLEN VETERANS. THEY WOULD TAKE ON A NEW BODY AND ASCEND INTO HEAVEN AND RESIDE WITH OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN FOR ALL ETERNITY. REMEMBER, FROM THE DUST OF THE EARTH WE ALL CAME INTO BEING, TO THE DUST OF EARTH WE ALL RETURN, WAITING PATIENTLY IN OUR GRAVES FOR THE RESURECTION OF THE DEAD. (GENESIS 3:19)

AS A YOUNG NATION WE HAVE FOUGHT MANY WARS INCLUDING TWO (2) WORLD WARS ON FOREIGN SHORES. EXCEPT FOR OUR CIVIL WAR, 1861-1865, DEFENDING FREEDOM. WW II ENDED IN 1945 AND THE COLD WAR BEGAN IN 1945 ENDING 46 YEARS LATER IN 1991 WHEN THE USSR COLLAPSED. WHILE THE COLD WAR BETWEEN THE USA AND USSR WAS GOING ON WE WERE AT WAR WITH NORTH KOREA, JUNE 1950-JULY 1953, THREE (3) YEARS, A WAR THAT ENDED WITH A CEASE FIRE WITH THE UNITED STATES KEEPING MILITARY IN SOUTH KOREA NOW FOR 59 YEARS, AND THEN VIETNAM FROM 1964-1973, NINE (9) YEARS. TWO (2) YEARS AFTER WE WITHDREW FROM VIETNAM, IN APRIL 1975, THE NORTH VIETNAM ARMY DEFEATED THE SOUTH VIETNAM ARMY. NORTH VIETNAM AND SOUTH VIETNAM WERE THEN UNITED AS ONE COUNTRY. FROM AUGUST 1990 - FEBRUARY 1991, PERSIAN GULF WAR, OPERATION DESERT STORM OCCURRED WHERE WE HAD TO, BECAUSE OF CLOSE DIPLOMATIC TIES, EXPEL IRAQ OUT OF KUWAIT RESTORING KUWAIT AS A NATION WITH THE HIGHEST OIL QUALITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

AFTER THE 46 YEAR COLD WAR ENDED IN 1991, IN FEBRUARY, 1998, OSAMA BEN LADEN, FOUNDER OF AL-QAEDA, DECLARED WAR ON THE WEST, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND ISRAEL. SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, THREE (3) YEARS AFTER HE DECLARED WAR ON THE USA, HE ATTACKED THE UNITED STATES HOMELAND. SEPTEMBER 20, 2001 OUR GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED THE WAR ON TERROR OR GLOBAL WAR OF TERROR DECLARING TERROR WILL END WHEN EVERY TERROR GROUP OF GLOBAL REACH HAS BEEN FOUND, STOPPED, AND DEFEATED. OCTOBER, 2001 THE U.S. INVADED AFGANISTAN TO OUST THE AL QUEDA. IN NOVEMBER 2003, WE CREATED THE HOME LAND SECURITY DEPARTMENT. WAR IN IRAQ FORMALLY ENDED DECEMBER 2011. BEN LADEN WHO DECLARED WAR ON US IN 1998 WAS KILLED 13 YEARS LATER ON MAY 2, 2011, 11 YEARS AFTER HIS SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 ATTACK ON OUR HOME LAND. WE REMAIN IN AFGANISTAN TODAY, 11 YEARS LATER, FIGHTING AL QUEDA TERRORISTS.

TERRORISM IS VIOLENCE COMMITTED BY GROUPS IN ORDER TO INTIMIDATE A POPULATION OR GOVERNMENT INTO GRANTING THEIR DEMANDS. IT IS A WARFARE WHERE THE ENEMY HAS NO COUNTRY, NO HOMELAND, AND MUST BE HARBORED BY SOME COUNTRY OR COUNTRIES. HARBORING COUNTRIES ARE

AIDING AND ABETTING THE ENEMY. THIS NEW ENEMY HATES AMERICANS. THE HATE IS SO INTENSE THAT THEY WILL KILL THEMSELVES TO KILL AMERICANS, DAMAGE OUR CITIES, EMBASSIES, AND PUT US IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION WHERE WE FEAR THEIR NEXT ATTACK. THIS WAR BY AL-QAEDA ON US HAS BEEN GOING ON NOW FOR MORE THAN 11 YEARS. IT TOOK US 11 YEARS TO LOCATE, CLOSE WITH, AND DESTROY OSAMA BIN LADEN, THE FOUNDER. HE WAS HIDING IN PAKISTAN, A COUNTRY THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE OUR FRIEND. BECAUSE OF SPECIAL OPERATION UNITS THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED BY OUR MILITARY SINCE 9/11, THE NAVY SEALS BEING ONE OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNITS, WHO WERE ABLE TO CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL RAID, BASED ON GOOD INTELLIGENCE AND STATE OF THE ART EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING, INTO PAKISTAN KILLING BIN LADEN.

WITH THE DEATH OF THE AL-QAEDA LEADER, WHO DECLARED WAR ON US IN 1998, MAYBE HIS TERRORISM WILL DIE ALSO, BUT THAT HAS YET TO HAPPEN. AL-QAEDA CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT TO ATTACK US AT THE MOST UNEXPECTED MOMENT, IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED MANNER, RIGHT HERE ON OUR HOMELAND. IN THE 9-11 ATTACK ON OUR HOMELAND, IN BROAD DAY LIGHT, FOREIGN COUNTRY PILOTS WHO HIJACKED AFTER TAKE OFF AND IN FLIGHT, JUMBO PASSENGER AIRPLANES USING THEM AND THEIR FUEL AS A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION CRASHED FOUR (4) COMMERCIAL JETS, TWO (2) INTO THE WORLD TRADE CENTER IN NEW YORK CITY (ECONOMIC POWER), ONE (1) INTO THE PENTAGON (MILITARY POWER) NEAR WASHINGTON DC, AND THE FOURTH INTO A FIELD IN SHANKSVILLE, PA WHICH HAD TARGETED EITHER THE WHITE HOUSE OR US CAPITAL (DEMOCRACY), LEAVING ABOUT 3000 INDIVIDUALS DEAD OR MISSING. THE PILOTS WHO SEIZED OUR AIRCRAFT WERE FROM SAUDI ARABIA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE), LEBANON AND EGYPT, MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES WE TRADE WITH AND HAVE DIPLOMATIC TIES. THE HIJACKERS WERE EVEN TRAINED HERE IN 2000 IN OUR FLIGHT SCHOOLS ON HOW TO FLY OUR COMMERCIAL 747 JETS. OSAMA BIN LADEN, A BILLIONAIRE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR, WAS A SAUDI ARABIA CITIZEN UNTIL 1994. FROM 1994 – 2011 OBAMA WAS STATELESS WITH NO NATIONALITY. THE FOUNDER OF AL QADA, AN ORGANIZATION THAT BELIEVES THEY SHOULD KILL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM THE U.S. AND ALLIED COUNTRIES. TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED INCLUDE SUICIDE ATTACKS AND SIMULTANEOUS BOMBING ON DIFFERENT TARGETS.

AS A NATION WE WERE CAUGHT OFF GUARD, BUT EVER SINCE 9-11 HAVE BEEN ON GUARD. NO ONE EVER SUSPECTED THE 9-11 ATTACK WOULD HAVE BEEN EXECUTED BY 19 AL-QAEDA HIJACKERS FROM SAUDI ARABIA – 15, UAE – 2, LEBANON -1, AND EGYPT -1.

OUR NATIONAL STRATEGY HAS TO INCLUDE THE BEST MILITARY AND THE BEST INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS AGENCIES IN THE WORLD. A MILITARY INTELLIGENCE COMPLEX THAT IS TRAINED, EQUIPPED TO FIGHT AND DEFEAT POTENTIAL ENEMIES INCLUDING IDENTIFYING TERRORIST PLOTS AND DESTROYING THEM BEFORE THEY ATTACK US. CAN YOU IMAGINE A SURPRISE ATTACK FROM AN ENEMY ON OUR HOMELAND AGAIN?

IN ADDITION TO OUR MILITARY, WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL FOR THE CIA, DIA, FBI, U.S. NORTHCOM (NORTHCOM), HOMELAND SECURITY, NATIONAL GUARD, STATE AND LOCAL POLICE, AND WHAT WE LEARNED FROM 9/11. INCIDENTALLY, 47,000 U.S. SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN WOUNDED SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001. THAT'S ABOUT 4700 CASUALTIES A YEAR FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS. IN 2011 425 AMERICANS WERE KILLED IN ACTION ALL IN COMBAT FOR THEIR COUNTRY.

IN OUR YARDS, ON OUR HOMES, IN OUR SCHOOLS, ON OUR MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, STATE CAPITALS, AND OUR NATION'S CAPITAL, EVEN ON OUR POSTAGE STAMPS, WE PROUDLY DISPLAYED OUR FLAG, OLD GLORY, AND OUR NATIONAL COLORS. WE PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS ON A DAILY BASIS WITH EVERY CLASSROOM IN OUR SCHOOLS TAKING THE LEAD, DISPLAYING OUR FLAG IN EACH CLASSROOM AND WITH YOUNG STUDENT AMERICANS WITH THEIR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS INCLUDING SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, RECITING THE PLEDGE

OF ALLEGIANCE. AS DIRECTOR OF THE PHYSICAL PLANT FOR THE STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM 1978 – 1998, 20 YEARS, MY CUSTODIAL STAFF ENSURED THERE WAS A CLEAN FRESH BRIGHT AMERICAN FLAG IN EVERY CLASSROOM FOR THE CHILDREN TO SEE AS THEY RECITED THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PURPOSE AND MAIN IDEAS

INITIALLY THE 30TH DAY OF MAY WAS IDENTIFIED JUST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR HAD ENDED AND DESIGNATED AND CALLED MEMORIAL DAY FOR THE PURPOSE OF REMEMBERING AND HONORING SERVICE PERSONS WHO HAD DIED ON WAR'S BATTLEFIELDS IN DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY, BUT NOW WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THOSE VETERANS WHO FOUGHT ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF WAR AND SURVIVED.

IN THE OBSERVANCE OF MEMORIAL DAY, NO FORM OF CEREMONY IS PRESCRIBED, BUT COMMUNITIES IN THEIR OWN WAYS ARE TO ARRANGE SUCH FITTING SERVICES AND TESTIMONIALS OF RESPECT FOR OUR FALLEN HEROES.

THE SERVICE SHOULD PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN THE FEELING THAT HAS BOUND TOGETHER SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIR MEN, AND MARINES AS THEY UNITED TO SUPPRESS A THREAT TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY.

WHAT CAN ADD MORE TO THE ETERNAL BOND THAT EXISTS WITH SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN IN TIME OF WAR THAN CHERISHING TENDERLY THE MEMORY OF THE HEROIC DEAD AND THE HEROIC LIVING. OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN ARE OUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS.

WE SHOULD GUARD OUR VETERAN'S GRAVES WITH SACRED VIGILANCE THEREBY MAKING A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THEIR MEMORY.

LET NO FOOT TREAD RUDELY ON ANY OF THE HALLOWED GRAVES OF THE HEROIC DEAD. MAY REVERENT VISITORS AND FAMILY FIND TIME TO VISIT OUR CEMETERIES WHERE LOVED VETERANS, WHO HAVE BEEN LAID TO REST, RESIDE.

LET NO VANDALISM, NEGLECT, OR RAVAGES OF TIME BE PRESENT WHICH WOULD DEMONSTRATE WE HAVE FORGOTTEN, AS A NATION OR AS A COMMUNITY, THE COST OF FREEDOM AND THE SACRIFICES MADE BY OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TIME OF WAR. FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.

MAY OUR EYES NEVER GROW DULL OR OUR HANDS SLACK OR OUR HEARTS COLD TO THE SOLEMN TRUST AND RESPECT WE HAVE FOR OUR FALLEN HEROES.

LET US GATHER AROUND OUR VETERANS AND THEIR SACRED REMAINS, AND DECORATE THEIR PRECIOUS GRAVES WITH BEAUTIFUL SPRING FLOWERS AND IN SO DOING, CHERISH TENDERLY THE MEMORY OF OUR HEROIC DEAD.

LET US PLACE ON EACH GRAVE THE DEAR FLAG OF STARS AND STRIPES OF RED, WHITE, AND BLUE FOR WHICH OUR VETERANS FOUGHT, SOME DIED, SOME LIVING WITH HONOR AND COURAGE WHERE COMMON VALOR WAS A COMMON VIRTUE.

LET US AT THIS MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE RENEW OUR PLEDGE TO AIDE AND ASSIST THOSE LOVED ONES OUR VETERANS HAVE LEFT: THEIR WIDOWS, THEIR FRIENDS, THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS.

LET US NEVER LET MEMORIAL DAY BE REMOVED FROM OUR CALENDAR AND NATIONAL HOLIDAYS SO WE AS A NATION ALWAYS HAVE A TIME EACH YEAR TO REMEMBER AND PAY TRIBUTE AS WELL AS HONOR TO OUR MEN AND WOMEN WHO GAVE THEIR ALL FOR THEIR COUNTRY, AND THOSE WHO GAVE AND SURVIVED, PROTECTING AND ENSURING OUR MOST PRECIOUS VALUE FREEDOM.

LET US ALSO PAY A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MARY SMITH, PRESIDENT, AND VIRGINIA LEHMAN, SECRETARY/TREASURER, OF THE LIMESTONE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION AND THOSE MEMBERS FOR TAKING CARE OF THE CEMETERY KEEPING IT CLEAN, WELL GROOMED, AND WITH A RESPECTABLE STATELY APPEARANCE; AND, ALSO A SPECIAL THANKS TO JOHN AND SALLY GUISSWHITE FOR ARRANGING THIS SPECIAL SERVICE.

AND FINALLY – ALL VETERANS WHO SLEEP IN THEIR GRAVES IN THIS CEMETERY AND THE CEMETERIES IN OVAL, COLLOMSVILLE, AND BASTRESS, AS WELL AS THOSE ACROSS THIS GREAT NATION. WE WISH YOU SWEET SLEEP AS YOU WAIT TO RISE ANEW. AND THOSE OF US WHO LIVE, KEEP OUR NATIONAL PRIDE AND FAITH SO THAT OUR FALLEN HEROES WILL NEVER HAVE TO FEAR THAT THEY DIED IN VAIN.

MAY OUR LOVING GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS OUR NATION, ALL OF US, ESPECIALLY OUR DECEASED VETERANS AND ESPECIALLY THOSE DECEASED VETERANS IN THIS CEMETERY AS WELL AS THOSE IN THE OVAL, COLLOMSVILLE, AND BASTRESS CEMETERIES.

LET US OFFER A SPECIAL PRAYER FOR OUR LIVING VETERANS AND THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM BATTLEFIELD WOUNDS, OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS, AS WELL AS OUR MIAs AND POWS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

MERRILL A. SWEITZER JR.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL USMC RETIRED