



The Grand Finale

Patriotism soared during World War II. Everyone rallied to the cause. It was the war to end all wars. But in subsequent years, with prosperity and security, the feeling dissolved to apathy. History, of course, has a way of repeating itself, and there have been wars since World War II. Fighting for territory rights, human rights, religious rights may never end. We can only hope that, someday, the world will learn what most Escapees members already know: how to care about and for our fellow human beings, and how to share with each other.

Hello, Remember Me? -90- *Courtesy of Dakan Funeral Chapel
Submitted by John Acarregui*

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Hello, Remember Me?

Courtesy of Dakan Funeral Chapel

Submitted by John Acarregui #18663

Some people call me Old Glory, others call me the Star Spangled Banner, but whatever they call me, I am your Flag, the Flag of the United States of America. Something has been bothering me, so I thought I might talk it over with you—because it is about you and me.

I remember some time ago people lined up on both sides of the street to watch the parade, and naturally I was leading every parade, proudly waving in the breeze. When your daddy saw me coming, he immediately removed his hat and placed it against his left shoulder so that the hand was directly over his heart...remember?

And you, I remember you. Standing there straight as a soldier. You didn't have a hat, but you were giving the right salute. Remember little sister? Not to be outdone, she was saluting the same as you with her right hand over her heart...remember?

What happened? I'm still the same old flag. Oh, I have a few more stars since you were a boy. A lot more blood has been shed since those parades of long ago.

But now I don't feel as proud as I used to. When I come down your street, you just stand there with your hands in your pockets and I may get a small glance, then you look away. Then I see the children running around and shouting...they don't seem to know who I am. I saw one man take his hat off, then look around, he didn't see anybody else with theirs off, so he quickly put his back on.

Is it a sin to be patriotic anymore? Have you forgotten what I stand for and where I've been...Anzio, Guadalcanal, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf? Take a look at the memorial honor rolls sometime of those who never came back to keep this republic free...One Nation Under God...when you salute me, you are actually saluting them.

Well, it won't be long until I'll be coming down your street again. So, when you see me, stand straight, place your right hand over your heart and I'll salute you, by waving back and I'll know that...you remembered.

The Chapel Is Open Forever

By Steve and Gail Ault #41031

These words are inscribed in the entrance door to the chapel located at the Vietnam National Memorial 40 miles north of Taos, New Mexico, between the little towns of Eagle Nest and Angel Fire on the Enchanted Circle Tour. During construction, Dr. Victor Westphall accidentally locked the doors and on returning found the touching note, “Why did you lock me out when I needed to come in?” The doors have remained open ever since.



Dr. Westphall built this first Vietnam memorial in the nation to honor the veterans of that war, including his son, Victor David Westphall III, one of the many who didn't come home. Each Memorial Day, thousands gather to honor fallen family members, friends, comrades and unknown victims of war. The memorial sits at the crest of a hill where the peacefulness of the setting contradicts the horrors of this war.

Next to the chapel is another building with displays depicting this misunderstood war through copies of letters written home, video interviews with soldiers in Vietnam, pictures, graphics and emblems.

There is plenty of parking, and the chapel is open forever. The visitors center is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Write PO Box 608, Angel Fire, Minnesota 87710, call 877-613-6900 or visit www.angelfirememorial.com for more information.

Steve and Gail have been RVing extensively each year since 1995, and they have seen much

of the U.S.—each area with its own special offerings. This year they picked their favorite—Arizona—and purchased a home. After logging over 225,000 miles in their motorhome, they will try settling down but still keep a rig for short jaunts and group get-togethers.

Photo of Chapel?

- Page 92 Ault's photos of the chapel, there are two, are still on their original article. I've condensed the article and am sending it to you as an attachment so you'll have the photos.

Taps

Contributed by Tom and Elaine Gocke #35371

If you have ever been to a military funeral in which “Taps” was played, this brings out a new meaning of it. Here is something every American should know. Until we read this, we didn’t know, but we checked it out and it is true:

We in the United States have all heard the haunting song, “Taps.” It’s the song that gives us that lump in our throat and usually tears in our eyes. But do you know the story behind the song? If not, we think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison’s Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land. During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field.

Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. When the captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician. The captain chose a bugler. He asked

the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

This wish was granted. The haunting melody we now know as "Taps," used at military funerals, was born. The words are:

Day is done...
Gone the sun...
From the lakes,
From the hills,
From the sky.

All is well...
Safely rest...
God is nigh.
Fading light,
Dims the sight,
And a star
Gems the sky,
Gleaming bright,
From afar,
Drawing nigh,
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise,
For our days,
'Neath the sun,
'Neath the stars,
'Neath the sky.
As we go,
This we know,
God is nigh.

We, too, have felt the chills while listening to "Taps," but we have never seen all the words to the song until now. We didn't even know there was more than one verse. We also never knew the story behind the song, and I didn't know if you had either, so we thought we would pass it along. We now have an even deeper respect for the song than we did before.

Remember those lost and harmed while serving their country.

And also those presently serving in the armed forces.

Please send this on after a short prayer.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the
United States of America
and to the republic
for which it stands,
one nation, under God,
indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all.

