

# The Freedom Fighters' Newsletter

Week of February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Volume 1 Issue 3



New updates on our website:

<http://operationlettersfromhome.weebly.com>

We have made a new section on our website under photos dedicated to honoring the Veterans who made it home. Even though they aren't active they are still Veterans. Some who are pictured are no longer with us but they are still being honored.

<http://operationlettersfromhome.weebly.com/veterans.html>

If you have any family members or close friends you want to see honored on our website please send us an email with some information and pictures of them. Also if you have any ideas, comments, or concerns involving this newsletter, our website, or Facebook page please email us them!

This Newsletter is sent out to three pages now (Operation Letters from Home, American Patriot Coalition, and Support for America's Troops and their Families). Here is a little info on these three pages and links to their Facebook's.

Support for America's Troops and their Families:

My name is Grace Peeler, I'm 23 years old and I started this page a little over two years ago. It was about the time that some of my friends and relatives were being sent overseas or had been overseas for some time. I had a good friend that was sent to Afghanistan right when things became really ugly. I had always wanted to be a Medic but knew it wouldn't happen, a big reason being that I have asthma. Since I couldn't be there in person for my friends, I decided that one way I could reach out to a great number of our Heroes and their Families was to start a support page on Facebook. I had to feel like I was doing something to show them my support. And thus it began!

Through running this page, I have come into contact with several great people. I've been able to talk to some of our Heroes who are currently overseas as well as their Families waiting for them to come home. I'm able to follow the stories of those who have sacrificed and been injured in the line of duty, and as I get to know them more, they become like family to me. I love each and every one of them!!

My goal through keeping the page going is to be a source of love, comfort and support to our Troops as they are overseas fighting and to be there for the Families who sacrifice as well. I have also made a promise that as long as I have breath and life, I will do whatever I can to make sure that the sacrifices of our Troops, past, present and future are not forgotten or taken for granted!! We as a Nation cannot afford to forget those who are fighting for America, and my page is to make sure that No Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine or Coast-guardsmen is EVER forgotten!! God Bless our Troops and God Bless America!!

Just click the blue link to be taken to their Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/SupportforAmericasTroopsandtheirFamilies>

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### American Patriot Coalition:

The American Patriot Coalition supports our military, veterans, emergency services, and their families. All patriots are welcome!

To promote life, liberty and the pursuit of all who threaten it! This is a forum to express thoughts, ideas and beliefs that are in line with the ideals of a freedom loving/respecting society. If you cannot abide with this mission statement, BUGGER OFF!!!

The APC is open to all who value freedom and all the liberties that are granted to us by the US Constitution. Hate speak/rhetoric WILL NOT BE TOLERATED ON THIS SITE! IF IT IS FOUND, THE POSTER WILL BE BLOCKED/REMOVED FROM THE SITE and reported to FB as it is the admin's privilege to do so. We are not political and/or religious in nature, but we will not tolerate any group/individual that would infringe or curtail the freedom/liberties of any being. Enjoy what you see, read, and hear. Please feel free to recommend, share, and/or post anything for the betterment of the site. We also support the International community allies that fight against ANY form of oppression and the curtailing of freedom, whatever form that takes.

Just click the blue link to be taken to their Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/AmericanPatriotCoalition>

### Operation Letters from Home:

Operation: Letters from Home was started on July 14th, 2012 after learning a close friend of Dylan's lost a close friend in Afghanistan at the end of June 2012. Dylan sent a letter through the mail to his friend and her family. After receiving the letter the family knew that Shawn will not be forgotten and his sacrifice won't be either. So after that Dylan decided to write letters to other families of the fallen, and troops (wounded and Active), along with Vets. A few days after starting the page he went to Eden, NY where they had the Moving Vietnam Wall on display. He was there for a few hours looking at the panels, thanking vets, and just watching how each vet reacted differently. Some broke down and cried, others just had a silent moment, while others were just reading the panels and moving along. It truly was a moving sight to see these vets and how they reacted to it. While Dylan was there he met many vets who he continues to talk to and sadly some of them are embarrassed to tell people they were in Nam because they were ashamed when they came home.

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### Message from a young troop supporter:

“Hello my name is Victoria and I am seven years old. I am a Girl Scout and am selling Girl Scout cookies to donate to the troops overseas. All boxes are \$3.50 a box and will be sent to the troops after cookie sells end in March. If you would like to help me please contact us through Facebook at Tommy's Pizza Cranston or call them at 401-944-4634 for information. You may also contact Kim Menna Sacco on Facebook with any questions. You can make checks payable to GSCCC and drop them off or mail checks to Tommy's Pizza Too 870 Oaklawn Avenue Cranston, RI 02920. We also have a collection box dedicated to raising money for our cause. I would also like to add that if you would like to place the donation online please contact my mom Melinda L. DeWitt at [katluvsonly1@hotmail.com](mailto:katluvsonly1@hotmail.com) with your email address and she can email you the link. Keep in mind that you will have to mail her a check or money order made out to: GSCCC. My mom will email you her address and when your check or money order is received she will confirm your promise to donate. All boxes donated will be sent to those fighting for our country. My goal is to send as many as possible. I would like to thank you for your support if you choose to do so.”

How many can we get for our troops?

Unlike previous wars with parades, parties, and other events for the troops when they came home, these Vietnam veterans came home to protests, no support and no love. They were called baby killers and treated as such all because of how the media portrayed the war. Let's face it the media is biased no matter what they say, and will show what they feel like it and not caring what it will do to those displayed in the news. Vietnam was the first war in which media used cameras and were allowed to be on ground with the troops during the firefights. So it is the mission of Operation Letters from Home to make sure that the troops do not lose support while deployed nor when they come home.

Our Facebook page link is:

[www.facebook.com/OperationLettersfromHome](http://www.facebook.com/OperationLettersfromHome)

Our website is:

[www.OperationLettersfromHome.weebly.com](http://www.OperationLettersfromHome.weebly.com)

Our Email is:

[OperationLettersfromHome@gmail.com](mailto:OperationLettersfromHome@gmail.com)

Would you like to send letters to our troops please click the link below to be taken to our website's section to learn how to:

<http://operationlettersfromhome.weebly.com/get-involved.html>

Are you a Veteran, presently in the military, family of a troop, wounded warrior, or sadly the family of a fallen HERO? If so please email us at [OperationLettersfromHome@gmail.com](mailto:OperationLettersfromHome@gmail.com) to tell us your story and to get you on the list to be written to!!!



Here are some pictures for all of you to look at



Do you have questions that you need answered? Please email us these questions and we will get them answered by our friend Dr. Clinton other professionals. We will post them in every newsletter.

Questions for Dr. Diane Clinton , PTSD Psychologist

Q: Is it a symptom of PTSD that my husband has nightmares every night? He scares me screaming! Amy

A: yes, unfortunately it is a symptom of PTSD. He is remembering the terrible things that happened to him or that he witnessed. There are medications on the market that will help in quieting such vivid nightmares. One tested is Ambien. But nothing works better than talking it out if he will. He should talk to a counselor if can that specializes in PTSD.

Q: Does therapy really help PTSD or is it a scam? Jim

A: Indeed Jim, therapy does help. Sometimes some warriors wants to talk to another war experienced vet, and sometimes a civilian psychologist who specializes in PTSD.

Sometimes it's easier to talk to a civilian PTSD specialized professional because it erases the stigma associated with a warrior admitting he needs help. The military teaches you not to complain, be strong, and get back up! It takes corage and integrity for a patriot to ask for help! I deeply respect the warriors who have trusted me into their lives! I'm honored. But the answer is a huge YES, IT HELPS!



The journal of Melissa Jarboe, a first person account of the life events after her husband was shot by a sniper in the Zhari District of Afghanistan in April 2011.




Inside the hospital walls of Walter Reed to the homecoming of SSG Jamie Jarboe to a hero's welcome from a thankful nation to his last moments with his wife vigil by his side. Sacrificed puts readers alongside Jamie and Melissa as they fight for each day they are given, their unconditional love, strength & dedication is extraordinary.

Please visit the following website to buy this now:

<http://www.jamiejarboe.org/#/bookdonate/4570697168>





My name is Chan; I am the sister of the late John Douangdara. He was the lead dog handler for the Elite Seal Team 6. John and his Military Working Dog, Bart both perished on a Chinook helicopter that was shot down on August 6, 2011. I want to share with you a more personal side of John that you probably have not heard or read about.

My parents fled Laos, a small land-locked country situated in Indochina, back in 1980, with just me in tow. Born December 29, 1984 in Sioux City Iowa, John was the third child of all five siblings. Our family actually grew up on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River in South Sioux City. For my family, Nebraska was quite a change from communist Laos and our Buddhist foundation; but it was an opportunity we always appreciated.



As a child Johnny, our family's nickname, was the typical boy. Watching him grow up into a teenager, I noticed early on that he was not a follower. While countless local kids were often pulled into gangs and drugs or the lesser evil of skipping school, Johnny remained steadfast; he was simply not susceptible to peer pressure.

While others boys were romancing girls all night, Johnny was working on computers at home. He was pretty much a computer geek. — a well-loved computer geek. He thrived on school activities and enjoyed the challenges of debate team, an activity that bolstered his skills in research, public speaking, persuasion, teamwork and finding opponents weaknesses.

He had tons of friends and I never once heard of any of his friends being mad at him or talking bad about him. He was the friend that you could always count on and that trait stayed with him throughout his life. When his friends were deployed, he would step in. One of his friend's daughters was distraught that her father was unable to attend a father-daughter school function, but was ecstatic when Johnny stood in for her dad. He sometimes also babysat for friends so they could make the most of their time at home with taking their wives out on "date night".

From as far back as I can remember my father was always trying to get one of his kids in the military. My mother's grandfather was a captain in the Laotian Army. My father knew that the military would add discipline and structure to our lives so we always stopped at the recruiter's office every time we went to the mall. We even had an Army bumper sticker on our front door that reminded us that it would make him proud if one of us would join. "Army—Be All You Can Be" is what we saw every day when we walked out.

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Towards the end of Johnny's junior year in high school he started weighing the options of what he wanted to do after high school. He started going to see recruiters and by the beginning of his senior year he had made up his mind to enlist in the Navy and specifically wanted to work on in the Navy's nuclear program. In fact, his plans were for him to graduate from high school a semester early, so he would be heading to boot camp in January.

Our brother, Pan, and I, being older siblings, sat Johnny down and asked if the Navy was what he really wanted to do. I couldn't see my geeky little brother making it into the military. He was small- 5'5" and maybe 115 pounds- and would probably have to prove himself to make it. We offered to pay for his college; even if that meant taking out personal loans for him. But, he was adamant about going into the military and that was that. Debate over. John graduated midterms in 2002 and headed to Great Lakes IL for Navy boot camp in 2003.

John went in as a Master at Arms (security and force protection) and after completing his school, he headed to Sicily, Italy. In his calls and letters, we could tell he was homesick and it broke my heart hearing my baby brother so unhappy. It appeared it was going to be a long three year tour for all of us.

Weeks passed and I noticed his mood had changed. Johnny would call me, but instead of being muted voices, the background noises were now barking dogs. I asked what he was doing at the kennels and he told me he was watching the dogs that were retired, but unadoptable. They would stay in the Navy until their last breath. I asked him if that was a hard thing to do, and he told me he spent time giving great care to these K9s before they had to go. You could tell in his voice that he loved being around these dogs.

Then, a wonderful surprise: Johnny called me to tell me that he would be in San Antonio, Texas for canine school. I was ecstatic since I lived in Dallas and was going to see my baby brother more often now.

It was not until after Johnny had passed and I met Billy, a handler who served with John in Sicily, that I learned the full story of Johnny being drawn into the kennel. Billy shared with me that indeed, Johnny was miserable in Sicily. Billy felt badly for him so he invited Johnny to stop by the kennels and hang out with him. Billy felt like he needed to take this young kid under his wings and make his stay a little easier by befriending him. That is when Billy discovered that Johnny loved being in the kennels and being with dogs. Johnny would work 10-12 hour shifts at the gate then would go to the kennels and volunteer his time at the kennel for a couple of hours. Once Billy realized that Johnny loved being with the dogs and that he had this natural understanding of them, Billy put in a word for Johnny to head to canine school in San Antonio.

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After canine school, Johnny loved his job. He never stopped talking about his dogs. His first deployment to Iraq scared me. He had a bomb sniffing dog and they worked the gates. I told Johnny that he needed to call or email me to let me know he was safe. We never talked about how it was over there. We both knew it was dangerous and our phone conversations were more of getting his mind away from this dangerous place. He was the type of guy to make the best of things in any situation.

An example of that are the pictures he would send me. He would email me pictures of his dogs and he always had them wearing silly accessories. He had bunny ears on one dog for Easter. On his 21st birthday, he had to celebrate it in Iraq. But he sent me a picture of him and his dog with Hawaiians leis and a bottle of sparkling grape juice celebrating the occasion.

Going through all of Johnny's personal belongings after he passed one could tell how much each and every dog he handled meant to him. He had all kinds of pictures of his dogs all over his house and on his cell phone.

Most especially, he had Toby's ashes in his room. Toby was a dog he had on deployment on his second tour in Iraq. Tragically, Toby was killed in action in 2008, the only time Johnny ever called home crying. The action remains classified, but we do know that Toby had saved 6 Canadian lives that day and our family was gifted with a plaque from the Canadian Military to honor Johnny and Toby, after Johnny's passing.

We also heard of stories from so many fellow handlers of how great of a handler he was: from taking the most difficult dogs and being able to work with them to how he would baby his dogs by carrying them around the kennel over his shoulders.

I can honestly say that these dogs were his passion. So dying beside his dog and his fellow comrades, those in whom Johnny trusted his life, would have been, to Johnny, an honorable way to leave this earthly life.

The city of South Sioux City honored John by naming a dog park honoring military dog handlers and military dogs – the John Douangdara Memorial War Dog Park. We, the family are working hard to raise money to erect a bronze statue of John and Bart at the park. In the future we would like to be able to honor all military handlers and military dogs.

Currently the statue is being worked on by the internationally known Susan Bahary. She has worked on an "Always Faithful" a memorial in honor of Marine Military Working Dogs that is erect at a military base in Guam. So, it would seem fitting for her to work on John and Bart's statue.

(The following page is pictures of John and his loyal partner)



