

feb 27

the forgotten ones

"the Lord has sworn by the pride of jacob: "surely I will never forget any of their works." amos 8:7

i have a little story i want to tell you. a story the involves humility and gratefulness.

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richard, my husband, never really talked a lot about his time in vietnam other than he had been shot by a sniper. however, he had a rather grainy, 8x10 black and white photo he had taken at a USO show of ann margaret with bob hope in the background that was one of his treasures.

a few years ago, ann margaret was doing a book signing at a local bookstore. richard wanted to see if he could get her to sign the treasured photo, so he arrived at the bookstore at 12 o'clock for the 7:30 signing.

when i got there after work, the line went all the way around the bookstore, circled the parking lot and disappeared behind a parking garage. before her appearance, bookstore employees announced that she would sign only her book and no memorabilia would be permitted.

richard was disappointed but wanted to show her the photo and let her know how much those shows meant to

lonely gi's so far from home. ann margaret came out looking as beautiful as ever, and as second in line, it was soon richard's turn.

he presented the book for her signature and then took out the photo. when he did, there were many shouts from the employees that she would not sign it. richard said, "i understand. i just wanted her to see it."

she took one look at the photo, tears welled up in her eyes and she said, "this is one of my gentlemen from vietnam, and i most certainly will sign his photo. i know what these men did for their country, and i always have time for 'my gentlemen.'"

with that, she pulled richard across the table and planted a big kiss on him. she then made quite a to-do about the bravery of the young men she met over the years, how much she admired them, and how much she appreciated them. there weren't too many dry eyes among those close enough to hear. she then posed for pictures and acted as if he were the only one there.

later at dinner, richard was very quiet. when i asked if he'd like to talk about it, my big strong husband broke down in tears. "that's the first time anyone ever thanked me for my time in the army," he said.

that night was a turning point for him. he walked a little straighter, and for the first time in years, was proud to be a vet. i'll never forget ann margaret for her graciousness and how much that small act of kindness meant to my husband.

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those of us old enough remember the bob hope tours and what they meant to our men and women of war; ones ready to give there all for God, family and country. too often today they have been forgotten and even looked upon with disrespect and ridicule. while that may be well-places feelings with some of the leadership, we should not let it flow down to the rank and file.

remember a veteran and soldier today. thank one should they cross your path. we all may be fighting soon for the freedom we cherish and so casually accept. freedom isn't free. it is paid for at great cost. Jesus paid for our freedom and regrettably there are many who refuse to thank Him as well. "therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." john 8:36