

DEFEND OUR TROOPS

Letter to an Accused Soldier: SSgt Hal Mitch Warner

August 10, 2008

Dearest Mitch,

I recently read [a tribute to First Lieutenant Andrew Grayson](#) that was written by his uncle after charges were filed against him in the Haditha incident. I shed tears as I read it and I realized that often it is easy to allow words to go unsaid. Especially words that may be sentimental or words that may cause us more emotion than we are comfortable with.

As I pondered the charges that have been made against you and again read the letter by Lieutenant Grayson's uncle, I asked myself, "why?" I thought of reason upon reason, some realistic and some not so realistic. I came to no conclusion, but I did decide that the time had come to pay tribute to you.

As I began this missive, I reflected upon you and how you came to be the person that you are. I wondered what and who influenced you the most. Was it the many books on history that you read? Was it a movie that you watched? Was it a teacher, or preacher? Was it one of your grandpas, who both served in the military? Was it one of your uncles, who all served? Or, perhaps it was your father who is a retired military man?

Whatever the reason, at some juncture you made the decision to join the military. A man that is willing to put on the uniform of this country and do what is necessary for the right of liberty and the right of freedom for this land. A man that is willing to put his life on the line.

Under the Stars and Stripes many wars have been fought by men such as you. They have been fought by men of valor who believed in the right of democracy. They have been fought by men of courage who answered the call and marched forward into battle. They have been fought by men of conviction who understand that there has been and always will be a price for freedom.

You are such a man. You believe in the American dream, in American values, and most especially you believe in freedom. You have served your country for our freedom to live in domestic tranquility, to pursue happiness, and to worship freely. You have gone the extra mile in keeping America free for American's to live their American dream, with these freedoms intact for this generation and hopefully the next.

At this point I will refrain from saying much more, but I do feel that I speak for most Americans when I say that freedom is not nor has it ever been free. The price for America's freedom has been great, and has been purchased by men such as you throughout history. It started with the Revolutionary War and has continued to present day America.

I don't think a value can be placed on the service that has been rendered to this country by you and others like you. You serve because you chose, and you chose because you are a brave, honorable, devoted, and proud American. You are on your third tour of duty in Iraq, and have given yourself freely to your country for this cause. No, freedom is not free, but it is a precious gift, given by men like you to this nation.

I, for one, am a thankful American, and a proud aunt. My prayers are always with you.

Love,

Aunt Martha

August 10, 2008

Note:

The family of SSgt Mitch Warner has established a fund. Anyone wishing to donate may send checks, payable to "Warner Defense Fund", to the following address:

Armstrong Bank
1111 W. Broadway
Muskogee, OK 74401
