

By Jesse Jose

A Cup O’ Kapeng Barako

T his Memorial Day weekend, in honor of America’s fallen patriots, I’d like to quote this essay written by Charles E. (Chuck) Norris, a Vietnam veteran and a former Recon Platoon Sergeant of 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, Vietnam, 1966.

I came across it while I was at the VA Hospital here in Seattle waiting to be called in for my doctor’s appointment. A lot of war-wounded and disabled veterans use this hospital and the wait at times can be long.

I usually bring a book with me that I can read while waiting. But I left that darn book at home that I’ve been reading this week: “House Rules,” Jodi Picoult’s latest, a perfect book to read *pa naman* while waiting.

“The Voice of Memorial Day,” an Ode to America’s Fallen Warriors - MabuhayRadio

Written by Jesse Jose

Friday, 28 May 2010 16:43 - Last Updated Friday, 28 May 2010 17:15

So I picked up this magazine, “Purple Heart,” that was laying on one of the tables of the waiting room. While flipping the pages, I saw this essay: **“The Voice of Memorial Day.”** After I’ve glanced at the first sentence, I was drawn into it.

It was beautifully written.

It was simple and easy to read.

It was profound.

It was touching.

I wanted to share it with y’all, Dear Readers. So, I lifted the magazine and brought it home to copy the essay. I brought it back to the hospital a week later when I went in for my follow-up appointment.

{xtypo_quote} Editor’s Note: Here’s another article that Jesse Jose wrote on May 31, 2007, for that year’s Memorial-Day commemoration:

[Yo, America! Where's Your Outrage?](#)

{/xtypo_quote}

Here’s the essay, an ode, really. Read it slowly. Savor the sentences. Feel the emotions of the soldier who wrote it.

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Hear the cries and longings ... of
America
's brave warriors.

Remember them on Memorial Day.

In church this Sunday, let's utter a prayer for them.

Here goes:

□

I am the voice of America’s fallen patriots. □ I am a soldier, a sailor, a Marine, an Airman and a Coastguardsman. □ I am the young man or woman who gave up my job, and left my beloved family to don the uniform of my country and fight for freedom in far away lands when called to do so.

□

I fought with General George Washington at Valley Forge, I fought for the rights of fellow Americans alongside Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg

.

□

I was there in World War I again for freedom and World War II with General Dwight Eisenhower.

□

I struggled across the frozen battlefields of Korea

, I fought in the steaming jungles of South Vietnam

. I stood on the sands of Saudi Arabia

as I liberated as I liberated Kuwait

.

□

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□

I fought in many places many of you never heard of such as, Old Baldy, Heartbreak Ridge, Hill 88I, Pork Chop Hill, The Chosin Reservoir, Hobo Woods, the Ia Dang Valley and Khe Sanh.

□

I have always been there when freedom and democracy were in danger.

□

I am not here with you today because I gave my life for what I believed in.□ I died in the arms of my fellow soldier whose tears for my passing mixed as he held my head in his arms and comforted me as I left this life.

□

I am not here with you in body, but NEVER DOUBT that I am here with you in spirit.□ I am there in the furls of the Star and Stripes you raised in my honor this morning.

□

My face is on the statues you carved in bronze to remember me.

□

My name is on the cold black granite wall you erected in Washington

,

D.C.

□

□

I am there in the memories of my comrades I fought side by side in my quest for

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freedom. I am the memory in the hearts of those I left behind, those whom I loved with all my heart, yet found the courage to ensure they would experience the taste of freedom forever more by the GIVING OF MY LIFE.

□

I am the first ray of sunshine you see on a bright sunny day. I am in the memories of my children who grew up without my guidance, NEVER TO KNOW THE LOVE I HELD FOR THEM SO DEEP IN MY HEART.

□

I don’t wish to be remembered as a hero. If my actions in battle were heroic, it was not to make me a hero. It was because I placed freedom and democracy above all else and I was willing to give my life to defend them.

□

If I saved the life of my fellow soldier and gave my own in doing so, it was NOT to make me a hero, it was because he was my comrade in arms and he fought for the same principles I fought for. He would have done the same thing for me given the chance.

□

If you wish to remember me as hero, REMEMBER ME AS THE CHAMPION OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FOR THE GREATEST NATION ON EARTH: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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□

I hope that you will never forget me and the sacrifice I made for you and others to live free. □ Remember me when you cast your votes for the leaders of this great nation who must carry on the principles I fought and died for.

□

When you tell my children of me, instill in them the same principles I fought and died for and tell them also of MY DEEP AND EVERLASTING LOVE FOR THEM THAT REMAINS EVEN IN MY PASSING. □ Tell them that I look down from my home in heaven upon their shining faces every morning and I guide their footsteps through life’s treacherous journeys. □ Tell them also to pass my memory to their children and their children’s children and let them know that I gave my life for them to live free.

□

As you travel this great nation from sea to shining sea, take in the splendor of the purple mountain majesties, the amber waves of grain, the children running to and fro as they play ...

□

Remember that this freedom is NOT free, no, it is NOT free!

□

It has been paid for with my blood and the blood of my comrades and forefathers, who

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just as I, placed freedom and democracy above all else and gave our lives in defense of it.

□

Cherish this freedom I have given you, fight for it to the very end to keep it sacred, for no sacrifice is too great to let it slip from your grasp.

□

If you will do these things, then I will be with you again the next time you come to honor me and I will reach out and touch you just as I have today and I will rest in peace, KNOWING THE GREATEST NATION ON EARTH, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SHALL NOT PERISH.□

□

God Bless America.

I t’s indeed a beautiful ode, isn’t it? Thank you so much, Dear Readers, for listening to the collective VOICES of my comrades and brothers-in-arms who have gone to their eternal rest.

Let’s honor their memory this weekend and when evening comes, listen to that solitary soldier blowing his bugle to the haunting tune of “Taps” bidding them restful good night.

Y’all have a great weekend. **JJ**

□

More Editor’s Notes: Here are the other articles in this website that are related to Memorial Day:

[Remembering the Asian \(and Filipino\) Holocausts on Memorial Day](#)

[A Message for Memorial Day: "No Veteran Left Behind"](#)

[The Truth About the Veterans' Lobby \(Part One\)](#)

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[Remembering the Asian \(and Filipino\) WWII Holocausts and the Tens of Millions of Abortion Victims on Memorial Day](#)

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