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ARMY (ISSN 0004-2455), published monthly. Vol. 60, No. 6. Subscription \$33 a year. Publication offices: Association of the United States Army, 2425 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201-3326, (703) 841-4300, FAX: (703) 841-3505, e-mail: armymag@ausa.org. Visit AUSA's web page on the Internet at www.ausa.org. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, Va., and at additional mailing office.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ARMY Magazine, Box 101560, Arlington, VA 22210-0860.

Letters

Remembering D-Day

■ June 6 marks the 66th anniversary of the D-Day assault along the coast of northern France during World War II. The 1998 film "Saving Private Ryan," set during the invasion of Normandy, was noted for the intensity of its opening scenes that depicted American forces landing on Omaha Beach. This letter from Paul J. Greenhalgh Jr. to his daughter, Cathleen, conveys his reaction to the film as well as his thoughts on service.

Letter to Cathleen

You asked me to tell you what I thought of "Saving Private Ryan." Last night I saw it and was touched by its depth and truthfulness. Having been in the 82nd Airborne and on alert for combat, I found much to relate to. I once knew what FUBAR meant, but now will have to ask someone who served. Served is the correct word. That is what all soldiers did. Our favorite complaint was, "The incompetent are telling the unwilling to do the unnecessary." [This was] largely true. But deep within us was a conviction that we were part of the forces of good—that our lives were forever connected to the soldiers lying on Omaha Beach. They gave. It would be unthinkable to refuse to carry our flag in their stead. Teilhard de Chardin said, "Life is mankind's never-ending journey back to God. Our dignity calls us to participate to the fullest during our window of time on the journey." In the end, the soldiers' contributions in the movie and our service will fit together.

The movie was certainly a most realistic depiction of combat. All of the emotions and cruelty of war were dramatized with crushing effect. The expe-

rience was real. I found myself loving and being inspired by each young soldier. Their courage and sacrifice made me sob at death's sudden impact. With them, I write to you today. There is an honor (a sacred trust) that I feel with them. I wanted to reach out to the screen and have our fingers touch. I wanted them to hear, "It's worth it. I'll make your sacrifice worthwhile." My hand become one with theirs on the bleeding stomach of the dying medic.

Until today, I thought the question of life was, "Who am I?" Now, there is a better question. Ryan put it best. "Did I lead a good life? Did I do my best to carry on the flag of truth for which countless others have died?" Contrary to what our world tells us, we are not alone. Freedom is not isolation. Each of us is forever connected to the sacrifices of the past. Our struggles of today will influence those who will continue our crusade. Together we will triumph and hold each other forever in the place where human eye has not seen and ear has not heard.

You, too, are on the journey. You are good—the journey assures that. I have tried to nurture your goodness, and you will find truth by thinking for yourself. Each of us experiences our own Omaha Beach. You must find your own way. We are with you.

PAUL J. GREENHALGH JR.
Cherry Hill, N.J.

The Global Effort

■ My compliments to MSG William B. Bertelson on "Bringing Stability to Southern Sudan: Views from One NCO" (May "Front & Center"). It is re-

This Month's Cover

In celebration of the Army's 235th birthday on June 14, and to honor those who serve our country today, this month's cover features streamers from some of the Army's memorable campaigns. In further appreciation of the Army and its history, please turn to "Army Teamwork—A National Asset" (page 18) by BG Harold W. Nelson, U.S. Army retired, and "Historically Speaking: Recognizing Valor" (page 85) by BG John S. Brown, U.S. Army retired.

(Cover photograph by Dennis Steele)



freshening to read about subjects beyond Iraq or Afghanistan, as it exemplifies our global effort. I have deployed to East Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya) in support of U.S. Central Command and U.S. Africa Command requirements over the past six years and can confidently confirm the importance of cultural understanding when working with partner nations.

In 2009, I taught counterterrorism analysis to a class of senior NCOs and

warrant officers at the Kenyan School of Military Intelligence. The students were attentive and intensely engaged, yet seemed hesitant when I explained the imperative of providing detailed assessments to the commander.

In private discussions with some of the students, I learned that they had to be very careful when presenting information because their leadership was from a different tribe and to “appear smarter” than their officers—by

telling them something that they did not already know—was akin to career suicide. My advice to the students was simple: When providing information to the commander, it better not be the first time your “leftenant” hears it. Engage with your leaders early and often. Success in counterterrorism is not defined by who gives a briefing, but in stopping the next attack.

CPT RUSSELL TOWNSEND
Valrico, Fla.

ARMY Magazine welcomes letters to the editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited for reasons of style, accuracy or space limitations. Letters should be exclusive to ARMY Magazine. All letters must include the writer's full name, address and daytime telephone number. The volume of letters we receive makes individual acknowledgment impossible. Please send letters to The Editor, ARMY Magazine, AUSA, 2425 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201. Letters may also be faxed to (703) 841-3505 or sent via e-mail to armymag@ausa.org.

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