

THE POWER OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR MILITARY

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues, but the patent of all others”. Cicero

For civilians, in this great country of ours, it can be easy to forget the value and sacrifices our military has made, is making, and will continue to make in the future for us and all we hold dear. And for our U.S. military—heroes all, past, present, and future – it may feel at times that the world does not appreciate and value you, as it should. As a matter of fact, you may at times feel... INVISIBLE.

BUT YOU ARE **VALUED** and **APPRECIATED**. And rest assured, you are not, nor will you ever be... invisible.

Having an **Attitude of Gratitude** should not be a challenge for any of us that get to live in the *“Home of the brave and land of the free.”* It should be an easy choice and resonate inside our DNAs for the freedoms we have in this ever changing and dangerous environment we now are living in. Freedoms that we should never take for granted; freedoms that can be categorized as:

- **Freedom of Speech**
- **Freedom of Expression**
- **Freedom from Fear**
- **Freedom from Want**

Freedom, in general, is an unalienable right... and for us in the U.S., it’s even Constitutional. How can our military be “invisible” and not valued when their role is ensuring Americans have these FREEDOMS. They even protect the freedoms of speech and expression when those that they protect speak out and protest against them! Amazing, when you think about that! We may not be perfect as a nation, but our military makes us the very best of the best. And then there is the freedom from fear- whether the threat comes from bad, non-state actors, unstable regimes, or resurgent global powers looking to their past and wanting it back again—regardless of the consequence. Plus, the same is true for keeping us free from want to ensure that trade, energy, food, and commerce are not at risk. Add to that, the COVID environment in which we are living—that I will term “the great distraction”- and our military is as valuable as it has ever been.

Bottom-line, if anyone ever deserved ENCOURAGEMENT, it is our military!!

What they, our military **INVESTS** in us as a nation is priceless: Their time from loved ones; along with their physical; emotional; financial and psychological “investments” into our country, simply cannot be repaid. It is therefore, in my opinion, as civilians that you protect, we should stand up and do our part: to encourage; to educate; to provide aid; comfort... but most of all to encourage and share that **YOU ARE VALUED!!!**

John Kennedy once said:

“Word to the Nation: Guard zealously your right to serve in the Armed Forces, for without them, there will be no other rights to guard.”

Also:

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget the highest appreciation is not to just utter words, but to live by them.”

Amen!

My name is Brent Longnecker and I’m now blessed to be part of the **Soldiers Angels TEAM!** Soldiers Angels mission is to provide aid, comfort, and resources to the military, veterans, and their families. **Soldiers Angels** is an amazing not-for-profit organization that garnered 4 out of 4 stars by Charity Navigator. They also earned top rankings in both financial management and accountability and transparency. What that all means is they are passionate and disciplined in their mission. There is no waste... only a desire to maximize the resources they must bless our men and women that are part of the U.S. Armed Forces. I have recently been accepted into the **Soldiers Angels** team—I enjoy writing. So, it is my honor and privilege to do so for them, you, and our U.S. military and Armed Forces- both here and abroad. Whether you are deployed, wounded, a veteran or the families of these brave men and women, I pray I can contribute and make a difference.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Our words and our actions either encourage or discourage others—there is no middle ground. The words spoken into our lives have a tremendous amount of impact on where we will be, tomorrow. When we ENCOURAGE, we are, in essence, imparting courage which I find amazing since the goal of this article is to impart “more courage to the most courageous”. Further, positive words actions are sometimes very difficult to remember, while negative words and actions are actually very hard to forget. A long time ago, I heard a psychologist state that “it takes 10 words of encouragement to make up for one of discouragement.” WOW! Bottom-line, if you are living and breathing, we all need encouragement. And if you are part of our U.S. military, Soldiers Angels would like to make sure you receive it- ten-fold!

Think about it... without encouragement, life could soon feel pointless and burdensome. Without encouragement, we could be overwhelmed by the very real and perceived pains of our lives. Without encouragement, we can quickly feel under-valued. Without encouragement, we can

begin to think only internally of ourselves and never think outside ourselves to bless others and use the talents we have been given to make a difference.

The word “encouragement” also has an interesting etymology worth sharing. Specifically:

From Middle English encouragen, encoragen, from Anglo-Norman encoragier, from Old French encoragi. Roots are in the 15th century. It’s original meaning was “to foster, give help or patronage. To mentally support; to motivate, give courage, hope or spirit... To spur on, strongly recommend.”

We ALL need encouragement!! That, we must all agree on. Plus, never a bad day when two allies help put a great word together.

Interestingly, when I was researching the roots of the word “encourage”, I was struck with how important the word was back then around “giving courage” and “to motivate”. The 15th century! I went back and counted sixty different wars during that century. 60! Then, as I cross-referenced it against viruses at the time, guess what had everyone’s attention while wars were everywhere? The black plague. As I thought about that and about how key those words are today, I wondered about the impact COVID has/ is having on our geopolitical front- where are troops are always ready to go and defend. I thought about what a “great distractor” this virus has been for us, like the black plague in the 15th century. My research continued.

In a great article by both James L. Regens and John S. Bedows, titled: **The COVID- 19 Pandemic and Geopolitics**, they had this to say. And I quote:

“The COVID-19 pandemic is taking place during a transitional period in geopolitics. The survival of liberal internationalism and America’s leadership role—related but distinct geopolitical concerns—have become increasingly questioned as the pandemic has progressed. Liberal internationalism has been based on expanding trade and increasing globalization under a system tied to western-centric norms and values. From 1945 through the first two decades following the Cold War’s end, the United States was the primary, but not sole, advocate for this approach to structuring political and economic relations. In essence, liberal internationalism provided the basis for a relatively stable, multi-decade geopolitical equilibrium grounded in free market economies. The world today, however, is much different politically, economically, socially, and culturally than it was in 1991. As a result, given changes in the global order over the past 30 years, is liberal internationalism as it has existed since World War II possible without continued American pre-eminence?

Sino-American rivalry, ascending Chinese economic and military power, growing disenchantment in numerous countries with the consequences of globalization, and U.S. global retrenchment under the Trump administration have amplified debate within the

U.S. and concern abroad—especially on the part of U.S. allies—about the future of liberal internationalism and the global order. From a strategic standpoint, this question provides a lens through which to assess plausible geopolitical implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The cliché of a globalized, borderless world in which national borders drawn on maps no longer matter is rendered hollow by the reality that, although SARS-CoV-2 spread is not prevented by political boundaries per se, the effectiveness of the overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic is contingent on decisions made within but resonating far beyond those boundaries. National strategies for mitigating the onset and the consequences of COVID-19 resonate far beyond national borders. Decisions within those states may prolong or shorten the acuteness of the pandemic within their borders, contain or allow it to spread beyond their borders, and in so doing prolong or reduce the period of global economic slowdown, political flux, and social disruption. This article summarizes the evolution of the pandemic as a threat to global stability and analyzes its geopolitical implications.”

One theme I particularly picked up on by them and their article is:

NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR MITIGATING THE ONSET AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 RESONATE FAR BEYOND NATIONAL BORDERS.

Cases in point: Russia at the Ukraine’s Border and North Korea testing more missiles in the first month of 2022, that they did in all of 2021.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

It’s time we give it and more to our military...to those deployed, wounded, a veteran and/or families.

Remember, *“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”* - Winston S. Churchill