

Today marks my final roll call with you. But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the corps, and the corps, and the corps. I bid you farewell.¹

Patriotic Poetry: James L. of Oildale:

The scrum of battles, conflicts, and campaigns has inspired many to poetry and song. Back in 2007, many of you participated in the production of a DVD that was sent to our troops in the Middle East. Its title track was co-written by a man who tunes in to our Internet broadcasts. He has been appointed to the office of Poet Laureate of Oildale, California. I would like to include three of his works that salute those who have both fought and died in the defense of our national colors.

The first two are taken from his book and both of which have recently graced the home pages of our Web sites.

“Silent Heroes”

*Normandy, France
6 June 1944*

I walked, today,
Though just in fantasy,
Along a stretch of beach
At Normandy.

The tide was busy with the sand,
The sky was standing clear,
And courage, long departed now,
Had left no sign of fear.

Inland, across the grassy fields,
Amid the well-kept lawn,
“Old Glory” still draws duty;
I found her there, at dawn.

A quiet thought, a morning breeze,
As she began to stir ...
I sensed the scope of sacrifice
Entrusted now to her.

I strolled at ease among the rows
Of crosses, placed with care,
And felt the tug upon my heart,
Of honor's presence there.

¹ <http://www.keytlaw.com/f-4/general-macarthur-duty-honor-country-speech/> accessed November 5, 2015.

Then looking back I watched that flag
With rippling colors wave ...
A proud salute to each white cross
That marked each silent hero's grave.
(p. 59)

"The American Fighting Man"

I fought the British redcoats,
Served Washington with pride.
I marched with Grant, and yes, with Lee,
I fell at Custer's side.
I made the charge up San Juan Hill.
I "held" at the Alamo.
A threat to peace—the First World War,
And I was called to go.

I shed my blood throughout War Two
On sand and jungle tree;
They pulled me from the flaming wrecks;
They buried me at sea.
At Korea's thirty-eighth parallel
I soldiered amid the sham.
I left my loved ones, took up arms,
And died in Vietnam.

On every conceivable battlefield,
Desert sand to jungle marsh,
I suffer the agonies, the mortal wounds,
In conditions most brutal and harsh.
I've viewed the bombed-out cities,
And grieved for all that's lost;
I ponder, in my saddest hour...
What could warrant such human cost?

The answer, of course, is freedom!
Freedom defines the job I do.
I volunteer; I'm called to serve,
On freedom's maintenance crew.
Yes, career or citizen soldier,
I serve the Higher Plan,
Of honor, God, and Country—
I'm the American Fighting Man!
(p. 60)²

² James L. Wattenbarger, *Confessions of a Wordsmith: the Complete Incomplete Works of James L. of Oildale*. (Oildale: TCL Press, 2003), 59-60:

Finally from Jim we have the title song to the DVD tribute to our military,
“Safely Home,” written by Jim and J. E. Tyack:

“Safely Home”

(James L. Wattenbarger and J. E. Tyack)

(© 2007 by James L. Wattenbarger. All rights reserved.)

This song is for our soldiers
To let them know we care;
From all of us at home,
We're sending you this prayer:
“O, Lord, rest Your arm around them daily,
May they speak your name each night.
Bring them all back safely home, Lord;
Please, watch o'er them through the fight.

“We are grateful for our freedom;
Our brave warriors 'cross the sea,
They serve with pride and honor
To keep our nation free.
And we proudly wave Old Glory.
No, they don't stand alone.
Let them know we've got their back
Till they all come safely home.

“From the shelter of our homeland
To the battlefield's unrest,
Holding high the torch of liberty
Go our bravest and our best.
Some will come home scared and wounded,
Some beneath the stars and stripes,
But bring them all home in victory, Lord,
Please, reward the sacrifice.

“We are grateful for our freedom;
Our brave warriors 'cross the sea:
They serve with pride and honor
To keep our nation free.
And we proudly wave Old Glory.
No, they don't stand alone.
Let them know we've got their back
Till they all come safely home.

“Yes, we'll proudly wave Old Glory.
So they'll not stand alone,
Let them know we've got their back
Till they all come safely home.”

The Wars of the Roses and Harlech Castle:

We quoted the speech of **Henry V** prior to his victory over the French at Agincourt. It was a significant event in the history of England since it left Henry in control of Northern France. But only seven years later he fell victim to illness and died with the crown inherited by his infant son, Henry who, just nine-months old at the time, became **Henry VI**.

During Henry VI's minority, England was ruled by a regency of a council of nobles until he was 15 when he was declared "of age." At age 32 he married **Margaret of Anjou** \än-zhü\ who was just 15 herself at the time. Henry was not the kingly type. He was an extremely moral man who preferred to study Scripture rather than govern England. His lack of desire to care about the affairs of state ultimately led to a struggle with his successor to the throne that was decided by a series of conflicts that became known as the Wars of the Roses.

The pretender to the Lancastrian throne was from the line of **John of Gaunt's** fourth son, **Edmund of Langley** who was the **Duke of York** of the House of York. His grandson, **Richard**, had inherited the title as **Third Duke of York**, and was Henry VI's antagonist for succession to the throne upon his death.

Richard was the rightful heir and although grossly mistreated by Henry, he remained loyal to the crown. Henry and Margaret seemed unable to have a child and York's assumption that he was heir apparent was well founded. Not only was there no heir to the Lancaster line, his bloodline also went back to John of Gaunt's second son.

But in 1453, Margaret became pregnant for the only time in her marriage to Henry. In December of that year she gave birth to **Edward** who automatically became the Prince of Wales.

During the time of Margaret's pregnancy, Henry had the first of several bouts with what could have been catatonic schizophrenia:

In early August 1453, Henry VI suffered a complete breakdown. Some of the king's subjects put this down to necromancy, but most knew that his mental health had always been fragile. In view of his maternal grandfather's madness this may have been a hereditary condition. But whereas Charles VI is said to have believed that he was made of glass and that if anyone touched him he would shatter, Henry's breakdown took the form of complete immobility. For nearly eighteen months he was unable to speak or use any of his limbs. It has been pointed out that his condition bears a resemblance to a period of stupor in a case of catatonic schizophrenia, though at this distance of time confident diagnosis is not really possible.³

³ John Gillingham. *The Wars of the Roses: Peace and Conflict in Fifteenth-Century England*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 75.

With a new crown prince on the scene the friction between the Houses of Lancaster and York increased. The Duke of York, Edmund of Langley, began a campaign to win public support to overthrow the rule of Henry. He was not immediately successful so he changed his tactics and sought to win support to succeed Henry at his death claiming that because of superior primogeniture, he had the rightful claim to the throne rather than young Edward.

Ultimately armed conflict broke out between the two houses. Since the House of Lancaster's badge was a red rose and the House of York's was a white one, the battles became known as the Wars of the Roses. The battles were spread over the whole of England, Scotland, and Wales.

At the Battle of Northampton in July 1460, King Henry VI was captured, yet Margaret held fast to her contention that Edward was heir apparent. Nevertheless, she was forced to take refuge and did so at Harlech Castle in Gwynedd \gwi'-neth\, Wales. Margaret's supporters killed the duke of York at the Battle of Wakefield in December 1460, and freed the king from captivity at the second Battle of St. Alban's in February 1461.

But Edward of York, the son of Richard, the duke of York, seized the throne as Edward IV. The occupier of the throne exchanged hands three more times until Henry was murdered in the Tower of London in 1471. His son Edward, Prince of Wales was killed in the Battle of Tewkesbury the same year, leaving Edward IV and the House of York in control of the British crown.

In late 1461 and early '62 Edward of York ordered a campaign through Wales to attack Lancastrian strongholds in several Welsh castles. Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, Henry Holland, duke of Exeter, and other Lancastrians were in possession of castles as important as Pembroke, Harlech, Carreg Cennen \Ka'-rig Ken'-en\, and Denbigh \den'-be\:

In the autumn Lord Herbert took command of a highly successful campaign. He captured Pembroke Castle on 30 September. Then on 16 October, he defeated the earl of Pembroke and the duke of Exeter at Caernarvon \kir-när'-vaun\. After this defeat the Welsh Lancastrians were no longer capable of putting any army in the field. Their strongholds were isolated and picked off: Denbigh in January 1462, Carreg Cennen in May. Only Harlech continued to hold out. The capture of this great fortress, designed to be supplied from the sea, would have required a greater expenditure on ships and artillery than Edward was prepared to sanction. So for several years more this nest of rebels was allowed to survive.⁴

⁴ Gillingham, *The Wars of the Roses*, 139-40.

The story of the Harlech Castle's resistance against the antagonists of King Henry VI remains legendary in Wales today. The Web site www.data-wales.co.uk gives details about the seven-year holdout and how it inspired the battle song "March of the Men of Harlech."

The song Men of Harlech is something of an unofficial anthem in Wales. Every Welsh person knows the tune and despite the variety of lyrics over the years, the martial air has become identified with the country's determination to retain its identity. Harlech Castle in north Wales, one of the "iron ring" of castles intended to subdue Wales in medieval times, remains as a picturesque reminder of the ultimate futility of the invader's ambition.

A period of comparative peace was brought to an end by the Wars of the Roses. In 1460 the castle was held by Lancastrian forces and endured a siege which is said to have lasted seven years. The constable, Dafydd ap Ieuan \dā'-fith ū-t'-an [or David Bevan], and his garrison held out long after other Lancastrian commanders in England and Wales had surrendered to the Yorkist faction and Alan Reid, in *The Castles of Wales*, [New Ed. (John Jones Publishing, 1973)] tells us the following story:

"(David) ... widened his fame by replying to one summons to surrender with the boast that he had once held a castle in France so long against siege that all the old women of Wales talked of it; and now he would hold a castle in Wales until all the old women of France talked of it."

Eventually famine forced surrender and (David) handed the castle to Lord Herbert and his brother Sir Richard Herbert on honourable terms. King Edward IV at first refused to honour the terms of the settlement but Sir Richard Herbert, out of respect for the bravery of the defenders, is said to have offered his own life in exchange for (David's) rather than see his promise broken. These defenders were the Men of Harlech commemorated in the song.⁵

The Welsh version of the march has maintained the same martial melody but it has received numerous lyrical adaptations. I have chosen this one to give you the idea of the mindset of those who "held the fort":

"March of the Men of Harlech"

(John Oxford)

1. Men of Harlech! In the hollow,
Do ye hear, like rushing billow,
Wave on wave that, surging, follow
Battle's distant sound?

'Tis the tramp of Saxon foemen,
Saxon spearmen, Saxon bowmen;
Be they knights, or hinds, or yeomen,
They shall bite the ground.

⁵ John Weston. *Men of Harlech*. (www.data-wales.co.uk/harlech.htm).

Loose the folds asunder.
Flag we conquer under!
Placid skies that hear our cries
Shall launch their bolts of thunder!

Onward! 'Tis our country needs us!
He is bravest, he who leads us!
Honor's self now proudly heads us!
Freedom, God, and Right!

2. Men of Harlech! Honor calls us,
No proud Saxon e'er appalls us!
On we march, whate'er befalls us.
Never shall we fly!

Tho' our mothers may be weeping,
Tho' our sister may be keeping
Watch for some who now are sleeping
On the battle field!

Forward, lightly bounding,
Hear the trumpet sounding!
Forward ever, backward never.
This proud foe astounding!

Fight for father, sister, mother,
Each is bound to each as brother,
With this faith in one another
We will win or die!

This anthem crystallizes the attitude that free people must possess in order to remain free. We have observed today the mental attitude of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic courage in the face of protagonists that have challenged the freedom of our British and American citizens.

In doing so we salute those who have served both nations "on the battle field." It is the heritage of our forefathers that have inspired the military of this country to take on any who would bring to peril the lives, liberty, and property of the people of this client nation.

"Christian Soldier":

Just as these warriors have their marching songs, so do we as combatants on the battlefields of the Invisible War. Sometime early in his ministry, Colonel R. B. Thieme, Jr., took creative pen in hand and crafted a hymn to fit the music of this Welsh march. He titled it "Christian Soldier." Here is the lyric put to the music of "The March of the Men of Harlech":

“Christian Soldier”

(R. B. Thieme, Jr.)

1. Christian soldier with Christ soaring
Do not fear the devil's roaring
Wave on wave of Satan's demons
Clank with groaning sound.

'Tis the thrust of Satan's dagger
Sin and death to make men stagger;
With their unbelief in darkness
They shall die in hell.

Gospel of salvation
In Christ a new creation
The Word of God now going forth
Shall launch its bolts of thunder.

Onward through our Christ who saved us,
He is mighty, He who raised us;
Honor Christ, the Lord of Glory,
Jesus Christ, our King.
2. Christian soldier, you're victorious
Trusting Christ the strong and glorious
Faith with faith a mighty vict'ry
Conquers sin and death.

'Tis the faith that gives salvation
Precious blood of our redemption;
Whether poor, or weak, or broken,
You can trust in Christ.

He's the King of kings
He's the Lord of lords.
He shall come with trumpet sound,
And we shall all come with Him.

Onward 'tis our Christ who leads us;
He is mighty to redeem us;
Honor Christ, the Lord who saved us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

It is only fitting that churches take the time to honor the soldiers who are part of its membership. For without the military preserving our national freedom, it would be impossible for us to worship God and to grow in grace. Therefore, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the nation's branches of the armed forces and especially those few who are members of this congregation. Such recognition is biblically sanctioned by the honor roll of David's Men of Valor found in 2 Samuel 23.

Most of the men mentioned in this passage are found nowhere else in Scripture thus emphasizing the fact that it was God's desire to preserve their names forever in the eternal record. These men were loyal to David and served client nation Israel with skill and courage on the field of honor.

2 Samuel 23:8 - These are the names of David's men of valor: Jósheb-Bassébet, a Táhkemonite, was chief of the three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.

v. 9 - Next to him was Eleázar son of Dódai the Ahóhite. As one of the three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dámmim for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated,

v. 10 - but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.

v. 11 - Next to him was Shāmmah son of Ágee the Hárarite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them.

v. 12 - But Shāmmah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory.

2 Samuel 23:18 - Abíshai the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah was chief of the thirty. He raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed, and so he became as famous as the three.

v. 19 - He was most honored among the thirty. He was their commander even though he was not included among the three.

v. 20 - Benáyah son of Jehoíada was a valiant fighter from Kábzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Móab's best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.

v. 21 - And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.

v. 22 - Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty men.

2 Samuel 23:23 - He was held in greater honor than any of the thirty, but he was not included among the three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

From verse 24 through 39, the Holy Spirit sees fit to record the names of the thirty. To eliminate some confusion, I will only mention their names although the passage gives additional information on many of them such as the name of some of their fathers or place of their births. And so the honor roll of David's Men of Valor continues in:

2 Samuel 23:24-39 - Ásahel, Elhánan, Shámmah, Elíka, Hélez, Íra, Ábiézer, Mebúnnai, Zálmon, Mahárai, Héled, Íthai, Benáyah, Híddai, Ábi-Álbon, Azmáveth, Elíahba, Jónathan, Shámmah, Ahíam, Elíphelet, Éliam, Hézrai, Páarai, Ígal, Zélek, Náhari, Íra, Gáreb, and Uríah.

Here in the Word of God we see a listing of honored warriors who served David in defense of client nation Israel. Thus a precedent is established which authorizes the recognition by name of those who place their lives at jeopardy in the service of their country.

Accordingly, we now salute those who are presently serving on active duty in the armed forces of the United States who are associated with Grace Doctrine Church:

Debby Danyluk, David Heeren, Ryan Johnson, Caleb Kerr, Jennifer Liescheidt, Greg McMackins, Everett Probasco, Tyler Risty, Brett Turner, and Sean Wojciechowski.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come to you today with gratitude and thanksgivings for those who, throughout the history of our client nation, have served, bled, and died so that we might enjoy the benefits of freedom and the sunshine of halcyon days by which we may grow in grace. It is imperative that a client nation, a free people, and your children have the environment necessary to make the advance to the high ground of spiritual maturity so as to wage effective battle in the Invisible War.

It is due to the selfless service of those who have gone before and who presently draw duty in the armed forces of this country that we enjoy such privileges. So today we salute these people who are the martial *promachoi* who make it possible for us to do our spiritual duty in the Lord's phalanx.

Protect those in harm's way. Enable them to defeat and conquer the sons of Hagar. If it be Your will, bring them each and all safely home. But for those who are bound for your glory or to the judgment seat, may they depart with the earthly glory that is due them for following the code of duty, honor country.

As we depart to enjoy the comforts and accouterments of freedom may we take time to reflect upon and remember the sacrifice of so many who have made our lives prosperous and safe: to say a prayer for those who serve, offer a kind word for one who has gone before, give a mental salute to all who have fallen, and to maintain a mental memorial for the armed forces of these United States and the freedom they have bought and continue to purchase with their time, their blood, and their very lives.

And we lift our prayer in the name our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is *Yahweh Sebaoth*, the Lord of the Armies.

Amen.

As is our custom, shall we stand and face the colors as we close with the singing of the first and last stanzas of:

“The Star-Spangled Banner”

(Francis Scott Key)

1. Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?
4. Oh, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with victory and peace, may the Heaven-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just;
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust!"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.