

The following is a letter I sent to a wonderful woman who's son was killed in action in Iraq. I have included it on the website because I feel we owe her, and all the mothers like her, a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. I have deleted her address and changed her name to protect her privacy.

Dear Ms. Smith:

I recently learned that your son died fighting for our country in Iraq. Please permit me to express my heartfelt condolences. I'm sure you do not remember, but we met in 2003 when I was assigned to the Rotary GSE Team that traveled to Brazil. You were kind enough to allow the team to train at your restaurant. As a six year veteran of the US Navy and an eighteen year veteran of service to our State as a peace officer, I think I understand what motivated him to go to the other side of the world and place himself in peril. Although we never met, I'm sure your son embodied the traits we cherish most in the patriots who serve our country.

I have a twelve year old son who is the apple of my eye. His ambition is to attend college on an NROTC scholarship and be commissioned a lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. Put simply, he wants to be the man your son was. I can only imagine the anguish you feel at his loss. Please know that, contrary to the hyperbole in our press, your son did not die in vain. He died in valor so that my children can live in safety. I, and all Americans, am forever in your debt. If I can help in any way, please do not hesitate to call at the number on the business card I have attached.

Sincerely,
Jeff Newsome