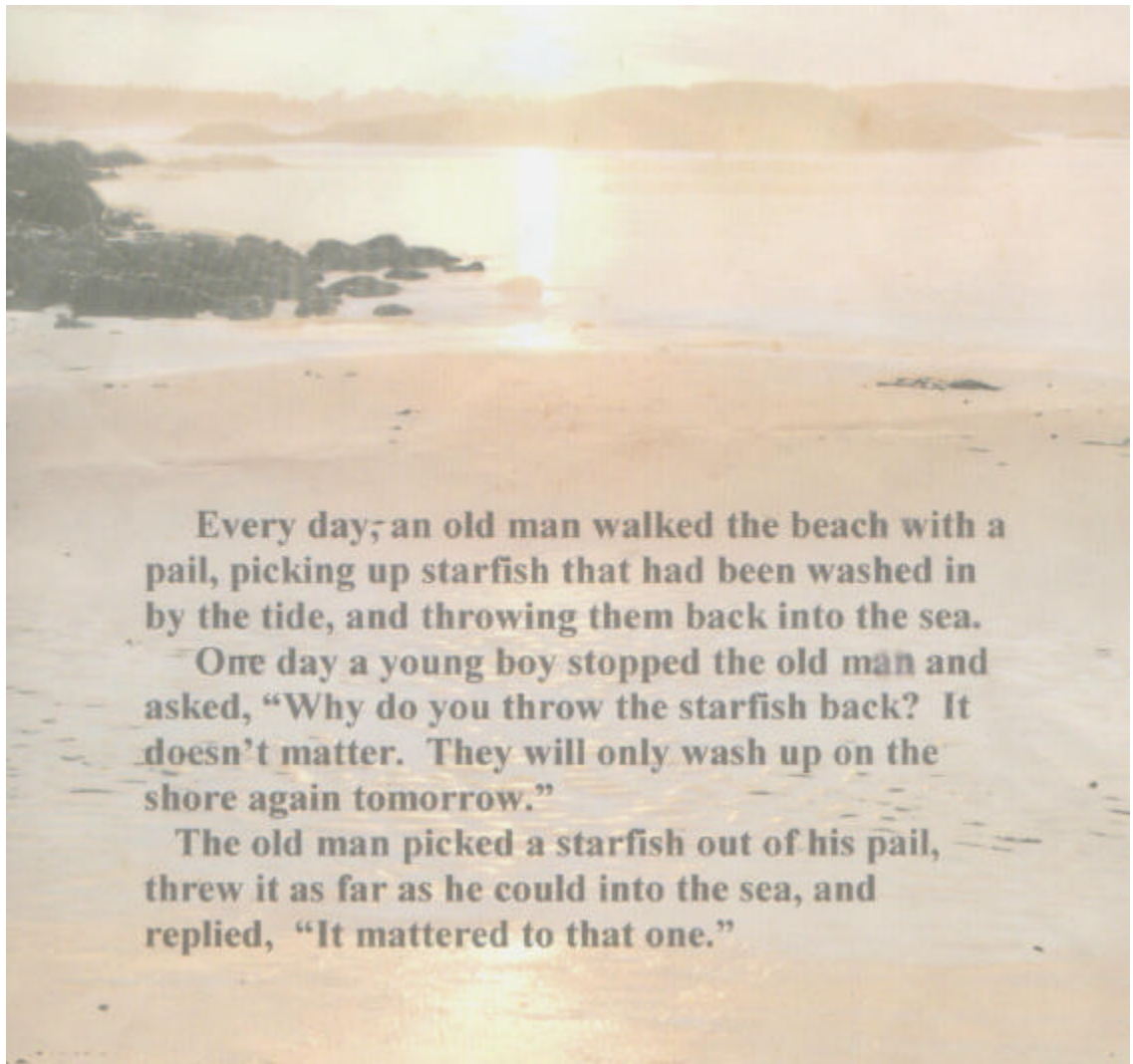


Appendix E

Assortment of feelings Published in Grief Magazines And email



★★★ Parents' Network

A Mother's Story

by Fran Heiser

Dear TAPS,

You can't imagine how much your call meant to us. TAPS can really be a life saver for so many who are finding themselves desperately coping with a horrible loss. Mike was killed in the senseless bombing in Saudi on June 25th, and until we spoke, there was no one who really understood how we felt or where we were coming from. Of the many support groups offered, none was military-oriented and most were for older folks who had lost a spouse through illness (more of a "normal progression of life"). I would like to share with you a bit about our life, our son and our terrible loss.

My husband, Gary, was a Sergeant Major in the United States Army who retired with 22 years of active service. Thus, we understand the military, and the risks and benefits of this whirlwind life we have all chosen to become a part of. Raising our son Mike in Europe gave him a taste for travel and an international flair for excitement. After high school, he enlisted in the Air Force but tried for the USAF Academy. By the time he was accepted, he was the old man of the class, but he completed one year of prep and his plebe year before deciding this just might not be for him. It was a hard decision, but he gave it up and went back into the enlisted ranks and proved he could succeed. During his 17 year career, he had many cold weather assignments — Iceland, England, Germany, Ellsworth, SD — but his flying took him all around the world so often he didn't know if it was hot or cold or what continent or country he was in most of the time. His favorite tour was flying on the C-20 out of Ramstein, where he was a radio operator. This was a job that kept him on his toes and always ready. There were many general officers and dignitaries from Washington who flew with him, even the President, and during the Gulf War, his crew was assigned to General 'Stormin' Norman.'

Last December, he rotated to Patrick AFB in Florida near our home. Mike was the happiest we had seen him in a long time — home for the holidays. He bought a lovely two-story home and Gary and I helped him unpack and get settled before he had to enter a three month training session in New Mexico for Search and Rescue. "So others may live" their squadron motto says. After only a couple more weeks to enjoy his home and be close to Mom and Dad, (you can burn up the highway when it's only 110 miles), the orders came for a 60-day deployment to Saudi Arabia. "No sweat," he said, "been there, done that." Even when he called his dad on Father's Day, he said it was like déjà vu. He sounded relaxed and bored. We talked about our cruise the next week to Alaska. We teased him that he had logged in over 10,000 hours of flying time but had never taken a cruise, and we would just have to do something about that when he comes home.

***We are experiencing things
that a parent should
never have to face.***

That was to be our last communication with Mike. Gary and I left for the cruise and while we were only one day out to sea, the breaking news story on CNN hit like a knife in the gut. We knew his whereabouts and we knew he should be flying — and he was, until they brought the plane in early due to engine trouble. Twelve hours later a Ship-to-Shore phone and faxed message confirmed that Michael was the first identified casualty.

We lost a lot in that young man and so did the Air Force. Mike was one of the most decorated enlisted men ever. The reports say he was killed instantly while relaxing in his room. We are experiencing things that a parent should never have to face. There was a formal memorial at Patrick where President Clinton paid his respects, we had another formal memorial at our local VFW and on September 20th (Michael's birthday), he was interred at Arlington Cemetery.

It is too soon to share success or healing stories as we aren't there yet. I



*Master Sergeant Michael Heiser,
killed June 25th in the bombing in Dhahran.*

can comment that one must not just sit and dwell on what can't be changed.

All of you who are reading this and remembering our fallen service members, stop and realize that each one probably had a Mom and Dad out there somewhere who are mourning. Don't let them be forgotten. Mike was still single and very close to us so we were not forgotten, but some parents aren't recognized once a family is extended. This was clear to Gary and me after attending several different support groups lately, most of the focus being on the widow or children. But I wanted to tell them, "A mom is a mom forever!" And even if the mom is mentioned, the poor dad is put on the back burner, like he is expected to heal fast, take care of details, and go back to work. *This is the 90's and we work together but we grieve alone.*

TAPS is a wonderful organization because most groups don't understand the military family, therefore support is limited in a civilian community.

Mike was our life, our pride and joy, but as we fill the long days doing busy work, we stop to reflect on the good times, the joys and sorrows and memories. We asked our friends not to mourn but to keep Mike's memory alive in their hearts and take time to hug their kids. We probably don't realize the finality of all this at this time, but we do realize that there are a lot of people who really care.

Thank you for being there,

Fran Heiser

SEE THINGS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM BE.

The process of growing and learning always involves risk.
In the process, your obstacles will always look large or small to you
according to whether you are large or small.

Have the courage to face your difficulties.
Your courage will come from the reserves of your mind
that are much more powerful than your outside circumstances.
When you are bigger than your problems,
you'll find the courage necessary to win.

Have the courage to confront what you can imagine.
It will give you the ability to rise above any temporary obstruction.
Overcoming obstacles is the price of achievement, the price of success.

See things as you would have them be instead of as they are,
and always remember,
you are more important than any of your problems.

****Love Ya****

> >
> > *Suppose one morning you never wake up, do
all your
> > friends and family know you love them? I was
thinking...I could
> > die today, tomorrow or next week and I
wondered if
> > I had any wounds needing to be healed,
friendships
> > that needed rekindling or three words
needing to be
> > said. Sometimes, "I love you" can heal &
bless. Let
> > every one of your friends and family know you
love
them.
> > Even if you think they don't love you back,
you would
> > be amazed at what those three little words
and a smile
> > can do.
> >
> > Just in case I die tomorrow....I LOVE YOU!!!*

★★★ TAPS Advisor

Siblings

by Ken Doka, Ph.D.

When Jan came in to talk to me, she was apologetic. Her sister had died some six months before. To Jan, this was a devastating loss. But her family, even her late sister's husband, seemed to have little patience with her grief. He seemed upset when she cried, at one point reminding her, "She was my wife, and only your sister." When a child loses a brother or a sister, we find it easy to recognize the loss. But when an adult loses a brother or a sister, we may not have the same degree of empathy. Yet the loss of a sibling can be a devastating blow. Sibling relationships are special and unique. First, while they are kin relationships, they are more equal than the relationships we are likely to have with other members of our family, such as a parent or a child. They are the longest lasting relationships we are likely to have, stretching from childhood through later life. Few other relationships have that duration. Our siblings are part of our own identity. Part of who I am is shaped by the fact that I am Dot and Franky's kid brother. That was part of my identity as a growing child, and it remains so now. Siblings may share a special solidarity. They have experienced many of the same moments, know the same people, recall similar memories. I can



make my sister laugh at any time or place simply by asking her if she had a BM today. It evokes a time when we stayed at an aunt's house

during our mother's illness. My aunt had a deep concern with the regularity of our bodily functions that we found both intrusive and embarrassing. Just the question reminds us of a shared experience. Naturally, relationships between siblings differ. A colleague of mine, Helen Rosen, once did a study on sibling loss. She found that sibling relationships varied along two dimensions. Relationships varied in warmth; some ties were especially strong, others nonexistent. The other dimension was distance. Some constantly interacted with their siblings, some not at all. This led to a variety of types of relationships. Some were warm and distant, with strong emotional ties but little day to day contact. Siblings

...we need not apologize for our grief, nor discount it. It is not only a sister or a brother, it is a piece of ourselves, or our past, even our present and future.

who battled all the time might be characterized as hostile, but close: they had regular, if largely unpleasant, contact. Those who never spoke might be seen as both hostile and distant. Rosen found that relationships that were the most intense, either very close or distant, very warm or hostile, generated the most grief. In the distant and hostile relationships, this grief was colored by feelings of guilt. This reminds us that each loss is different and each of us responds to loss in our own way. Even brothers and sisters may respond in distinct ways to the loss of a sibling. For each, the meaning of the loss is very different. But we need not apologize for our grief, nor discount it. It is not only a sister or a brother, it is a piece of ourselves, or our past, even our present and future. We not only *can* grieve these losses, we *have to*. ★★★

★★★ Around the country

One Year Later —**Dharan Remembered**

Just one short year ago, our lives were normal, our men shared a deployment in Saudi Arabia, and although we did not know one another, the families of 19 special airman all looked forward to the day their sons, husbands and fathers would return to US soil. This did not happen, instead they became the target of a violent Terrorist attack. Nineteen families are distraught, their dreams and hopes shattered in an instant. On the first anniversary of this tragedy, we joined together in Orlando, FL where most of us met for the first time. There were about 100 people representing 15 of the 19 families sharing an emotional roller coaster weekend. As strange as it sounds, it was both heartwarming and heartwrenching at the same time. We laughed, we cried, we shared fond memories and we all asked the same question, WHY? We are proud of ourselves for surviving such a traumatic year. Our weekend was one of healing. The family of Chris Adams organized the gathering and TAPS sponsored Dr. Darcie Sims, who is a wonderful person and a well known psychologist. She spent quality time with us and related to feelings we share and she made us know we are not alone, that what we feel is a terrible hurt and we are not crazy; merely "acting normal in an abnormal situation." She told us we hurt because we loved and that pretty much sums up why we do the things we do, because we loved them so much. Everyone reading this article can relate to this, we are all Survivors! We bonded and shared with each other and made tentative plans to meet again next year. The circumstances won't change but maybe we will. Our lives all changed on June 25, 1996. I guess we are the "S" in TAPS! We are Survivors.

Fran Heiser

OH HOW SOON WE FORGET ?

**FOR ALL WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF GRAVES
OF THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES DEFENDING YOU**

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

by John McCrae

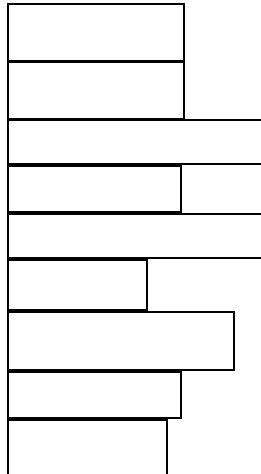
GOD BLESS AMERICA AND HER ALLIES

In Loving Memory



Surviving After Terrorism Strikes Home

By
Fran Heiser
Palm Coast, Florida
Mother of Mike



Terrorism is not new to America but it is news when it happens on American soil. As you have joined this family of Victims of Terrorism, let others reach out to help. We need it; our loss was not only tragic but also compounded by the sudden trauma and mystery surrounding the tragic death of our loved ones and our feelings of confusion.

Briefly, so you know who I am, I will give you a little background. I am an only child who lost my only child at the Khobar Towers bombing in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia on June 25, 1996. Just like the newly bereaved from the 911 attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., we had to learn to work through the deep grief and trauma, to remember the good things, and to hope and pray these awful people can be stopped before another "next time." First we had to admit we needed help. Our son was 35 years old and married to the Air Force. Our life, our future, and in one swift instance every plan was changed. He had a very bright future ahead of him and we, as parents, looked forward to planning a wedding, to spoiling grandchildren, and doing all the things that are considered a normal progression of life. How can you cope with sudden, unexplained loss of such magnitude?

You see, you are not alone. We are not alone. Terrorism is not new and probably won't end with the recent dreadful attacks on our freedom. While the powers that be work diligently to stop them, or to Stamp Out Terrorism as I like to think, we work hard to pretend to be normal. Normal now is a lot different than normal then. Looking back five years, I can relate to a lot of different questions, feelings and thoughts. The biggest question that will remain unanswered forever is WHY?

In 1983 some of you may recall the attack on Americans in Beirut, which killed 213 Marines who were sent there to protect our freedom. This was followed by the attack on Pan Am flight 103 of Lockerbie, Scotland. More recently, in 1995 there was a bombing on American soil, the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma, which killed 168 innocent people, followed by a terrorist attack in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia that killed five Americans. And, only seven months later, the truck bomb that sheared the front off the building that housed American Airmen at Khobar Towers, in June 1996 that killed 19 Airmen and injured several hundred more. Then the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and until 911, that's September eleventh, the USS Cole had been the last terrorist attack against Americans. Seventeen Navy men and women died unnecessarily then. As you can see, this is not new, just new to us in America.

It's unfortunate that any of us have had to join any of the many wonderful support groups or organizations, but we would really be lost without them. Having a network of new friends who not only share feelings but also care about us makes the difference. Knowing we are not alone brings us a comfort and sense of well-being. We look at the others that arrived before us and they seem normal. Soon we realize we can be normal too. Before becoming a part of this unique group, we probably didn't know such groups existed and now so many childless parents who have, 'been there and done that' surround us. Is that comforting? You bet it is! Can we make it? You bet we can! Will we have to live with a hole in our hearts? You bet we will!

We've been told our tears represent our endless love for our children. Look in the mirror. Your kids know you love them. Now, open the door and let the network of 'experienced' bereaved parents reach in to help you.

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Written for the newly bereaved right after the 911 Attack on America

Date: Fri, 14 Sep 2001 16:30:33 -0400

Subject: Message to America

Fran and Gary Heiser
10 Live Oak Lane
Palm Coast, Florida 32137
386-445-2254

A MESSAGE TO AMERICA

AN ACT OF WAR

Once again our enemies have waged war against America, its citizens, its servicemen, and its agencies, all symbols of our great democracy. Once again our hearts go out to the families of whose loved ones have become victims of unmitigated hatred. The tragic news keeps repeating that the latest terrorist act against America is considered an Act of War. Where have you been all of these years?

Fundamentalist Islamists have been at war with America and against our western culture and democratic way of life for more than twenty years, using terrorism as a model of warfare.

We can look back to the bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut in 1983, and more recently to the bombing of Oklahoma Federal Building in 1995, followed by the bomb that killed 5 Americans in Riyadh later in 1995, or to the unprovoked attack on Khobar Towers that murdered 19 young airmen which at the time was referred to as an Act of War, followed by the Embassy bombings and the bombing of the USS Cole. These were all Acts of War and our government did nothing of any consequence to respond.

Don't you think retaliation was needed before? Did anyone listen to our cries and pleas to do something before "the next attack"? How many next times are necessary before a government responds? By response, I mean affirmative action with substance. Stop being the Paper Tiger Country. We feel strongly there is a need for retaliation, FULL retaliation, not a half hearted attempt at punishing those responsible.

Before going any farther, let me introduce myself. My name is Fran Heiser. I am an only child who's only child was killed at the hands of terrorists during the bombing of Khobar Towers. On a personal level let me tell you about my beloved son Michael. He was not only our link to a future but he was planning for his own bright future. He was one of the most highly decorated enlistedmen in the whole Air Force and served for love of his country. He served for his country and died because of his country.

I'm writing this as a representative of the 19 families who's lives were changed that day, June 25, 1996. We will never be the same and neither will our country as is seen in the faces of the latest victims of war and terror.

I mentioned FULL retaliation as we can only flash back to Viet Nam and know how we accomplished nothing by being there other than the loss of over 57,000 Americans.

Former President Bush sent us into the Gulf War and the country united and we were proud to be an American. Then the war was stopped but the enemy was not. Why?

Terrorism strikes hard when it takes our young men and women. There was always sadness around the country and world but it was soon forgotten, especially by those who so blatantly made those empty promises. Secretary of Defense William Perry said he "will take full responsibility" We still wonder what that meant as he soon retired with honor and a huge pension. President Clinton said (almost verbatim) what President Bush said, we will find those who did this and bring them to justice. What does that mean?

I hate to have to say it but this is a world that does not respond to words. We have just learned a horrible lesson in terrorism and now we need to do something about this. No more Paper Tiger routine, but back to the school of hard knocks, the real world..

Today terrorism is of global proportions. For the past few days and nights, we have heard from experts that terrorist networks have been identified in 34 Countries, including the United States. Steven Emerson, an expert on international terrorism has provided the FBI information that details multiple terrorist networks comprised of Hamas, Hizballah, and al Queda members that have existed in the US for several years capable of carrying out simultaneous WTC type bombings across the United States.

It has been very convenient to put all the blame on Osama bin Laden and his organization al Queda. However it is farfetched to believe that one man can stop this great nation. Only governments have the capability of carrying off an attack of this magnitude. The initial reaction has been to point fingers at Afghanistan and Iraq. No mention of Iran. Do we truly believe that Iran is clean of responsibility. For over ten years Iran has been diligently creating networks throughout the world that are capable of being called into action at any time. Today all terrorists organizations comprised of Hezballah, Hamas al Quedan have combined their manpower and skills and share intelligence. Iran has set up a bureau for the coordination of these networks, under the capable leadership of Imad Mugnyah. Do you remember who he was? He was the notorious terrorist who was responsible for most of the terrorist attacks and hostage taking during the eighties.

We survived 5 years longer than any of us ever imagined on that date of terror, June 25th, 1996. This year at the 11th hour just before the 5th anniversary there were several indictments handed down. That was the good news. The rest of the story is, we were very disappointed there were no indictments against Iran even when Mr Ashcroft mentioned Iran 31 times as being involved. Why are we afraid of our attackers? We have been telling our Administration that neither individual terrorists nor their organizations are capable of carrying out these attacks alone. They must be provided with huge amounts of funds, intelligence information, military and tactical training, and infrastructure that can only be provided by governments. Think about it. A limited response targeting individuals or a singular base of operation will only leave others more resilient and dangerous. War must be declared against all terrorists and the countries that sponsor and harbor them.

Please ACT NOW and don't quit until the job is done! If we are to remain a super power, we better put our actions where our words are. Don't let our sons and daughters and sisters and brothers and mothers and fathers die in vain. We have to stand up for them NOW and this time not wait for the next attack. In the lower grade schools the primary message would be to get them before they get us. Think about it, and please take action now against all nations that sponsor terrorism.

Where children in our western society grow up idolizing entertainers and sports celebrities, children who are raised in fundamentalist Islamic countries who idolize suicide bombers and murderers are being encouraged to emulate them. Each spectacular and successful mission against America encourages more religious fanatics to volunteer for future missions of terror. For America's sake and the future of America's children, this must end now with finality and with all the harshness of warfare. For this purpose, the United States has and maintains a well trained military.

I've made a proposal for a postage stamp that is under review for the year 2004. It bears a simple message, stamp out terrorism! And while we are at it, please let's free America for Americans!

Sincerely remembering terrorism and knowing what this monster can do to families.

Fran Heiser

Michael G Heiser 9-20-60 6-25-96

Khobar Towers Terrorist War against America

FOUR AND FORTY

Four very long years ago the news dominated the airways, Terrorist Bomb kills 19 American Airmen! Four years ago our lives went from energetically looking forward to a bright future, to having Mike "home" in Florida, to helping him plan his retirement from the military and a new life as a civilian, probably as a business partner, and eventually to have a family of his own. That terrible event robbed us of all the hopes and dreams, of the future and now four long years later, we continue to live with beautiful memories and try not to fall too deeply into the "what if" syndrome. When you deal with such a high profile situation you are kept busy with reliving the nightmare publicly during interviews, at FBI briefings, and attending wonderful tributes and dedications of memorials all around our country.

Forty years ago this month Mike was born, a healthy baby boy, born to a young mother who would learn all the new responsibilities of parenting real quick. We grew up together and were a very close family. Having experienced the growing pains, the next phase was the need for speed. Did we ever think he would spend more time flying than on the ground? He followed his Dad's choosing of a military career and loved it, made us proud as we were remarking about all his accomplishments and decorations, it was then we were told our low key son, was one of the most highly decorated enlistedmen in the whole Air Force. Hard work pays off and now we have to try to console ourselves with the facts of having had a good son, a rewarding 35 years, and lots of wonderful memories to share. The sad parts are living the loss and never having an extended family and always wondering what the future would have held for that bouncing baby boy brought into this world forty short years ago.

Gary and I recently sold our business and will continue prompting the government to stay on this case until justice is served. We will also work with the agencies and museums to continue to heighten awareness of Terrorism. It can strike home, it did, and the anguish and emptiness and grief we live now are all the aftershocks. Our friend and well known grief counselor, Darcie Sims, once told us, "grief is the price you pay for love!" It can't be summed up any better than that. If we didn't love our kids so much we wouldn't be grieving so hard, and we wouldn't be members of the support groups who publish these messages. Forty short years and four long years later we continue to live our lives but things will never ever be the same. Respectfully submitted,

In Loving Memory

Michael G Heiser

9-20-60 6-25-96

For and Gary Heiser

REINVESTMENTS

Irene Ferrell, Sun City, AZ- Irene had a memorial candle light service and meal at a local restaurant on Thursday night prior to the National TCF conference in Salt Lake City. She had invited many seasoned grieverers that she has known several years since her son, **SHANNON's** death and also some newly bereaved parents that she just met this year. She had memorial tribute gifts for each of the bereaved parents and each parent had an opportunity to tell the child's name. Everyone who attended felt it was a very sacred meal and service and were privileged to be there with Irene.

Fran & Gary Heiser, Palm Coast, FL – I'd like to take this opportunity to tell all of you about the **MGH Foundation** to remember all Victims of Terrorism. We established it in 2000, long before the September 11 attack on America. The basis behind this was to use some of our son's money and make it work for all of us and keep his memory alive at the same time while calling attention to the aftershock of a terrorist attack. When he was murdered in the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia on June 25, 1996, our world and future came to a screeching halt. Not many folks understand how we feel and shortly after what happened we realized not only how a traumatic event can destroy your own lives but we also learned a lot about people, and how little they understand about a situation like this. I'm an only child and Gary has a few scattered relatives. Not much help in the crisis. We turned to strangers and now they are friends. In one way it is a good thing most people don't know these wonderful organizations exist. None of us joined by choice.

Khobar Towers continues to be in the news as it was one of the early warnings that were not heeded. We have made several television and newspaper interviews and are also involved in a lawsuit against Iran. Many of you have seen us on TV. Ever since the lawsuit became public knowledge the media likes to promote it, probably because Osama bin Laden became a household name. They manage to bring up that topic in every interview and we make maximum use of the opportunity to let them know about this foundation. The funding date is primarily from our son's estate and our own private donations. We appreciate the help and support

and plan to continue to Help the Helpers! That's what we tell the reporters in hopes of increasing donations and also to call attention to the helpers. When given half a chance we mention these support groups such as **Alive Alone, In Loving Memory, Taps and No Greater Love** and others that are working with limited income and how the whole donation is contributed, not cents on the dollar like the big national charities. When this lawsuit is settled we have to look at it in a positive way, we plan to use a lot of the settlement to add to funding this foundation. In the meantime if any individual is fortunate enough to be looking for a tax deduction and would like to help us help the helpers they may do so by contacting us via email, heiser@pcf1.net

Kathleen James, Wisconsin Dells, WI –My son, **JOHN** died in 1999 and his father died when he was eight. I worry that no one will remember him after I am gone and I have tried to do some things to memorialize him.

I established a fund with our local community foundation that provides a \$1,000 scholarship for a student at the school John attended. The scholarship is given to a student going into a technical field with preference for welding and mechanics, fields John excelled in. Preferences are given to students from a single parent household and those who have learning disabilities. The scholarship has been awarded twice since John died.

The fund is set up so that in the future when it has grown it can make donations to groups to fight drug abuse and to help parents with children who have learning disabilities obtain services. John died from an overdose of drugs given him by "friends" who were charged with reckless homicide although not convicted. John also had a learning disability that made some subjects in school such as math, extremely difficult. He did not qualify for most school programs because he was smart enough to compensate and not fall two years behind. Being two years behind was one of the criteria the school district used in allocating services to children with learning disabilities. I hope the fund someday helps parents so other children can excel rather than just keep on.

ALIVE ALONE FALL 2002

From: <heiser2@juno.com>
To: DODNEWS-L-request@DTIC.MIL
Date: Wed, 14 Jun 2000 09:37:10 -0400
Subject: Re: CJCS/MLB Commissioner Korean War Wreath Laying Ceremony
Message-ID: <20000614.093710.-138859.1.heiser2@juno.com>

Dear sirs, As the father of one of the 19 airmen killed at Khobar Towers in Saudi on JUNE 25, 1996, I speak for all of the families in requesting you keep June 25th for remembrance of the Khobar Towers bombing and not use that day to commence honoring the Korean War Dead. On that same day at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida, where 5 of the 29 killed were stationed, a memorial service and remembrance monument will be dedicated by the Secretary of the Air Force, Mr Whitt Peters. I am asking you to delay the Korean War Week until June 26th and keep June 25th as the day of remembrance for the Khobar Towers Bombing. Respectfully submitted: Gary G Heiser, father of Master Sergeant Michael G. Heiser killed at Khobar Towers on June 25, 1996.

Letter to the Editor

The headlines are clear, you know, you wrote them. This is in answer to the numerous recent letters commenting on the state of the union. People are finally realizing that 911 is not to be blamed for everything wrong with our country. We mourned as a nation, our president stepped up to the plate and acted presidential with his strong words about axis of evil, and evil doers, and how he will stop at nothing to 'get Osama', well, that fizzled and now he wants a war! So all day every day we have to hear the Target Iraq report and let this bully boy antagonize a sleeping giant while overlooking the potential problems in North Korea. I wonder is this was all part of the master plan when they put him in the White House. Hello people, there is more to being a leader than being a bully. We have a wonderful free country that is riddled with serious problems, mostly financial, people are unemployed, under insured, under paid, lost their retirement nest egg due to fraud or mishandled stock investments, or not being stimulated by the tax revenue being refunded. We haven't seen debt like this in a lot of years, so what is the next move? A less than stimulating stimulus, a federal government getting a nice pay increase on top of their above average wage and life time of benefits, a war to keep our attention away from domestic problems, bankruptcy at an all time high. Think about it. Our military reserves have been activated at the cost of billions of dollars 'just in case'. Their training, travel and job loss will cause more financial hardships on the families and the country deficit. There isn't enough money left to take care of our veterans but we are creating more need for more veterans while giving away millions in the name of foreign aid, or in other words to buy the use of other nations. Tom Brokaw has aired a show for years called 'The Fleecing of America'. He exposes waste but no one seems to do anything about it. If we sit back and allow this screwing of America to continue we won't need to worry about the 2004 election while we meander along this narrow path.

F Heiser Palm Coast

10 live oak lane
palm coast, fl
445-2254

SAY MIKE

The time of concern is over.
No longer am I asked how I am doing,
Never is the name of my son mentioned to me.
A curtain descends. The moment has passed.
A life slips from frequent recall.
There are exceptions.
Close compassionate friends.
Sensitive and loving family.
For most the drama is over. The spotlight is off.
Applause is silent.
But for me the play will never end.
The effects on me are timeless.
Say Mike to me.

On the stage of life he has been both lead and supporting actor.
Do not tiptoe around the greatest event of my life.
Love does not die. His name is written on my life.
The sound of his voice replays within my mind.
You feel he is dead. I feel he is of the dead and still he lives.
He ghostwalks my soul, beckoning in future welcome.
You say he was my son. I say he is.
Say Mike to me and say Mike again.

It hurts to bury his memory in silence.
What he is in spirit stirs within me always.
He is of my past but he is part of my now. He is the hope for my future.
You say not to remind me. How little you understand that I cannot forget.
I would not if I could.
I understand you but feel pain in being forced to do so.
I forgive you, because you cannot know, and I would forgive you anyway.

I accept how you see me, but understand that you see me not at all.
I strive not to judge you, for yesterday I was like you.
I love you, will make no expectations towards you.
But I wish you could understand that I dwell both in flesh and spirit.
The mystery is that you do too, but know it not.
I do not ask you to walk this road. The ascent is steep and the burden heavy.
I would rather walk with him in flesh looking not to spirit roads beyond.
I am what I have to be.
What I have lost you cannot feel. What I have gained you cannot see and I would not have you.
Say Mike to me for he is alive in me.

He and I will meet again, through in many ways we have never parted.
He and his life play light songs on my mind.
Sunrises and sunsets in my dreams.
He is real and shadow, was and is.
Say Mike to me and say Mike again.
He is my son and I love him as I always did.

SAY MIKE

Author Unknown

WE THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT . . .

Michael G. Heiser September 20, 1960 - June 25, 1996

The two reprinted letters are from General Norman Schwarzkopf and President Bill Clinton. These arrived too late to be read at Mike's Memorial Service but we wanted to share them with you as they were selected from the many condolence notes and personal memories written by high ranking officers and dignitaries and are representative of the life that Mike lived and loved and took all in stride.

With the wonderful support and good wishes and prayers sent and all the flowers, fruit, food, warmth, and the scholarship fund, we felt a tribute to be more fitting than just a preprinted thank you note.

We have received over 500 cards from all parts of the world from folks who were either touched by Mike or knew us or just mad at the senseless situation that took place in Saudi Arabia on June 25th.

In his short life, Mike saw and did more than most people do in a very full lifetime. He traveled extensively, and was proud to be involved in many "firsts". Mike accompanied the then Chancellor Kohl to Berlin on 9 Nov. 1989, when the wall came down. Mike was on the first US plane escorted and allowed to land in free Russia. In 1993 at Keesling NCO Academy he was the recipient of the Academic Achievement Award and the Distinguished Graduate award. In 1995 Mike was selected as the Aircrew Member of the Year in Europe. His accomplishments seem endless and we are proud. He was an honor student in schools and one of the most decorated enlisted men in the Air Force.

Mike stayed in and visited some of the finest palaces, hotels, and countries. He met with and escorted most known dignitaries, and also met the complete opposite, where he visited countries with names we never heard of or cannot pronounce, saw life and poverty and sickness that will never be erased, saw war torn people and places but all Mike ever wanted to do was help to keep America free! He was full of endless stories, serious, funny and pathetic but all were interesting and based on real life experiences.

Mike was the little guy, the guy with a brain that he thought could make a difference. He served proudly and he served well, but just as sure as we, as young parents grew up together with him, the master plan was for us to grow old together with him.

He was so happy to be reassigned to the USA and "home". We nurtured the family businesses and watched them grow just like we nurtured Mike and helped him grow. In 3 short years he was to "retire" his stripes and step into the family business.

We had a wonderful son, our only child, for 35 years and even during long absences while serving abroad, he was only a phone call or e-mail away and such a comfort to be in constant contact.

We kept the post office busy exchanging video tapes and when ours were returned, there was always a thoughtful little surprise included, something from a faraway land.

Most families have a bond with their children but ours was a special closeness that was really extraordinary. That is probably because he was a bachelor and planned to stay single until changing careers. He didn't want a family torn apart with long separations, therefore choosing the Air Force to come first. Mike was very astute and caring and sharing, but it worked both ways, maybe he was just our clone.

Gary and I are best friends and partners just as we were with Mike and that may be the reason we have a better understanding of the military than most of you. We are holding on tightly to friends and family and VERY sincerely appreciate everyone's compassion and caring. The outpouring of support has been heart wrenching and overwhelming but at the same time very comforting. Mike's scholarship fund has far exceeded our expectations and because of this, we will be able to help students for many years to come.

Mike was our life, our pride and joy, but as we fill the long days doing busy work, we stop to reflect on the good times, the joys and sorrows and memories and a mission that must continue. Don't mourn but keep Mike's memory alive in your hearts and take time to hug your kids. We always lived by this and because there are no regrets, we'll get through this horrible pain some day. Knowing the love from and for him is the biggest comfort. We probably don't realize the finality of all this at this time, but we do realize there are a lot of folks who really care. Thank you all.

Most Sincerely,

Gary & Helen

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 3, 1996

Mr. and Mrs. Gary G. Heiser
Suite 4
39 Old Kings Road, North
Palm Coast, Florida 32137

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Heiser:

I want you to know that Hillary and I are thinking of you. We were deeply saddened by your son's death, and it meant a lot for me to talk with you about him. I will always be grateful for his help during my trip to Germany earlier this year.

Master Sergeant Heiser was a credit to the Air Force, and all those who served with him will remember with pride his commitment to America's security. We hope that your sorrow will be eased by the love of your family and friends and by the knowledge that your son dedicated his life to the cause of peace.

While I know there are no words that can adequately comfort you now, I pledge that we will not rest in our efforts to bring to justice those who committed this cowardly act.

The hearts of all Americans go out to you at this difficult time, and we want you to know that we are keeping you and your family in our thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton
Bill Clinton
President of the United States



400 North Ashley Street
Suite 3050
Tampa, Florida 33602
July 2, 1996

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Heiser,

I wish to extend my heartfelt condolences and tell you that I join you in your grief at the tragic loss of your son, Michael.

No words I can say will relieve your pain, but I want you to know you can be proud of your son's dedicated and selfless service to his country. Michael was both a heroic aviator and a great American.

Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time. I pray your grief will soon pass and your loving memories of Michael will be a source of warmth and strength now and in the years to come. May God bless you.

Sincerely,

Norman Schwarzkopf
H. Norman Schwarzkopf
General, U.S. Army, Retired