

Dear Sir,

This isn't a letter that one expects to write but I must admit that I am honored to do so. To begin, I'd like to tell you a little about myself so that you may understand better what I have to say. I'm currently serving in the United States Navy at the rank of Petty Officer First Class, which is the paygrade of E-6. I've served for 7 ½ years and am currently stationed in Stuttgart, Germany where I live with my beautiful wife Jamie. We've lived in Germany for two years and it is an amazing land with people that are very warm and welcoming. I even have the opportunity to interact with members of the German military and it's been a great experience as well (one that also involved a lot of delicious German beer).

Despite the great experiences I have had, the history of this place is not lost on myself nor any of the people here. Truth be told, it is amazing to think that it wasn't that long ago that most of Europe was covered in war and suffering. Despite that, the land has healed and outside of some locations that have been preserved for the sake of history you cannot even tell that two world wars have been fought in a centuries time throughout these lands. Outside of my house (especially in the summer when I leave it open all day) the sound of children playing is constant. I can only imagine that such sounds would have been thought to be impossible during the war. This is a testament to what you and your comrades have accomplished through great sacrifice. You have given the entire world a future and a chance at making things better than they were. Though things today are far from perfect I truly believe we can improve. For I have seen with my own eyes, the transformation that has occurred here in which myself and so many owe a debt we can never pay in full.

In addition to the peace you have given, to those of us in uniform you are a legend. The great victories won and terrible sacrifices made are such that we cannot feel anything but great humility to stand in the boots you once filled. Your actions are the standard by which we

measure ourselves every day. Our generation, like yours, has been called to war and we have answered that call to the best of our ability. But as we stepped forth to defend our country, we fully recognize that we could not have done so without those who have gone before us. All you have done in the war has allowed us to be who we are today, without you, there is no us and therefore anything we achieve is owed to you and your comrades. It is often said that your generation was the greatest generation that America has ever produced and I could not agree more. In the years to come I hope that our generation may continue to live up to the standard you set for us and perhaps be able to give some of the greatness you have bestowed upon us through your actions to those that come after.

It is my sincere honor to give these words to you; they are perhaps the most solemn and truest words I have ever committed to paper. You have done so much for us that it saddens me that this is all I can give you but I truly hope that it grants you some measure of peace to know that those of us who fill your shoes today are humbled by you and your comrades. I salute you and your fellow soldiers, sailors and marines.

Sincerely,

Eric J Wagner  
Operations Specialist Petty Officer First Class,  
United States Navy