

 **SGT RAYMOND
HUBBARD'S MEMORIAL
DAY REMARKS AT
HIS HOME TOWN
IN WISCONSIN
~ MAY 26, 2008 ~**

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SGT Raymond Hubbard survived a rocket attack in Baghdad. He lost his leg and suffered a stroke from the loss of blood, but he came home! On Memorial Day in 2008 he gave a heartfelt speech about his fallen comrades, his family's military history, and what the nation needs to do for its soldiers.

Both of Sgt. Hubbard's grandfathers, his father and his uncle experienced combat. In this speech he remembers those from his state of Wisconsin who fell, and he remembers his father who made it home alive from Viet Nam, but "died inside" when the system and people didn't seem to care.

By the end of his speech there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd. Here is a link to a video of that speech: [SGT Raymond Hubbard's memorial day speech - May 26, 2008.](#)



"To be honest, when George Bowman, my fellow patriot, bestowed this honor on me, it took all my will to not back down. Honoring the fallen is something so personal that I didn't think I could share my own grief, but if I was the first person asked, then it was my duty to not let this fall on someone's else's already heavy heart.

There have been 1.6 million soldiers that have served in the combat theater in the Middle East since 2001; that is .5 percent of the current U.S. population. If you compare that with the two percent of the population that served in Vietnam, or the 12 percent that fought in World War II, this seems to be a minor incident.

As of March 17th, 2008 there have been over 4,000 United States fatalities from Operation Iraqi Freedom, with approximately 74 of them officially declared Wisconsin sons and daughters.

Now, I stand up here and throw out these numbers, and you my friends, my neighbors either react with a sorrowful sigh or a de-sensitized disdain, and if you did so react, it's not your fault.

It's hard to feel grief, compassion, anger for over a five-year period of time. It's hard to feel anything at all when numbers are flashed across the screen or spoken from a podium. Numbers are not faces. Numbers are not people. Numbers are not names of loved ones.

Names of my comrades can fall from my lips like tears from my own eyes. Staff Sgt Todd Olson, Cpl Ken Cross, Specialist Shaun Novak, Staff Sgt Steven Martin, Pvt. Isaiah Hunt, Major Chris Splinter, Capt. Jonathan Kurth and Specialist Justin Linden — these are all Wisconsin sons and daughters.

I'm sure more than a few of you know of Justin. Justin played baseball for the Clinton Cougars. Justin graduated from Clinton in 1999. Justin moved to Oregon where he met his future wife Sarah. Justin and Sarah were married on February 28th, 2004, just before Justin was deployed to Iraq. On June 4th, 2004, Specialist Justin Linden was killed when his convoy was attacked by Improvised Explosive Devices and rocket-propelled grenades.

I have never seen so much loss, and so much pride, fill a man than it does with Wayne Linden, Justin's father. Every time he thinks about his son, you see the loss and the pride in immeasurable amounts.

I too felt the loss of a soldier. Losing a soldier has affected my life in ways that I still yet have to fully understand. This soldier was not my son, no, God willing, never that, and it was not during combat with an enemy. The soldier was my father by my birth, and my brother through our service to our country.

While Dan Hubbard was attending Elkhorn High School, his cousin and friend since childhood, Michael Stotlet was engaging democracies in Vietnam. On November 1st, 1966, my father's cousin was killed by small arms fire. Pvt 1st Class Michael Stotlet's name can be found on Panel 12-E, Line 8 of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. My cousin was the third Walworth County resident to die in Vietnam, and the first of Elkhorn's sons.

My father could not cope with his friend's demise. He tried to attend college, but I believe my father could not shake the feeling of, 'if only I was there,' 'if only I could do something.'

My father, Dan Hubbard, enlisted in 1969 and was quickly sent into the war zone. The things he saw there I shall not repeat for you this morning. Atrocities and inhumanities were wide spread. My father saw combat, some of which I cannot attest, and when he came home, he was physically and mentally disabled.

Now my father has had an entirely different war thrust upon him, upon his return home — a war for recognition and compassion, a war fought for, and against, the country which he so loved. He was denied a purple heart, he was denied his dignity, he was denied a clean conscience.

By the time I turned 14, my father had given up his battles. On February 11, 1992, Dan Hubbard, my father died, nameless, faceless, another statistic of the Vietnam era — another number, he was buried on February 14th, 1992, Valentine's day, with his friend's Purple Heart pinned on his chest.

I, Raymond Dan Hubbard, ask you, my friends, my neighbors to accept my apologies. I cry for your pardon, I beg you for forgiveness, for I have forgotten the face of my father.

When I was 14 and I had taken up smoking, I had forgotten the face of my father. When I was 16 and started to drink heavily, I had forgotten the face of my father. When I was 17 and had dropped out of high school, I had forgotten the face of my father.

During my graduation from Basic Training at the age of 24, I felt a hand clasp my shoulder. I looked up into my father's proud eyes and wept quietly in formation.

Prior to my deployment challenge, I chose a picture of my father while he was in service to his country in Vietnam. I attached it to my bunk so that he could always watch over me during my tour.

On July 4th, 2006, our nation's Independence Day, when a large self-propelled rocket detonated meters away from me, I saw my father's face again, fighting to keep me alive.

My friends, my neighbors, only through our perseverance, never forgetting, will we get through the difficult times ahead. Only through our humility and never forgetting, will we make them who have served feel our gratitude. Only through our unity and never forgetting, will we honor the fallen.

My name is Sgt. Raymond Hubbard, and I will never forget the face of my brothers. Thank you."