

Following is an article that was published in the Herald-Dispatch in November, 2002 (updated to the present):

### **Come Home, America**

Uncle Arthur died in World War II. He was one of the soldiers wounded during the D-Day Normandy invasion. He died a month later (July, 1944) in a military hospital and was buried along with the countless other GIs in the Omaha Beach cemetery (made famous by Scene 1 of "Saving Private Ryan"). Uncle Arthur was not coming home to the America he defended. It was the same for thousands of other soldiers. They were not coming home to see their America again.

At the time I was not long in this world – only 2-1/2 years. Now I'm a nearly 70-year-old veteran looking back at the significance and meaning of such sacrifice ... and knowing all too well that this death caused great suffering and pain to his immediate family. Uncle Arthur and his fiancée had been looking forward to a life ahead, if not for this great war.

Veterans' Days have come and gone over the past decades; and each year I remember the picture, the story of Uncle Arthur, and wonder how he would feel today if he looked at the country for which he died in order to defend and protect its freedoms.

It has been a long time since 1944 ... a long time and perhaps a very different country ago. Some refer to the days following WWII, the late 40s and 50s, as the "innocent years" or the "good old days." And some refer to those days and that time period as being not so good at all. I grew up in the 40s and 50s and prefer to think of it as a more simple, less complex age ... a cleaner culture. Some, of course, may disagree.

Veterans have been part of every generation. There are those who served willingly and those who just served. And of course, there were those who refused to serve. But service and freedom were the issues and the calling. And many of us just did our duty and were happy to be home again. Home is good, but the issues of freedom and service change and evolve through each generation. The definition of America changes and is influenced by issues and events and cultures that pull at its very fabric.

The America of 2011 is quite a different place from the generation born in 1942. We have somehow survived all of the changes, wars, and conflicts to have become “veteranized”. And we want America to come home. We want an America that has opportunities for its young people again. We want an America that is represented by honorable and ethical people who will not allow for the exportation of jobs and overseas employment at the expense of Americans. We want America, the most giving country in the world, to be able to rebuild its own infrastructure of roads and bridges. Come home, America!

We want an America that does not support a United Nations that has become part of the problem by supporting and housing terrorist countries within its own security council and member nations, making its mission as a peacekeeper suspect and compromised in practice. This is not what we fought, served, and died for. Come home, America! It is time to reclaim that America for all the uncles, brothers, fathers, sons, and daughters who made the greatest sacrifice one can ever make, believing their fighting and dying was beyond sacrifice. Come home, America!

For freedom is an empty word for those who have gone before us ... if we place that dream on a shelf and watch it turn to dust. For what is left when honor is lost? And the America of today has lost its honor, its freedoms, and its birthright. Come home, America!