

## **My Address for the RDVMF Honored Member Presentation Ceremony**

Freising, Bayern, Germany, May 25th 2009

*Ladies, Gentlemen,*

*it is an honor and a pleasure for me to have all of you nice people here on this event.*

*There's of course a special reason, why we are all here - and why we are able to attend this in peace and freedom.*

*This special reason is that some very precious people fought and sacrificed for that. Some of them gave their life, some gave their health, and for some the experiences of this time gave everlasting impressions.*

*Today we have some of these proud people here - please applaud the veterans of the RDVMF, the Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation.*

*Pete, Jim and Fritz, please let us applaud you.*

*Of course yet another important reason to be here is, that the veterans of RDVMF invited to this event, an invitation because of a very special purpose, which makes me very proud.*

*This honor given to me, to become honorary member of the 42nd Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation, I do humbly accept and I promise to do my best to prove myself worthy to be part of the 42nd RDVMF.*

*But please allow me to talk about one more reason for today's event, and this reason was established long time ago, from an also very admirable and famous person.*

*It was General George Washington, first President of the United States of America, who introduced in the year 1782 the medal of the Purple Heart, also known then as Badge of Military Merit, given for extraordinary fidelity and essential service.*

*The words of General Washington were: "The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus open to all,"*

*These words are better to understand if one considers that before only higher ranks in the armies were awarded with medals, and in contrary General Washington was the first who broke with this behavior, and created this award for his enlisted men, for the common soldier.*

*As the common soldiers are the ones who gave all, who fought and sacrificed for freedom and independence of the United States in these struggling years of the late 18th century.*

*That's why the medal of the Purple Heart is a very special medal, to recognize, honor and remember those proud people.*

*In this spirit I made the Purple Heart Jewel, which was given to the 42nd Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation on June 15th 2008 in Fredericksburg, as my expression of honor for the troops of the United States of America and especially the 42nd Rainbow Division veterans.*

*This gift shall have the same meaning, to remember, to be thankful and to honor these people who have done so much for our country. Whereas it is particularly important to mention that they did it not for their own country, they did it for us, for a country not their own, but in the spirit to bring peace and freedom.*

*If you would ask me, why I did this, and you may rightfully interject that I'm no general, nor somebody of rank, nor a statesman or representative of my country, politician or such, I will tell you that it is my deepest conviction, that every citizen who feels that something is important, is able to do something for it, show commitment, and is as well able to say "Thank you" and show such a sign of friendship.*

*I felt and I feel this way, and that was my personal reason to do what I did.*

*It's the meaning and the spirit behind such that counts; and in this spirit of the admirable George Washington I am very proud about this event today, and especially that the veterans took the long way to come here to Germany, a country that lives now in peace and freedom because of their commitment.*

*Thank you. Thanks !*