

Dachau, September 13th, 2008

*Dear President,
dear members of the Virginia Holocaust Museum,
dear attendees,*

As today, October 5th, 2008 is the day of the official Purple Heart Jewel Dedication, and this way the start of a new exhibit in the Virginia Holocaust Museum, please allow me to send you a few words of greeting.

First and of all, I have to express how high I value the honor given to me in accepting my gift, the Purple Heart Jewel by the Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation, on behalf of veterans and members of the 42nd Rainbow Division. I feel equally honored by the Virginia Holocaust Museum, who subsequently agreed to accept my gift from RDVMF.

In knowing history and the cruelties that happened, I feel I possibly can't overestimate that my gift is appreciated as an everlasting sign of remembrance and friendship.

Let me give a short metaphor that crossed my mind:

First, at the beginning of the circle are the troops, people who are ready to give their health and live to fight for a just cause, to fight against injustice in my country, against an unjust regime and dictatorship. This commitment allowed the young generation to live and prosper without oppression. As part of this generation I am grateful that I was given the chance to show this thankfulness to the veterans who actually made this life possible, something I would describe as another part of the circle. And it's amazing that one of these great veterans, Mr. James R. Pettus took the burden to commit himself to a fund-raiser for the troops, to think and care about them, to honor and value their deeds, like the good deeds of the veterans of the 42nd Rainbow Division will be honored and valued forever. And this way it comes back to where it began, to the troops, and so the circle got closed.

And as well war is something human kind neither needs nor wants, in our time war and oppression still happens on earth. Would not these proud troops fight for liberty, freedom and justice, our world and our lives would become unbearable.

Thank you for your time to listen or read these words, I wish all a good and fine dedication day and lots of new visitors for the museum.

With my sincerest regards,



Ludwig Stöckl

