

"Reflections at The Wall..... "

October 2013



Recently the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation held their annual candle light vigil at Memorial Park.

What a great turn out of our members, to show support to families that lost loved ones in the line of duty and those that were catastrophically injured. We lived up to our motto "Gone but Never Forgotten"

But what makes that ground so holy is the inscription "It is how they lived that we remember". I was standing at the wall lost in thought, when I noticed someone standing not too far staring at me. He said "I'll never forget that night".

"That cold winter night that we were out together, when our mutual friend had his life taken in the line of duty". We each tried to hide the tears that were escaping the corner of our eyes. We gave each other a hug and continued standing in silence, then he said "I know this job is tough filled with moments of laughs and moments of tears but I am glad I can make a difference, even if only in a small way". I felt proud, it was a moment that no words needed to be said, just being there spoke volumes. It brought to mind a short Reflection, that was written by a police officer titled,

"The Pain And Reward Of Being The Police"

I don't know what it's like to be a doctor, a lawyer, a garbage man, a chef or a priest. I don't know what it's like to install power lines, sewer lines or cable lines. I realize that I don't know what it's like for many professions. I know that and I accept that. I do know, however, what it's like to be a delivery boy, a bar-back, a fast-food cashier, a lawn boy, a loss prevention agent and a college student. I know what it's like to be a son, a brother, an uncle, a godfather, a husband, a father and a friend. I'm all of these and more. But I believe I'm best known in my neighborhood, for being a law enforcement professional, a police officer, a cop. In times like these, when it seems easier than ever to offer an opinion about an incident or to second-guess the actions of others, I wonder: "Do others see things and situations like I do?" I've watched other professions and professionals do their jobs, and I've wondered how do they do what they do, and why do they choose to do what they do? What does it take to get up each day and deliver babies, to construct buildings, to tar a roof, to drive a taxi or to work in public office? I know what it's like to be a patrol officer, a community policing officer, working a burglary unit, a robbery/homicide unit, a tactical officer and an adjunct instructor. And I wonder if others really know - or even care to know - about some of the things I do day in and day out - about events and situations cops aren't too quick or too willing to share with others. I've attended the autopsies of a newborn, a one-month-old infant and a seven-month-old baby - all during a 2½ week period while going home each night to my own expectant wife. I've gone through countless doorways and searched untold darkened areas for felons who would do anything - including killing me and others - so as not to go back to prison. I've made countless death notifications and arrested way too many mothers and fathers in front of their children. And I know all too well what it's like to try to save a man from harming himself or others and then having him turn on me, doing his best to hurt me. There are many humorous and lighthearted

occasions in this noble profession, but I wonder if others are aware of the profession's "behind the scenes" angst: the pain and suffering, the anxiety, the search for understanding, the attempt to rationalize the unthinkable and the unbelievable things that I see every day. And I wonder if others really understand what it means to the community when an officer is injured, when an officer is "down." I chose this profession because I felt - and I still feel - a passion for my chosen vocation. A passion to make our world a better place to live even if only a small way. I have no death wish, nor do I wake up wanting to hurt or kill another person. I will, however, put my life in harm's way for a stranger, and I won't hesitate to work toward finding a solution to whatever problems I face each day. And I am not alone; I'm surrounded by a multitude of like-minded team players, men and women, who share a commitment to the community. I realize I'm far from perfect in a profession that expects perfection and leaves little room for error. There is sometimes no tomorrow, for a mistake made today. And sometimes there is no tomorrow, even if I make no mistakes, and I have no control over that. I appreciate and admire so many others and the work they do. I admire my accountant, my doctor, my friends and without question, my family. I admire, too, my brother and sister officers in the military, for they're keeping watch over our interests here and abroad. Every day, though, I find new ways to admire my fellow law enforcement professionals. I know what they know, I've seen what they've seen and experienced every day. So when I hear others say they wouldn't do my "job" for a million dollars, I smile to myself. For despite the pain, complexity and danger, I feel like I would even do my job for free. But please keep us "the Blue Family" in your prayers. End of reflection.

The above was the feeling that was felt by all who were in attendance at the Vigil, and THAT my friends is what makes each of YOU priceless!

Thanks for being you. Thanks for what you do... The work you do is holy and noble, and for that we are most grateful.

Should you ever need a shoulder to lean on, have humor to share, or wish company for a ride along, don't hesitate to give us a call.

On behalf of ALL the Chaplains, may G-d bless you and keep you safe, always. Amen.

Compliments of Rabbi Moshe Wolf, Police Chaplain

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