



American
Warrior

American Warrior Series

Through the Centuries

Burial In The Sky



by Don Poss...
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A park setting of rolling manicured lawns, and a thousand acres of lakes, swans, ducks, and hallowed grounds of countless veterans at rest. A peaceful place for the spirit to linger, or spend an eternity. The veterans memorial dedication ceremony will begin soon, and yet my eyes are drawn to the alter, upon which rests a 12 foot pillar of black stone, and its burden. Dusk is upon us and the California skies are amber and a radiant pink that chases the fair blue from heaven, hills and valleys.

The Warrior...

He is a young man, this fallen warrior, newly slain. I chanced upon him as if pursuing echoes of wavering sounds of distant battle -- terrible Armageddon of thundering hooves, souging to and fro in gentle winds.

He is not posed in death to glorify the battle. How still, he lays... quiet... unmoving... though not abandoned nor discarded in fields of tall grass. More likely gently carried by comrades from the raging meandering battlefield, and placed thus upon this flat stone pedestal -- *protected from beasts* -- hidden from searching, killing, human eyes, yet vulnerable to flying creatures of metal or flesh, and elements of nature that would reduce him to dust.

It is easy to visualize early American ancestors who also buried their veteran warriors in the sky. It is easy to remember James Bruce Jones, mortally wounded and carried prostrate upon the hood of a jeep racing futilely to Đà Nẵng, Vietnam, Air Base's dispensary.

Hours have passed since comrades laid down the Warrior, and rushed back into the fracas... no doubt

planning a return to bind and care for his wounds, not yet mortal. Shimmering heat waves waffle sight and gleeful sounds of anguished cries for vengeance and mercy. Men had carried him, with care, to this his granite bed... granite alter... granite final resting place. Arms placed across his chest... not composed in death, but in comfort. His left arm sags to his side... his right arm now dangles toward earth, with open hand as if beckoning the human touch of love past, and undiscovered. Streaks of blood have dried away what stream of life once pulsed and flowed, and now... slowed to nothing.

A poncho liner is draped over his form and face -- shade from harsh light -- warmth from night's chill, should friends tarry -- and to their fates they tarry still. A tuft of hair catches a whisper-breeze, and flutters like the dandelion before flight. His head turned slightly, ear once cocked to sounds of muffled battle. Can he yet hear the growing silence? Hours since voices of victory or defeat last



cried out in murmurs of wavering discourse.

Mares-tail clouds wisped released souls from battlefields of dark stained earth, newly moisten red, plowed and torn asunder. Wispy friends of hours past, ride point toward the other side... and now await, having cleared the way for comrades of battle... and those yet to follow. They even beckon an all-clear to him... when he is ready... and wait, still and quiet in this peaceful place... patient, with time's certainty.

The first night of eons draws nigh.

No weapon laid nearby for self, last, defense. They knew.

No surgeon, nurse, friend, nor even guard of honor or enemy.

No tribute.

No flag.

Timeless veteran casualty... this fallen American Warrior... patriot of homeland... victor and vanquished.

Alone.

Loved ones still unknowing.

Candles are lit and light others, as cupped glows are passed amongst those who would remember lost friends and loved ones. Starlight descended to earth... twinkling to those souls who wait across the lake.

Bagpipes weep... Amazing Grace... "how sweet the sound..."

Bugles mourn Taps...

"... Fading light dims the sight
And a star gems the sky,
Gleaming bright from afar,
Drawing nigh,
Falls the night...."

The firing squad, across the lake, fires three volleys... line of muzzle flashes, though not in ambush....

The flag is lowered... and we are left with our parting thoughts.

He is a young man, this fallen warrior... newly slain. If by chance you happen upon him as if pursuing echoes of wavering sounds of distant battle -- terrible Armageddon of thundering hooves, souging to and fro in gentle winds -- pause and remember him... as he was... as he is -- and other veterans for their personal and emotional sacrifices, and acknowledge those who have lost loved ones in the service of their country. You are protected by the life-sacrifice of the American Warrior.

For those who fought for it,
Life has a different flavor
The protected will never know.



VETERANS MEMORIAL

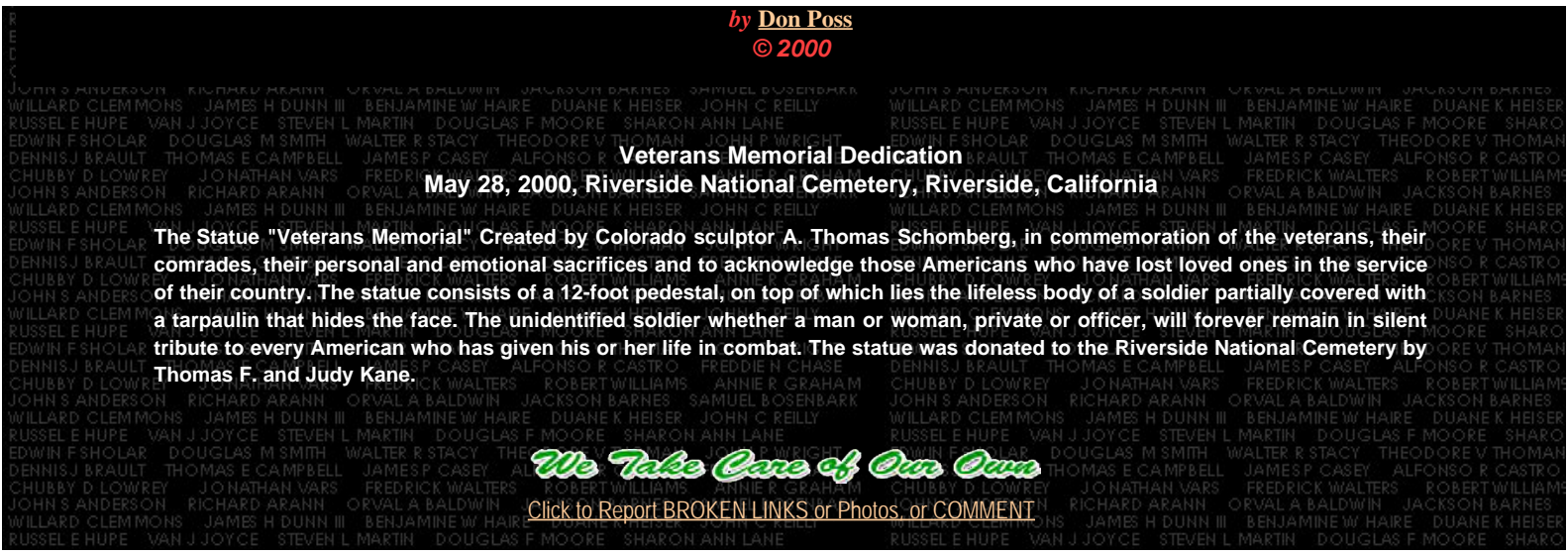
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Native American Warrior

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Veterans Memorial Dedication

May 28, 2000, Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, California

The Statue "Veterans Memorial" Created by Colorado sculptor A. Thomas Schomberg, in commemoration of the veterans, their comrades, their personal and emotional sacrifices and to acknowledge those Americans who have lost loved ones in the service of their country. The statue consists of a 12-foot pedestal, on top of which lies the lifeless body of a soldier partially covered with a tarpaulin that hides the face. The unidentified soldier whether a man or woman, private or officer, will forever remain in silent tribute to every American who has given his or her life in combat. The statue was donated to the Riverside National Cemetery by Thomas F. and Judy Kane.

We Take Care of Our Own

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