

Day of Days

An E-Mail to Family & Friends (including Democratic activists)

September 11, 2001

Dear Family and Friends,

I signed up for HBO on Sunday so I could watch, and tape, *Band of Brothers*, about soldiers in World War II. Having seen first-hand the amputees returning from Europe, Dad never watches war movies. I felt the need to see for myself what had been billed as an accurate recreation of what they went through, their sacrifices for us.

There were two episodes Sunday night, the second titled *Day of Days*, about their first day in combat.

Today has been the "Day of Days" for our whole nation, don't you think?

There are all sorts of opinions about how to react. We should respect them all—this is still America (thank God). The terrorists only win if they can divide and conquer us. [Bin Laden would later be quoted as saying that his ultimate goal was "the end of the U.S. as united states."]

My opinion is that any nation that harbors terrorists, whether or not the individuals are ultimately proved to be responsible for today's terrible events and whether or not that nation actively supports those terrorists or simply turns a blind eye to them, any such nation is our

enemy and should be treated as such. I hate war and killing, but unfortunately sometimes the only way to stop war and killing is to respond in kind or to surrender to evil. Innocent lives may be lost, but innocent lives are being lost. And no nation, let alone a great power, has ever stood for long without defending itself and even, in desperate times, making an example of its mortal enemies. In the end, more lives will be saved. And our country is worth saving for its principles as well as its lives and property.

In need of spiritual support, I went to Church this morning; and we prayed for the victims as well as for the judgment of our leaders. As you probably know, I had a great deal of trouble with the process and outcome and legitimacy of the last presidential election; but in this crisis, we should recognize and support Mr. Bush as the one and only Commander in Chief. There will be more than enough opportunity for politics and other issues, including important Constitutional issues, at a later date. As long as we remain united during these trying times, the terrorists will not win.

Dad and I debated whether this was the worst day in U.S. history or whether it was Pearl Harbor. More lives were undoubtedly lost today, in the first attack on the mainland I believe [since the War of 1812?]; but in '42, our Pacific

defenses were decimated, leaving our entire West Coast undefended to further attacks. In the end, neither day was any good.

Here's to better days ahead. If the terrorists thought that they would scare us into some sort of "submission," then they miscalculated. I'm sad, and I'm angry. But the last thing in the world I am today is scared.

You can tell a lot about someone by the kinds of friends they have (like Great Britain, whose P.M. voiced support for us today) and by the kind of enemies you have. If the people who dislike us so bitterly are the type who stage such horrible, unprovoked attacks on innocent men, women, and children—instead of lodging any complaints they may have by peaceful means, like Martin Luther King or Gandhi—then I'm glad I'm not one of my enemies. I'm proud to be an American.

So much from me. It's easy to be so hard when you're beyond draft age (although we have the means to punish our enemies [to a certain extent] without putting troops on the ground). But like it or not, history will judge us by what we do or don't do. I just hope it's in keeping with our principles (which don't include racism), and sends a loud and clear message that this sort of thing is not going to be tolerated (even though there will always be terrorism).

I just hope it wasn't a home-grown group (I remember thinking at first that the OK City bombing was the work of foreign terrorists). What would that mean? And what would we do? As we say in Church, "peace to you."