



Supporting the Troops is More Than Just a Phrase

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July 8, 2006

When President Bush spoke to the soldiers and civilians at Fort Bragg on Independence Day, he called on all Americans to make some kind of contribution to our servicemen and women "...because every one of us owes our freedom to these courageous Americans."

Supporting the men and women who dedicate their lives to the defense of our nation can mean so much more than just a "Support Our Troops" bumper sticker or a yellow ribbon car magnet. Any citizen can utter patriotic phrases, fly a flag, or put up a red-white-and-blue sign as a show of support for those who willingly sacrifice the comforts of our society to ensure that everyone else can continue their lives uninterrupted by the realities of war.

But for those who can do more and want to do more than offer a few gestures, although the gestures are certainly appreciated, President Bush provided a gentle nudge in the right direction when he referred his audience to AmericaSupportsYou.mil, a Department of Defense sponsored web site that provides a wealth of resources to help support those who fight and die so that we don't have to.

Whether you want to read or send messages to soldiers in harm's way, donate a computer or frequent flyer miles, or provide a gift certificate or phone card, there's a link to an organization that can help you support one or more of our service members.

With just a few clicks of your mouse, you can send care packages to Iraq or Afghanistan or make a contribution to scholarship funds set up for the children of our fallen heroes. You can find out how to volunteer your time and energy to any number of causes, or you can choose to provide monetary support to groups that are making daily, meaningful contributions to the lives of our soldiers and their families.

Our military is made up of men and women who are proud of their service and who would never ask for anything from the American public. They would never ask for organizations like Homes for Our Troops, a Massachusetts group that builds specially modified homes for those who have been severely wounded answering their nation's call.

They would never ask for assistance from the Fisher House organization, which provides lodging away from home for family members of our wounded, so that they can be with their loved ones when they need it most. And they would never ask for services like those provided by the Freedom Calls Foundation, which uses state-of-the-art technology to help our servicemen and women in Iraq stay in touch with their families.

Those selfless individuals who serve our country so well would never ask for anything in return, for themselves or for their families. But equally selfless Americans can step up and make a contribution in any number of ways. AmericaSupportsYou.mil can help point you in the right direction, if you want to help our soldiers. Because when all is said and done, supporting our troops is more than just a phrase.