



Fort Hood Area
United Way

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March 5, 1991

Mr. George Bush
The President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20201

Dear President Bush:

My husband, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Van M. Merrill Jr., is a member of the United States Army, 2nd Armored Division who is still serving in the Persian Gulf. He is also a Vietnam veteran, having served in the Marine Infantry in 1966.

For the past seven months, I have worried about the safety and wholeness of my individual family. For the past seven months, I have worried equally about the safety and wholeness of the 500,000 other families of Operation Desert Storm soldiers. For the past seven months, I have worried about the safety and wholeness of the entire world community as we have watched a thug attempt to rise to power by wielding the barrel of a gun as a scepter. Because of Saddam Hussein's tyranny and violence, I have been, and will always be, as is every other military family member, willing to sacrifice all that was necessary.

Now our soldiers are about to return home. The danger of the battlefield is past. First of all, thank you. Our deepest gratitude to Mr. Cheney, General Powell, General Schwartzkopf, to the Congress and the House; to all who have played even a tiny part in the support of our soldiers and their families. It has been the team effort that brought us to victory.

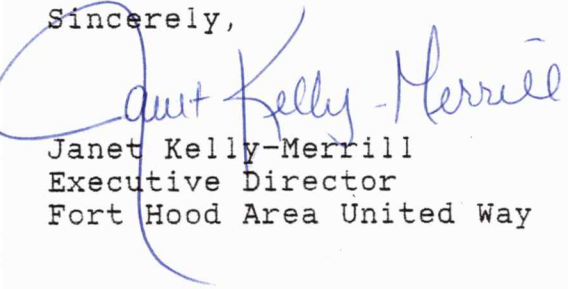
Every day, my office receives call after call from the families of military dependents who are facing great financial difficulties because of their soldier's service in Operation Desert Storm. Not a soul who asks for help, complains about the reason. They are proud of the men and women who served and have gladly accepted the challenges of military life. But they do worry about their loved one coming home to past due rent, unpaid bills; households facing challenges when their soldier should be basking in a hero's welcome. While my community has been especially hard hit, we are only one of many communities around the country with families who are facing yet another battle here at home.

President Bush, my request to you today is; Please use my community as an example and continue to remind the patriotic and compassionate citizens of our country, the members of the Congress, the House, the Senate, at every opportunity, that while the battlefield war has ended, many military families will have needs in the days to come, due to the war. We must continue to support the brave men and women who served in Operation Desert Storm, and their families, as they try to pick up the pieces of their lives and move ahead.

It is easy to be patriotic when the bullets are flying and the bombs are falling. It is harder to be patriotic when the hush of peace has settled on our land. For many young Operation Desert Storm soldiers, the hush of peace will not ring in their ears for some time to come. Now is the time when people can show their true patriotism by continuing to remember the troops through volunteerism, their financial resources or their encouragement. Now is the time citizens have the opportunity to put feet to their words, "We support our soldiers." Please remind them they truly can.

God bless you Mr. President. God bless our soldiers and their families. God bless the United States of America.

Sincerely,


Janet Kelly-Merrill
Executive Director
Fort Hood Area United Way