

Michigan's Own Military and Space Museum Frankenmuth, Michigan



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5th annual Patriot's Day Memorial Ceremony at Michigan's Own September 11, 2006

Museum
Director
Stan Bozich
welcomed
everyone at
1pm to our fifth
Annual Patriot's
Day Memorial
Service for
those killed by
terrorists in this
our Seventh
Foreign War and
a remembrance
of our MIAs
and POWs.
Bozich then
introduced our
special guests,
Commanders
of both the
American
Legion and
VFW, our
speakers and our



All of the attendees joined hands to sing God Bless America.

vocalist, Ms. Ruthie Van Gilder, who began the ceremony with a rendition of God Bless America.

Next, Pastor Nathan Mains of the Frankenmuth Bible Church gave the invocation followed by the honorable Gary Rupprecht, Mayor of Frankenmuth and State Representative Kenneth Horn, to welcome everyone to town. Director Bozich then introduced our keynote speaker, Mr. John Ellsworth of Wixom, who with his wife, Debbie, lost their son, Lance Corporal Justin Ellsworth USMC on November 13, 2004, in Iraq. His comments follow ...

My name is John Ellsworth and I am very proud to be the father of Lance Corporal Justin Ellsworth, USMC

Justin was killed in Fallujah, Iraq on Nov. 13, 2004. His voice is silenced forever, but his mission carries on.

My wife, Debbie, and I are the Michigan Chairmen of Families United for our troops and their mission. This is a grassroots coalition of Gold Star Families, Blue Star Families, veterans, families with loved ones in harm's way and Americans who share a deep appreciation for our men and women in uniform

and support them in their efforts to make America safer by winning the War on Terror.

Now, for those of you with the feeling you had when they were first born..

When we hold them for the first time, we make a promise to God to protect them and do the best we can to teach them right from wrong.

I can still remember making that

promise like it was yesterday. We try to give our children a moral compass to help guide them through the tough times that life can give. Give them a sense of pride in the things that mean the most to us... God, country and family. Teach them to respect others, fight for what's right and stand up for what you believe in.

My son learned these things quite well ...and in the process, taught me a few things, too.

You see, for me to tell you how September 11, 2001 affected me, I have to give you a brief history of my family.

The last week in August, 2001, I took my family on vacation to the nation's capital. We visited all the national monuments, the Lincoln Memorial, the Capital Building and the Washington Monument. But the one thing that seemed to really hit home to my little boy, was a particular stone wall with the words inscribed, "Freedom is Not Free".

I watched him as he walked around "The Wall" and ran his fingers over some of the names. He was truly touched by it all.

I took a photograph of him and my wife standing at each

