



**DEDICATED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES**

***Dear Members of the Armed Forces,***

***It is with gratitude and humility that this collection is dedicated by the writer and her friend Opal to the women and men of the United States Armed Forces for their bravery in serving this country in which we have the privilege of residing.***

***After having heard from so many of you stationed throughout the world, there is nothing that gives me greater pleasure than to know that the Devotional Embers website has caught your attention. Just realizing that the words God has dictated through this writer's fingers offer encouragement and touch you in some small way is one of the greatest highlights of my life.***

***When Opal learned of your interest, it prompted cherished memories of having written to so many soldiers over the years of her life that she wanted to pen a letter to a soldier at age 95 but could not due to being 80% blind.***

***However, determined to not allow her vision challenges to create a roadblock, she asked if I would take dictation and send it to a soldier. Admittedly, while recording her heart wrenching message, it was difficult to see the paper due to the blur caused by tears that streamed unrestrained down the writer's cheeks.***

***Think about a 95-year-old woman still possessing the ability to feel this level of compassion and generosity even though she needed daily care from others. Recalling the image of her stretched out on the hospital bed softly smiling as she carefully chose the words she wanted to form, it was obvious that God intended it to take wings and fly around the world.***

***Therefore, it is my hope that you the reader will internalize her message below in a way that it will be imprinted on your heart as a gift of love forever.***

**Dear Soldier,**

**My name is Opal, a resident at Glendale Gardens Nursing Home in Springfield, Missouri, who wants to express to you how much you are loved as one of God's children.**

**As a young girl, it was a top propriety to write letters to the soldiers all over the world. Even though it took a lot of effort to write meaningful words to every precious person, there was no question as to the importance in communicating to each one.**

**Today, as I write this letter from my bed at the nursing home, one that I now must dictate to a friend, the pleasure to communicate with you is still just as strong as it was then because of realizing and cherishing all that you have done for me during my life time. Because of your efforts and those of soldiers that went before you that served as gatekeepers to this wonderful country called the United States of America, an old lady like me can proclaim that due to these sacrifices, I have had a wonderful life, loving husband, children, grandchildren, and enjoyed living on a picturesque farm located in the rolling hills of Missouri.**

**Although I am now almost blind, and suffering from many physical ailments, please know that my greatest wish is for your own health and safety. I know the comforts of home are not currently available to you; things like your favorite pillow, delicious dishes of food, and seeing friends and family.**

**Dear one, if I could have my heart's greatest desire right now, it would be to give you the safety and comfort of my bed, even if for only one night, so that you could rest peacefully, without fear. It would indeed be an honor to have the staff move me to my recliner so that I could be your guardian angel for these precious moments in time.**

**And the best part in getting to see you in person would be for this blind lady to lovingly trace every feature of your sweet face with my fingers.**

**God's Love,**

**Opal**

