

5 Dec. 05

Dear General Schoomaker,

My name is John Moyes. I am a Social Studies teacher at Cuba High School in Cuba, Illinois. I have enclosed an assignment that I offered to my Current Events classes along with the response from one of my students.

I wonder if I might impose upon you to try to disseminate this around and out to the troops that are deployed to the Gulf, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The student, Andy Brooks, is a very thoughtful, kind and humble young man. While I understand exactly what I am asking of you, I also realize this might be a rather "feaseless" request. I thought I might ask you all the same.

I am a USAF veteran. I know very well what it is like to be "deployed", especially to SW Asia. I wanted you to know that there are a number of people that support our troops. In particular, there is one young man from rural Illinois who wished to THANK our troops and wish them well.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Moyes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Moyes
Cuba High School

Current Events- "Giving Thanks"

Yes...here we are in the Holiday Season again. Many people take a moment during this time of year to reflect on what they have and acknowledge their gratitude for these things. I know that I have a great deal to be thankful for, especially this Holiday season!! So then, here is your assignment:

Read this story below, I received it as one of "those e-mail forwards" that get passed around the internet all the time. In the shadow of what our country has undergone in the last couple of years, and will continue to go through in the coming months, it seems to be particularly appropriate. Your assignment is to write "THANK YOU's" to at least 6 people (your mom and dad count as 1). This can take any form as long as each "Thank You" is two paragraphs long. Include who the person is, what they do/have done for you, why those things are important to/for you, and your wishes of "THANKS". You may do this as a paper, as a poster, as letters to the people, as cards to the people, whatever. But, it must meet the minimum requirements and it is due at the beginning of the next class period (unless otherwise stated) or at the end of this one if you choose to get it done today. ALSO...I reserve the right (unless you tell me not to) to pass these along to the people you want to THANK. So...be advised.

Charles Plumb was a U.S. Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb. "I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat, a bib in the back, and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor."

Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know.

Now, Plumb asks his audience, "Who's packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. Plumb also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory-he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason.

This is a 60 point assignment! It might not be one you decide to miss!

To the soldiers who fought or are fighting

There is no way I can ever repay you for what you did. You risked your lives to keep us free. And some of you lost your lives to achieve freedom. But you didn't just keep the United States free; you kept the whole world free. And for that I am grateful.

Some Americans might not give you the respect you deserve. Some do not honor your sacrifices. But I will always honor and respect you for what you did. Someday I hope I am half the person all of you are. Thank you and I hope you have a good thanksgiving, wherever you are.

Indebted to you forever,
Andrew Craig Brooks

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.