

ELECTION OF 2008

by

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The most historic presidential election of our lifetime is over, and in these days that follow, many proud Americans — Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike — are reflecting on the enormity of its significance.

Statistics tell us that voter turnout was at an all-time high, and in the polling lines — eager to cast their votes — we saw more young and minority citizens than ever before. It was a beautiful sight!

The presence of these voters was symbolic of the new era in American politics we now find ourselves!

The choice of Barack Obama as our nation's 44th president was a monumental event. No doubt, it serves as a beacon of hope for many of our citizens. At the same time, it tells the rest of the world a lot about us. First, it affirms the depth and breath of our democratic process and how very well it works. Secondly, the election reconfirms that the American dream is achievable by each and every one of us. It proclaims the ideal, that among our flock, none are cast aside or forgotten. No matter how you voted, you've got to love that!

A week after the election, our nation celebrated Veterans Day. We did so with praise and gratitude for those brave men and women who have sacrificed so much for us. With parades and a variety of festive celebrations, we honored those who have protected the very principles of democracy we just saw played out on the political stage. I couldn't help but think on that special day, "How fitting the timing!"

My father is one of the veterans we honor each year. He served heroically in World War II and the Korean Conflict and came home with a box full of medals and a patriotism that knows no bounds.

He is 86 years old now and lives just outside a military base in north Louisiana. He goes on and off that base several times each week. He dines there, shops there and visits friends who gather there.

Routinely, my dad wears a "baseball" cap to protect his bare head from the sun. The cap is dark blue with insignias indicating his service in the Air Force and Navy. On numerous occasions, I've been with my father (in Louisiana and points beyond) when he was donning that cap. Often, total strangers (both men and women) see that cap and come up to him to thank him for his service. Each encounter puts a huge smile on his face and (no doubt) rushes of pride through his veins.

Afterwards, he always remarks, “Wasn’t that nice of them to stop and tell me that? Such a small thing, but it really means a lot!”

Even at an advanced age, my dad still cares very much about the political process in our country and who we elect as our leader. He still has very strong opinions about the military, how much money should be spent on defense, what justifies our presence in foreign countries, how long we need to stay there, etc.

My dad is fiercely independent. He’s never been a member of any political party. But, as you might expect, my dad is a big fan of John McCain. And, yes, he voted for him.

What might surprise you about my dad, however, is his attitude since the votes were counted.

He simply says, “Well, America has spoken. The election is over. Now, we must all get together and support our new Commander-in-Chief. We must pray with him that, indeed, America’s best days lie ahead!”

Proudly and, not for the first time, I declare, “Blessed be my father; seems he always knows best!”