

DON AND SHARON CUNNINGHAM

July 13, 2013

**Fire Chief Dan Fraijo and Personnel
Prescott Fire Department
1700 Iron Springs Road
Prescott, AZ 86305**

Dear Chief Fraijo and Staff,

I am enclosing a copy of a blog I posted which includes a poem I wrote honoring our fire and police personnel. The introduction to the poem is self-explanatory.

Sharon and I want you to know how much we respect and appreciate the services you provide to our communities. While we live in Prescott Valley we know that you provide the same excellent services as our fire and police departments do here. Several times I have had medical emergencies requiring EMT services. They have arrived in minutes. My impression of them is contained in my poem.

As you grieve and while still mourning, serve the community, our prayers go with you. Our prayers for the families of the hot shots who gave their lives and the sole survivor continue on their behalf. We know your brotherhood of fire fighters will support them as you travel their heartbreaking journey with them.

I hope my poem will prove to be a source of comfort and encouragement to each one of you. Thank you for being the courageous servants you are.

Prayers and Hugs, In Christ's and Our love,

Don E. Cunningham

Sharon M. Cunningham

Don and Sharon Cunningham

(Poet/author) (Artist)

HONORING OUR FIREMEN AND POLICE ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

Dear Friends,

Today, as we celebrate our hard won Independence day, I am thinking not only of our veterans and those currently serving overseas to protect our freedom, but of those who risk their lives in our neighborhoods every day to protect us and our way of life. This past week we have seen that courage and devotion dramatically demonstrated with the death of 19 Granite Mountain Hot Shot firemen. These young men gave their last "full measure of devotion" fighting a forest fire in nearby Yarnell. We cannot comprehend what their families and firemen comrades are enduring as they grieve their untimely deaths. We grieve with them.

In 2006 I wrote the following poem to honor our local firemen and police officers who were visiting our facility to familiarize us with their services. I had served as a Volunteer In Protection with our local sheriff's department, assigned to the Victim Witness Program. I have the greatest respect for these "Servants in Black and Navy Blue." I hope you will join me in saluting and praying for them and their families as they daily serve and protect. *As I thought about our brave hot shot servants and their families, on July 5, 2005, I wrote and inserted three additional verses about them into my poem.*

SERVANTS IN BLACK AND NAVY BLUE

Servants in black and navy blue,

We owe a special debt to you.

You protect our homes, lives and streets,

Needs of the fearful often meet.

Your sirens wail, you're on the way,

Sworn to protect us every day.

What're the problems you are there.

You show us that you really care.

Patrol our streets and keep them safe.

Take care of little forlorn waif.

Battling crime, a toll it takes,

Many of you it really breaks.

In combat gear you give us hope,
Will wipe out crime and stamp out dope.
When we're stressed out, you remain calm.
With smiling face give peaceful balm.

In yellow garb you do arrive,
Keep our feeble frames alive.
You check our pulse and thump our chest,
You care for us the very best.

EMTs in ambulance rush,
To stop our bleeding all a-gush.
With your strong arms our stretchers bear,
We're thankful friends that you are there.

In ambulance we speed away,
You help us live another day
Rush to the emergency room,
Help us avoid impending doom.

*So much heartache is seen by you,
Servants in black and navy blue.
Lifeless bodies on highways strewn,
Fire burned buildings sit in ruin.*

*Hot shots drop behind fire lines,
Fearlessly fight flames in the pines
Courageous men who give their all,
They're facing death - all standing tall.*

*Their families face the agony,
Beloved ones they may never see,
Hot Shots face fire's burning rage,
Entrapped within its blazing cage.*

*Amidst the flames their souls take flight,
They are precious in our Lord's sight.
Their bodies found right where they laid,
Our memories of them will not fade.*

*Lord we thank you for patriots brave,
For what they do and lives they gave.
We thank you Lord for all who serve,
Who from their duties never swerve.*

*Broken hearts barely stand the pain,
By our sides you bravely remain,
Hope you give - we cannot measure,
In our hearts it stays a treasure.*

So many things you do for us,
Done quietly, without a fuss.
You do your job as it was planned,
Complete your duties on demand.

Your work is hard and pay is low,
And yet you serve with hearts aglow.
Ever striving to reach your goals.
Bear the stress of tormented souls

So we are here to sing your praise,
And gladly now our voices raise.
Servants in black and navy blue.
We are very grateful to you.

Hugs, In Christ's and My Love,
Don E. Cunningham
Don E. Cunningham

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