

Points of Light and July Fourth



Each Independence Day, Americans celebrate with holiday parties, picnics, and, of course fireworks. As the symbolic "bombs bursting in air" explode, I am reminded of President George Herbert Walker Bush's observation: "We can find meaning and reward by serving some higher purpose than ourselves, a shining purpose, the illumination of a Thousand Points of Light." As I watch Fourth of July fireworks, I am also reminded of those who have lit the way for their fellow citizens in both small and large ways in many diverse fields and endeavors, and I am grateful.

During a ceremony posthumously granting the highest U.S. military honor to

Sergeant First Class Jared Monti for his heroic actions to try and save one of his wounded comrades in a battle in Afghanistan in 2006, President Barack Obama noted that Sergeant Monti and his fellow members of the military "remind us that the price of freedom is great. And by their deeds they challenge every American to ask this question: What can we do to be better citizens? What can we do to be worthy of such service and sacrifice?" The specific answer to this question will be different for each American, but it will have something to do with creating a point of light for others.

Dan Caldwell, PhD

Chair, Pepperdine Committee on Student Veterans

Distinguished Professor of Political Science