



A vertical strip of decorative text or a patterned border on the right side of the page, featuring a repeating stylized 'S' or 'J' motif.

Photos snapshots pictures IMAGERY documentation

By Tech. Sgt. Tracy DeMarco
89th Communications Squadron

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, Md. — If there was one thing I wish I could explain to everyone in my life—subordinates, family, friends, and even perfect strangers—it would be that photography is not about taking pictures. It is much more.

Photographs have the ability to change the way a person perceives the present, past and future. For example, everyone knows that on Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the United States. We know this because we remember airplanes hitting the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon burning. Because of compelling still and video images, we saw it with our own eyes as it was happening. These images brought the reality of Sept. 11 to people around the world.

Point of View

Photographs can connect us to the past. My grandfather was in the Army during World War II. He was a tall, slender man during those days as evidenced by the photo my mother gave me some time ago. It was a perfect square piece of paper with a black and white image of Grandpa Peterson in his uniform, standing in front of a row of tents. For years, I carried it with me during my military travels. One day, the antique frame shattered and I discovered two words on the back of the picture — Camp Barkeley.

At that time, I was stationed at Dyess AFB, Texas. On this day, I was tasked to shoot pictures during an off-base exercise. As we drove to the site, dust billowed around the car, almost engulfing it. When the driver got out to open the gate I looked up to read the arched metal sign that read — Camp Barkeley. Later, as I stood in the dirt, I imagined my grandfather standing in front of the rows of tents.

Photographs can connect us to the future or provide us an understanding of things yet to come. On one particular day, I sat on a folding chair listening to my friend Gabrielle, the mother of two boys, tell my other very pregnant friend, Tiffany, about a Web site with beautiful photographs of a baby in the womb. The thought of a photograph in the womb touched and excited Tiffany deeply. She began to cry because she could imagine the photograph as one of her own unborn son.

There is no question in my mind photographs can reach deep down inside people. They have the ability to tug at one's heartstrings, inspire anger, joy or even fear. Perhaps the only people who will ever truly understand how important images can be are the image creators. These are the people who truly need to understand because they are required to convey, through their images, very important messages to very important audiences. As long as every photographer or photojournalist in the armed service does understand, photographs will never lose their power.

[●] Pictured to the left is Sergeant DeMarco's grandfather, Lorants Peterson, who served in the U.S. Army 358th Infantry Regiment 90th Division. He was born in 1906 and died in 1985.