



# Khobar Towers Bombing Survivors Association

## October 2013 Newsletter

October is here, and our association is already 5 months old. I would encourage all Survivors and Family Members to become members and to suggest any ideas that would make the Khobar Towers Bombing Survivors Association stronger.

### **19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Services and Gatherings**

As stated in an earlier newsletter, we are in the early planning stages for the reunions and memorial services. We have selected Eglin AFB as the preferred site for the 19<sup>th</sup> memorial service because of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Memorial and their continued support of the families over the years; however, the *No Greater Love* organization held memorial services for the 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> anniversaries at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, DC. Our current plans are to join in the support of the Arlington Memorial service on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and are forming a committee to work with the *No Greater Love* organization. If you are interested in helping with these projects please let us know.

Please, consider becoming a member. It is going to take an ongoing membership to keep the association alive and working towards our goals.

### **Our Featured Story - How I Reclaimed My Rocks**

By  
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**My Reclaimed Rocks**

I was a Staff Sergeant and over half-way through my tour on the night of the bombing. A few days after I left the AOR, I started having spells I thought at the time were the result of not sleeping. These “spells” eventually developed into full-blown epilepsy. Since being diagnosed I have had to take medication three times a day to control the seizures. I retired from active duty in 2006 and went to work as a government civilian for the Department of Justice in Washington DC. My husband, retired USAF, also works as a civilian for the Department of Defense in Baltimore. We have two grown children, a couple of adorable grand-kids, a nice house, and four sweet dogs. This is the story of how I almost lost everything and what I did about it.

We live in Southern Maryland and the commute, on average takes about three hours a day round trip. After our youngest moved out several years ago, I entered what can only be referred to as a classic mid-life-crisis. This was something I couldn't simply fix by buying a motorcycle or getting a tattoo—I was quite unhappy and bored with my life. I hated my job and was not interested anything. I neglected household chores and after a while even neglected to take care of myself. The only time I spent with my husband was at night in front of the television. As time went on it became worse. I ignored emails and calls from family and friends, and sometimes even my own children. This progressive withdrawal from my life continued over the next three years. On a dark morning in January 2011, I opened the medicine cabinet and noticed about a dozen prescription medications my husband and I had accumulated over the past few years. As I stared in that cabinet thinking there had to be more to my life than this, a story I read years ago about a jar of sand, pebbles, and rocks came to mind. To understand why I recalled this particular story at that point in time, please read it below:

When his class began, the professor silently picked up a large empty glass jar and filled it with golf ball-size rocks and asked his students if the jar was full. They all agreed that it was. Next, he got a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar and lightly shook the jar so all of the pebbles would fall down into the spaces in between the rocks. The students laughed as the professor asked again if the jar was full. They all said, once again, that it was. So the professor picked up a bucket of sand and poured that into the jar and, of course, the sand filled the space in between the pebbles and rocks. The professor lifted the jar up high for everyone to see and then he asked them all to think of the jar as their life. He told them the rocks represent the most important things, such as family, partner, health, and children. The pebbles, he said, are the other things that matter on a smaller scale, like a good job, a clean house, and a nice car. The sand is everything else in life that should not matter at all.

Finally, the professor revealed the point behind the metaphor when he said: *“If you put all of the sand or the pebbles into your jar first, there will never be enough room for all of the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your energy and time on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are truly most important.”*

All morning, I thought about how I could reclaim the rocks in my own jar. I needed inspiration, so I typed a phrase into Google. I don't remember what it was...something about rocks and life. Anyway, what came up included listings for real estate in northern, Idaho. I'm from Tampa and had never even been to Idaho, but I opened a few listings, saw a picture of a realtor with a kind-looking face and emailed him requesting information. As soon as I got home that night, I told my husband what I did and why. Then held my breath and waited for him to get upset and call me crazy. He didn't though. Instead, he told me he was unhappy and needed a change also. Together we went online and looked at land for sale in northern Idaho. That consumed us for the next two months and on March 10th we flew out there and spent three days with our realtor looking at land and finally settled on 30 acres in Paradise Valley, Naples, Idaho. Our land has a deep, stream-fed, pond, and borders a million acres of beautiful mountains and forested public land for hunting and exploring.

We framed a large aerial photograph of our land and hung it on an entryway wall, so it's the last thing we see before we leave home and the first thing we see when we return home. We made a five-year plan and a countdown on our computer desktop always shows exactly how many days until we retire to Idaho. Since then, other “rocks” have fallen smoothly into my jar. I spend more time with family and friends; do the things I enjoy; and my husband and I gave away our big screen television and bought a bicycle-built-for-two! And that is how I reclaimed my rocks.