

BRYON JOHNSON FUNERAL
SEPTEMBER 23, 2007

WHAT I SAW CONCERNING THE PATRIOT GUARD

On September 28, 2007 , members of the Derby Fire/Rescue Department attended the funeral of Bryon Johnson, a Sedgwick County Fire Department Lieutenant, who was killed fighting a fire September 24.

The funeral was held at Central Christian Church in Wichita and was attended by several thousand people from all over the State of Kansas and as far away as New York.

In attendance were a number of members of the Patriot Guard. I don't know where all of them were from but they were at the church and escorted the procession of a large number of fire vehicles and the funeral cars on a 25 mile procession through Belle Air and Maize to the Rest Haven Cemetery.

When passing under a bridge while traveling on highway K-96 there would be a fire truck, police car and/or an ambulance on that bridge with personnel standing at attention saluting. Driving through a residential area whether in a city or the country large numbers of people were at the road side with American flags saluting or with the right hand over the heart I was personally pleased with the show of respect and patriotism shown by the people we passed.

At the cemetery we had to park a couple of blocks away from the grave site and walk in. Patriot Guard members were stationed about every 50 feet, each carrying a flag on a pole. At one intersection I noticed a group of people standing back from the Guard. A little girl that I would estimate to be 8 or 9 years old had several signs printed on colored construction paper. I could not read the signs and was not interested any way. When we got to the grave site we were in a group I would estimate at over 500 people. The Guard then came up and surrounded the area shoulder to shoulder until the ceremony was complete. The last thing over the speakers was a dispatcher signaling an emergency run. The words were " Lieutenant Bryon Johnson this is your last alarm". She then thanked him for his service to the citizens he served. This was a tear jerker for me.

That night I suddenly awakend and the little girl with the signs made sense. She was one of the people who would make a mockery of anyone helping thosewho are willing to give their lives to help their fellow citizens.

I have been aware of and have supported the Patriot Guard but had never seen how professionally the Guard funtioned until September 23, 2007. Their presence made me proud to be a recipiant of their actions.

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