The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

- Tell about my trip to Washington D.C.
- Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights
- Smithsonian – George Washington generals outfit, Abraham Lincoln’s top hat
- Dome of the capital building – murals, statues
- Washington monument, Lincoln memorial, Jefferson memorial, White House
- I’ve never been so proud to be an American in my life

Asked my students to write a paper – almost all responded “Tomb of Unknown Soldier”

It contains the remains of unknown American soldiers from World Wars I and II, the Korean conflict, and until 1988, the Vietnam War. It is guarded 24 hours per day, 365 day a year by specially trained members of the 3rd United States Infantry…”The Old Guard”

Tell about our day at the Tomb

The guard takes 21 steps during his walk across the front of the tomb, this alludes to the 21-gun salute which is the highest honor given to any military or foreign dignitary

The guard hesitates for 21 seconds, for the same reason as I just mentioned, after his about face before beginning his walk back across.

For a person to apply for guard duty at the Tomb, he must be between 5’10” and 6’2” tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30 inches. Other requirements of Guards: They must commit 2 years of life to guard the Tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and they cannot drink any alcohol, on or off duty, for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and they cannot disgrace the uniform (things such as fighting) or disgrace the Tomb in any way. After two years of service, guards are given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapels signifying they served as guards of the Tomb. There are only about 400 presently worn today. Guards are expected to obey all of these rules, for the rest of their lives, or give up their distinguished wreath pin.

There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on their uniforms at any time. Guards spend literally hours getting their uniforms ready for Guard duty.

The first six months of duty, a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Kennedy, President Taft, Joe E. Lewis (the boxer), and Medal of Honor winner, Audie Murphy (the most decorated soldier of WWII) also of Hollywood fame.

In 2003, as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington D.C., our U.S. Senate and House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC Evening News, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned
the duty of guarding the tomb were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer saying, “No way, Sir!” Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of the tropical storm, they said that guarding the tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The Tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, 365 days a year since 1930.

Conclusion

1.) Those soldiers died for my physical freedoms, Christ died for my spiritual freedom - Matt. 24:35
2.) There is no guard guarding the tomb of Christ, because His remains are not there.

If we honor the dead in Arlington National Cemetery, how much more should we honor the Living God.