



Dann Spear looks over the shirt that was flown on a 13-plus-hour combat mission over Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. The shirt, signed by members of the 405th Security Forces Squadron stationed in the nation of Oman, near Afghanistan, was presented to Spear for display at his Museum of Forgotten Warriors in East Linda.

Enduring Legacy

Linda museum gets special shirt

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When Dann Spear began collecting military memorabilia at the ripe age of 10, he always dreamed of having his own museum with special items.

He now has, nearly 40 years later, a cornucopia of authentic artifacts that fill his dream museum, the Museum of Forgotten Warriors. The newest display is a one-of-a-kind T-shirt signed by more than 60 members of special security forces fighting in Operation Enduring Freedom in and around Afghanistan.

The shirt was presented to Spear by Tech. Sgt. Roscoe Presley with the 129th Security Forces Squadron of the National Guard.

Presley received the shirt from his father, John Showers, before being deployed on a classified mission as part of the operation. Showers is a good friend of Spear's, which is how Presley knew him. Presley took the red, white and blue shirt with the flag design and had members of the 405th squadron, comprised of forces from all over the United States, sign it before presenting it to Spear in mid-December.

"Basically the shirt is kind of symbolism of a successful mission, and it was pretty easy to present it to Danny," Presley said. "By virtue of past and present combat members, he's done nothing but support that museum, so it just seemed the appropriate place."

Presley had visited Spear's museum with his

The shirt bears the signatures of U.S. security forces personnel gathered by Tech. Sgt. Roscoe Presley.

father and liked the personalized touch of each display. The museum is dedicated to Vietnam veterans, but houses any artifacts that have to do with the military.

"It's pretty awesome," Spear said of the shirt. "This country is so strong, and the men and women who are defending our country are strong; they really feel for what they're doing for this country and that's symbolized in this shirt."

The shirt contains numerous references to Osama bin Laden in various contexts, and it means "basically, they stopped him there so he couldn't get here," Spear said. "Freedom's here and they're here to defend that freedom in a high risk area."

The star-spangled shirt is covered with signatures, comments and nicknames on the front and back and up and down each sleeve. It was flown on U.S. and British combat missions before being returned to the U.S.

Presley presented the shirt along with a certificate that indicates the shirt was flown on an actual mission.

"I visited (the museum) about a year ago, and the duty of his museum, unlike other large museums, is everything he has has been used or

in the actual area and presented by the actual person in the actual area performing whatever their mission was," Presley said.

Spear opened the museum in Linda in January of 1985, after nearly three years of preparing a building that would house the collection. He makes sure everything presented in the museum has a personal touch.

"That (shirt is) probably one of the most personal things I've ever received," Spear said excitedly. "I have flags where guys have signed it, but not so much the sayings that are on (the shirt)."

Spear has another new display made up of dirt from various battlefields past and present, with pictures of the serviceman or woman in the area the dirt was sent from and handwritten letters and notes from the person. It's called "Hallowed Grounds."

"I try and show remembrance to all the men and women who have fought and are fighting now - that's what I can do for them, so they're not forgotten, they're remembered," Spear said. "They're in doing some heavy duty stuff - that means a lot and we take a lot of it for granted."

Spear's son, Carson, is a lieutenant with the First Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, which reminds Spear of the risks our military personnel face every day.

"They're out there all the time, they're on the line," Spear said. "If I want to run to the store and get a soda, I can do it without feeling any oppression, and that's because of what our military people are doing."

"I don't accept any money donations," Spear said. "This is my way of saying thank you or welcome home."

The Museum of Forgotten Warriors is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. the first Saturday of each month as well as every Thursday evening. It is located at 5865 A Road in Linda, off of North Beale Road. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, call 742-3090.

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