

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL GRENADIER BAND

1115 LINDEN ST., BETHLEHEM, PA 18018 610-691-7200, EXT. 50601 WWW.LHSGBOPC.ORG

January 12, 2007

Greg MacGill, Director
Liberty High School Grenadier Band

Gateway Music Festivals & Tours
P.O. Box 1165
Monticello, MN 55362

To all of our friends at Gateway Music Festivals & Tours:

Happy New Year! One of my resolutions was to finally send you this heartfelt letter of thanks for helping to make our performances at the USS Missouri and the Waikiki Holiday Parade, as well as our band's overall tour of Hawaii this past November 19 – 26, 2006, as an absolutely unforgettable, positive experience. In our many phone conversations prior to the trip, you and parade organizer Jake Peppers reiterated, "This will be the trip of a lifetime for your band members." – and you were so right! As you can tell from the many accompanying letters, without exception, our students have enthusiastically proclaimed their experience as just that, "a trip of a lifetime."

As you read their words, you might find it interesting that, for as unanimous as their approval is, they are equally varied as to what aspect of the trip personally touched them most. For some, it was the profound and solemn experience of visiting and laying a wreath at the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, as well as performing at the USS Missouri. For others, it was the overwhelming, positive response our band received from the crowds and military along the parade route and at the reviewing stand. Still, for others, it was the unparalleled allure of Hawaii's beautiful fauna and flora, dramatic volcanic peaks and coastlines, and many pristine beaches.

Gateway Music Festivals and Tours did a fantastic job at "keeping our troops well entertained." Our students' climb up Diamond Head, snorkeling at Hanauma Bay, the educational *and* fun Polynesian Cultural Center, and the circle island tour complete with a visit to the Dole Plantation all stand out as unforgettable experiences. Gateway perfectly balanced free and structured time, also allowing students ample opportunity to shop, swim at Waikiki Beach, explore Honolulu Zoo, and enjoy all that our magnificent, four star hotel had to offer. And the entire Gateway staff, including our extremely competent on-site Hawaii

guides, Margie, Katie, and Kiri, were professional, courteous, and efficient throughout. The organization and timing of ground transportation, performances, meals, and admissions was impeccable. This came as no surprise, for Gateway's excellent pre-departure communication and coordination of airline, hotel, and performance requirements set the stage for a smooth-running trip. Our band parents organization was also impressed with Gateway Music Festival's flexibility, especially with regard to payment deadlines, as well as your efforts to go the extra mile on our behalf on so many other levels.

From a band director's perspective, I can only add the following: I've been with the Liberty High School Grenadier Band for nearly thirty years, and we've been all over – countless festivals and parades throughout North America, and five times to the United Kingdom. Without a doubt, this stands out as one of the best band trips, if not *the* best trip, which I've experienced with our students. I should also tell you that during our stay in Hawaii, Ron Sherry (LHSGB Director, 1960-1990), just couldn't say enough superlatives about the parade and overall trip. I lost track of how many times Ron used the word "unbelievable" or remarked about the Hawaii trip surpassing any previous Grenadier Band trip. He, like all of us, was simply beside himself with joy. But, don't take my or Ron's word for it; more importantly, read what our students have to say.

Again, so many, many, thanks to all of you at Gateway. All of us associated with the Liberty High School Grenadier Band – students, parents, and staff – feel the same way: We will *definitely* return to Hawaii...and with Gateway Music Festivals and Tours at our side!

Sincerely and with best regards,



Greg MacGill