

Why America's Veterans Should Be Honored

Taylur DeWolf

My Navy father taught me to have great respect for our country, but my respect is a mere shadow of his commitment and love for the United States of America. The military is not just an occupation; it defines a veteran's very being. They serve their country wholeheartedly, giving themselves completely with no regrets and no holding back. Because of this, many veterans, even after they leave the military, are still ready to serve if their country asked. My father retired from the Navy when I was five, and when I was nine he was asked to go to Iraq. His absence gave me just a glimpse of what life would have been if he had not retired. I missed him dearly while he was gone.

America's veterans sacrificed in countless ways during their service; one sacrifice I personally experienced was time. My father was away serving in the Middle East when I was born, and he missed many parts of my early childhood, including first steps and first words. Another sacrifice veterans make is their precious health: from losing limbs and brain injuries, to little things that still affect their lives. Despite their sacrifices, veterans always demonstrate their unwavering commitment for their country with their actions and their lives.

We as citizens must thank and honor our veterans at every opportunity. All over the nation are thousands of memorials and events dedicated to our veterans. I visited Arlington National Cemetery and was amazed and humbled by how reverently they honored the fallen. Our country's youth needs to learn how and why to honor our veterans by watching and learning from adults, listening to their stories and appreciating their commitment. I believe this will help us to become better citizens worthy of our military's service.

Why should we honor veterans? I think General Douglas MacArthur stated it best:

I suppose, in a way, this uniform has become part of my soul. It is a symbol of my life. Whatever I have done that really matters, I've done wearing it. When the time comes, it will be in this that I journey forth. What greater honor could come to an American, and a soldier.

We should honor our veterans for their commitment, sacrifices, and desire to make a difference by doing what was right. They served to protect, so we could enjoy the freedoms of today. Veterans, your country thanks you.