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To be a veteran is to embrace the pride of service and selflessness. It involves those who have served in the forces potentially risking their lives to protect their nation. This dedication is not from obligation. It shows a commitment to citizens and their principles.

War veterans bear the burden of their service. A mix of pride and sorrow are all part of their experiences in battle. For them the shift back to civilian life can become a challenge as they navigate through the extreme impact of combat experiences. The expertise and grit acquired from serving are frequently useful in their professional civilian lives; however the emotional and mental strain from their service may endure far beyond the time when after they retire.

Being a veteran develops a connection among personnel who have served in the military. This common background creates a sense of unity and solidarity allowing veterans to relate to each other in ways that non veterans might not completely grasp.

In short, veterans represent strength and the persistent pursuit of peace. They serve as a reminder to society of the sacrifices made for liberty and the importance of showing appreciation and assistance to those who have served. It is vital to acknowledge veterans not on occasions but as a constant recognition of their efforts and sacrifices. At its core being a veteran embodies pride, strength, and a dedication to serving both the country and fellow citizens beyond their time in the military.



Julia Rust
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What Does It Mean to Be a Veteran?

What does it mean to be a veteran? I never asked myself that question. I knew many veterans; two were even my own grandfathers. One fought in the Korean War. But, I never understood the concept or the mental struggle, until I started reading my grandfather, Jim's, letters back home from basic training.

If fighting overseas doesn't shape your mentality, basic training certainly will. Jim went through things in a safer environment. It prepared him better for not crippling under pressure during the heat of the moment in actual war. I can only imagine what the shaping looked like.

From leaving their loved, everyday American lives, to leaving their loved ones, to being in training, to then going overseas and fighting other people. It can be a mentally draining thing! The courage it takes to do all those things, and then come home from war, is not for the faint of heart. In some cases, those soldiers never got the homecoming they deserved. Some even got utter hate and retaliation from those in their community. They never got the honor and thankfulness, and for that, Americans should be ashamed for not showing our great appreciation and gratitude for those who have served.

Veterans have many admirable qualities, especially the fact that they came back from their duties in the military and back into their original lifestyles. Those coming back, in most cases, brought images of war and hardships with them. Not only mentally, but physically. Some lost something they couldn't get back, and it shook their world, making it hard to go back to their original way of life. However, the qualities of adaptability and the courage to never give up strengthened their mentality, and strengthened their work ethic. We've truly been blessed by their love for this beautiful and free country.

My other grandfather, Richard, had a unique work ethic like no other. He always gave 100% on anything he did, even getting older, he did jobs that he really shouldn't have done himself, but Richard believed he could do them. I never learned how to work like he did, with a servant's heart and the strength to always be able to jump in and help anyone who needed it. Part of the reason why: after basic training, he helped train other soldiers. From what I've heard, mainly shining shoes.

The bravery and resilience of veterans can be seen and should be shown to younger generations, who could learn so much from their humbleness and servitude. So, today we thank you and those who have served. You are part of America's history and have shaped our country to what it is now.



Blake Nixdorf
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What does it mean to be a veteran? This is the question I was asked to answer this past Monday. There is the obvious answer, "A veteran is simply a person who has served in either the active military, naval, or air service." But in reality, a veteran is not simply a person who served. To be a veteran means to have put your body and soul on the line. Not merely the physical act of defending our country, but also the severing of emotional ties, the cutting off of one's own innocence in the same way as one prunes an unfruitful branch from an apple tree. Veterans are men—and certainly women as well—who put themselves as protective barriers between their mothers, wives, and children and those forces of evil that sought to destroy the innocence of all. Veterans are those protectors of our country that fought. They fought and lost. They didn't lose their lives; they didn't lose the wars; they lost their own innocence and many lost the lives of their closest friends. Veterans aren't human. Veterans are superhuman.

To be a veteran is to carry a weight that many will never fully understand. It's not just the weight of combat gear or the physical burdens that come with service; it's the emotional and psychological toll of memories that refuse to fade, of sacrifices that linger long after the battles have ended. A study showed that those Veterans who served in Iraq have almost a 29% likelihood of being diagnosed with PTSD at some point in their life (Schnurr). Veterans are often left with invisible wounds, scars that mark them just as deeply as any visible injury. These wounds serve as a reminder of what they have endured, and they stand as a testament to their resilience and fortitude.

Veterans are the embodiment of sacrifice. They have willingly faced dangers most would run from, knowing full well the risks and still choosing to serve. They may return from conflict, but they don't leave it behind. They bring with them stories of courage, loss, and camaraderie. They carry the legacy of those who stood beside them, those who didn't make it home. These memories—both of triumph and tragedy—shape their identities long after their active duty has ended.

Yet, to truly understand what it means to be a veteran, we must also look at their role in society after their service. Veterans return home not to a life of ease but to one that often demands even greater strength. They must reintegrate into a world that can't comprehend their experiences. Many struggle to find a sense of purpose, to translate the skills they learned in service into everyday life, to cope with the dissonance between civilian life and the structured, mission-driven world they left behind.

Being a veteran means finding new ways to serve. Whether it's through mentoring younger generations, participating in community service, or simply sharing their stories, veterans continue to give to their communities. They take on the responsibility of being examples of resilience, teaching us all the value of discipline, selflessness, and courage.

So, to be a veteran is more than a title or a set of accomplishments. It is a lifelong commitment to honor those who sacrificed alongside them, to live in a way that respects the memory of friends lost, and to uphold the values that they once fought to protect. Veterans are our nation's guardians, not just in times of conflict but every day, reminding us through their actions of what it truly means to live for something greater than oneself.

In the end, to be a veteran is to be a hero, not for the glory or recognition, but because they were willing to answer the call when others could not or would not. Their stories, their sacrifices, and their dedication are the foundation on which our freedom stands.



Aidan Fictum
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What Does it Mean to Be a Veteran?

When I look around the world today, I don't always like what I see. I see too many people who are only in it for themselves. People who will take the easy way out every time, even if it is to the detriment of another. This is individualism taken to its extreme, and it's infecting every corner of America. But when I look around our country, these aren't the only people I see. There are those who stand in stark contrast to the selfish and self-serving. These are brave, selfless people, who know what sacrifice is. People who are willing to lay their own lives down for the common good. The people who I'm referring to are of course our nation's veterans.

What does it mean to be a veteran? I'm not talking about a simple, black and white definition. Rather, what makes veterans stand out in a crowd, what makes them special, what makes the title really mean something. I believe that above all, selflessness is what makes a veteran.

It would be easy to sit around and talk about a veteran's bravery, and coolness in the face of danger. But it's hard for those of us who have not served to understand the true sacrifice that veterans make for us. Many veterans sacrifice what would be their college years. Most face pain and discomfort. Many even face the risk of death. They have given their lives, not for their own good, but for the good of their nation. They sacrificed so much so that we can sleep securely each night, without having to worry about our safety.

Our nation's veterans are the reason that our country is the strongest nation in the world, and we all owe them our thankfulness for that. Despite all of this, however, the veterans I've met are some of the most humble people I know. Even though they have every right to, they don't boast about how good they are. They consider their service to our country their God-given duty.

Our nation's veterans are some of the most selfless people I know, and I believe that it is this selflessness that really makes a veteran. On behalf of me and the rest of this country's citizens, I would like to thank our veterans for their service. America would not be the nation it is without you.



Faith Marohn
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Being a veteran is the greatest way to serve your country. It shows appreciation for your country, and a willingness to serve it. Being a veteran means you are willing to lay down your life for your country and for its people.

Being a veteran is a great sacrifice as well; as a veteran, you might not live in the best conditions. Some sleep on the floor with rocks for pillows, some veterans live in freezing conditions or in extreme heat, some live in unsanitary environments. They do all of this so the American people can sleep in their soft beds and feel safe at night. They do this so you don't have to worry about your life or your children's lives.

Being a veteran means to be a strong and willing person. When you are a veteran, you are leaving everything behind. Some don't see their family for months. The willingness to do these things is incredible. They leave all of this behind so we can be with our families every day. Being a veteran means to have an extreme amount of bravery. Strong, brave men and women go out into the battlefield not knowing what will come next. They might not ever see the light of day ever again. They know that they are risking not being able to see their family ever again. They might not ever get to go home and hold their newborn in their arms. They do this because they love their families and want them to be safe and live with freedoms. Being a veteran is a completely selfless act. They are willing to give up everything so that the American people can have everything.

Being a veteran is having extreme pride in your country. Not many people are willing to make this sacrifice. A lot of people aren't willing to give everything up. Our incredible veterans make the greatest sacrifice by giving their lives for the American people.

We will forever be grateful for the sacrifices our brave veterans make for our country. We see it every day when we go outside and look at cities full of free Americans. Everyone has an opportunity to become anything they want to be because of these veterans. We dedicate a day every year to our brave veterans. We teach our children about the sacrifices they made and the freedoms they gained for us. We want to make sure they understand the sacrifices they make and what it truly means to be a veteran.



Abby Lenz
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Being a veteran means many things. All veterans have impacted our nation, and it shows everyday. Being a veteran is very respected, because they have done what many people can't do.

Veterans day was originally called "Armistice Day". Armistice means a truce between 2 sides of a war. The original Armistice Day happened on November 11, 1919, on the 11th hour. It was made to commemorate the truce between the Allies and Germany in World War I. It was changed to veterans day on November 11, 1954. It was changed to monumentalize all people who have served, known as Veterans.

Veterans are some of the most resilient people in our nation. They were able to withstand brutality from wars. Throughout their service, they fought for the better of our nation. They fought for many people they didn't know, but that didn't matter to them as long as our nation was protected and safe. They fought for our freedom, and many still fight today to preserve this well fought for freedom.

Even though some veterans come home without any struggles, 44% to 72% of veterans come back with mental health problems, disabilities, and substance abuse. There are many organizations that have come together to raise money for struggling veterans. Many people donate to the organizations because they care deeply about our veterans. One of the largest organizations is called "Home For Our Troops". In 2023, the money they collected for veterans was over 38 million dollars. All of that money goes to building houses that are specially adapted to severely injured veterans. Other organizations donate their money to hospital bills, school expenses, and more.

Veterans are known for their valor. The training these veterans had to go through had to be unbearable, but they made it through because they knew how they were going to use God's gifts. Many people are blessed to be strong, able to adapt, are well educated, initiative, selflessness, courageous, and loyal. Even though people are blessed with those abilities, they don't use them to serve our nation. So when soldiers choose to serve their nation, they are also serving God by using their gifts.

Veterans deserve the utmost respect. They go into fight knowing the risks, yet they still do it. Many of their stories are untold, but we know they have experienced things that are unimaginable. And that's exactly why we need to respect them. Being a veteran means having to go through experiences that normal people don't go through. The least we can do is respect and honor them.



Holly Fictum
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Being a veteran means more than just serving in the military. It shows a strong commitment to protecting our country and supporting freedom and justice. While the term often brings to mind images of courage and sacrifice, it also includes many different experiences and contributions that veterans make to their communities. Whether through military service or their roles in the community afterward, veterans have an important place in our society, showing resilience and dedication.

Veterans play key roles in our communities that go beyond their time in uniform. Many veterans become mentors, helping to guide younger people and sharing valuable life lessons learned from their experiences. They also participate in community service, advocating for causes like veterans' rights and social justice. By sharing their stories, veterans help foster understanding and empathy between military and civilian life. This kind of involvement enriches their communities and shows a continuing commitment to helping others that many veterans carry with them long after their service.

However, the adaptation back to civilian life can be very challenging for many veterans. Some may deal with the psychological and physical effects of their service, such as PTSD, injuries, and the difficulty of finding purpose outside the military. The strong bonds formed with fellow service members can make the feeling of loneliness at home even harder to bear. My uncle, a veteran himself, works for a nonprofit organization helping homeless veterans in California. Everyday he comes across many veterans who are struggling from these problems, and he is able to relate. It is crucial for us to recognize these challenges and provide support for veterans as they adjust to life after the military. Offering resources, like helping with housing, mental health care, and opportunities for community involvement can greatly help ease this transition.

The qualities that veterans demonstrate—such as service, sacrifice, and resilience—are key parts of who they are. Their willingness to put themselves in harm's way for the good of others shows a deep sense of duty. Veterans show great strength, facing not only the difficult tasks of combat but also the emotional challenges that come afterward. This resilience often extends into their civilian lives, where many continue to make positive contributions to society. Many veterans find themselves with a heightened sense of empathy and a strong desire to advocate for those who need help, representing the spirit of service long after their military careers. Being a veteran is also about community and connection. Veterans often strive to help others, rich with the life experiences that come from their service. They may volunteer their time or skills to help fellow veterans or work in programs that support people in need. Engaging in these activities not only helps others but also gives veterans a sense of purpose and belonging in civilian life.

Being a veteran involves many aspects, including sacrifice, resilience, and a commitment to community service. Veterans add to our society through their mentorship, advocacy, and volunteer work while facing unique challenges as they reintegrate into civilian life. It is necessary to recognize and support these individuals for their contributions and sacrifices. By understanding the many layers of their experiences, we can better appreciate their commitment to our country and the ideals they strive to protect. Veterans, we salute you.



Elias Hefti
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What is a Veteran? Veterans can come in all shapes and sizes, but they all have one thing in common, they have or are currently serving in the military. A Veteran is someone who has put their life on the line for our country. Veterans should be remembered and thanked for their service and their bravery.

But why should we honor Veterans? They have served our country, and not only served it but put their life in jeopardy in order to keep this country safe and secure. Veterans have also made many sacrifices, they had to leave their life behind, family, friends, pets, everything they loved to go and serve in the military knowing they may never see these things again. These are all things that take lots of strength and bravery to do. Being a veteran can have a lot of mental struggles that go along with it and those can be just as hard as all the other things!

Veterans can also face a lot of challenges after coming back home. In the past few months we have been on a unit of survival in language arts. In this unit we read a story about survivor guilt. This is a real thing that happens to real people. Especially if a veteran has been deployed into a war and makes it out alive but their colleague does not, they may feel guilt. It can be a real effect and can be really hard for some to overcome. This is why I mentioned how hard mentally it can be to be a veteran. Veterans don't have it easy even after they come back they still face trials and it can be traumatic for them to look back into past experiences. All the more reason to thank veterans, sacrificing so much for our country.

To be a veteran, to have served in the military you will need certain qualities. Our veterans have those. They are willing to sacrifice for our country. Leaving home, family, children, wife, friends, memories to serve our country. Ultimately they are putting their own life on the line for our country. For our freedom. So that we don't have to be afraid of someone arresting you for speaking your mind in a news article. So we can vote on our president. So many freedoms we have and they fight so we get to keep them. They are also very brave, to leave everything behind to fight for our country, to go out and fight. They are also so resilient, they don't quit, it can be hard in the military but they persevere and stick through till the end.

I talked about a lot of things that veterans may have faced. I can't speak from experience and I probably did not list all the troubles veterans face. But we should all realize what they go through and what they sacrificed for this country. We should all continue to thank and honor our veterans for serving our country. For putting their life on the line for this country. So we should all thank our veterans this veterans day. For all the service they did for our country.
Thank you Veterans!



Reese Stachell
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What does it mean to be a veteran? According to Merriam Webster's dictionary a veteran is a former member of the armed service. It can also be an old soldier of long service. I'm sure many people have someone in their life who served or a neighbor perhaps. These people aren't just people who signed up for a job, they are so much more than that. They are brave, resilient, and self-sacrificing. In this essay I am going to present three characteristics that I think describe a veteran and the values they portray. I will also be talking about veterans' roles in society and why they deserve our respect and gratitude.

The first characteristic that I want to discuss is bravery. The veterans that enlisted in the military and the men that were drafted were and are incredibly brave. It takes bravery to fight for your country and to put yourself in danger. They didn't know what dangers lay ahead, but they still went. They put others and their country above themselves. They have defended our freedoms and rights, while putting theirs aside. Many veterans signed up even before the draft because they wanted to serve their country (Many also signed up because they assumed they'd be drafted, but regardless they still signed up.)

The second attribute I want to discuss is resilience. Veterans are resilient. If veterans fighting in the war would have given up at any point, we might not be here today. They had to push and keep going even when things got tough. According to studies veterans are highly emotionally resilient. The National Health and Resilience in Veterans studies showed that 67.7% of veterans who suffer from combat related PTSD are emotionally resilient. Many veterans are in their late 70s so they have had many traumas in their lives before service. This has made them more adaptable in difficult situations.

The third and final attribute I want to mention is self sacrifice. Veterans have given up their lives, health, mental health. They did it out of duty and honor to their country. This attribute really ties all the attributes in this essay together. Without self sacrifice why would anyone want to give up their comfort for others. Especially people they don't know. In sacrificing themselves they are showing love to their country and friends and family. Laying your life down for your friends is one of the greatest things a person could do.

In conclusion, veterans are not just people who served in the military. They have a special place in our society because they built it. Without them we might not be here or we might be speaking another language. Veterans deserve our respect and no veteran should be made to feel ashamed about the war they fought in. If people think the government made a bad decision about a certain war, they should be angry at the government, not the people who gave their lives. Veterans are so important and so this veterans day, thank a veteran for their sacrifice, bravery, and resilience.



Caitlin Marohn
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It takes a special person to be a veteran. Somebody who cares so much for their neighbor that they are willing to sacrifice their entire life for others. They have to leave their friends and family, and face mental and physical challenges that many of us could not endure. They are fantastic examples of what it means to truly be an American. They commit their lives to our country and risk everything so that we can live peaceful and free lives. Our country couldn't be what it is today without them.

The struggles that veterans face are much more than some of us could bear. They have been through things that we could never understand. Military life is very challenging and often more difficult than any of us could handle. They leave their family, friends, spouse, and children behind to protect and defend us knowing that there is a chance that they might never go home again. They take that risk for us, to protect us. The training is physically grueling and psychologically challenging. Going to war is much more than just physically fighting, there is a mental aspect to it that someone who has never been to war could never understand. Veterans have seen and experienced horrible things that we could never even imagine, and we will never have to see or experience those things because of them. These things don't just go away after war, they stick with them for the rest of their lives. They are willing to carry that burden for us, and that is one of the bravest things anyone can do.

Bravery is often the first characteristic that I think of when I think of veterans. The courage that they show is truly unparalleled. Being willing to risk your life for others is the bravest and most noble thing that I can think of. John 15:3 says "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." That is exactly what veterans do. They lay down their lives for us, so that we can live without worrying about whether we are safe or not. They have so much love and commitment for their country that they are willing to leave their comfortable lives and fight for our freedom. And their bravery doesn't stop when they come back home. They deal with both seen and unseen injuries in their lives. They have the bravery to power through those challenges and they do it with the same strength that they showed on the battlefield.

Veterans are truly heroes. We must recognize and honor their bravery and legacy, and strive to be like them. They have defended our country and our freedoms without once wavering. They are a reminder that freedom is not free. It came at a cost, and they paid that cost in full. We must never forget their sacrifice and commitment to us. They have done everything for us. Now it is time for us to do something for them. We salute you and thank you for everything you have done for our country.



Oliver Dieringer,
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A veteran, officially, refers to a person who served active duty in military, naval or air service, and was discharged or otherwise dismissed, in conditions that were not dishonorable. ("Verification Assistance Brief") But more than that, the word "veteran" refers to one of the current 16.2 million individuals among us, living and breathing, loving and suffering, with all the rest of us. These people, however, are not "ordinary" people. They are people who had and have uncommon courage - people who had a love for their country, so much so that they valued our Union, and our lives, more than themselves.

But what does it take to be a veteran, really? Well, looking at our definition, we see that all veterans served in active military duty. This means that they surpassed all of their rigorous training and actually fought, or worked for, our country in a war or conflict. Whether they had boots on the ground or were fighting in spirit, working in strategic, computer, or many other fields, they all count as active service if they battled in a conflict. This takes heart - great courage to complete. It takes sacrifice of family, time, body, and even life from time to time. We pray God blesses all those in active duty - this is no easy task in the slightest.

A veteran is also someone who has surpassed active service - but also one who was discharged or otherwise dismissed, aside from dishonorable grounds. But after being discharged, it doesn't always get easier for veterans. Some who were injured, and some who were not, may have struggles with homelessness or a wide range of money problems. This should not be so for our veterans, but that is the way it is. For this reason, many experience depression and other undeserved mental disorders. Not only that, but many veterans also suffer from PTSD, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It wreaks havoc on a person, and I know that it is not a graceful or enjoyable experience.

So we have learned that veterans not only sacrifice their time, family, and body for our country - but some have given all of their lives to it, as we can see from their various post-service mental disorders. And this is all for you and me.

So for this, we are incredibly grateful. So on behalf of myself and the rest of the American People, I say - "Thank You Veterans!"



Briley Simon
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What Does It Mean to Be a Veteran? I think that being a Veteran means honor, bravery, and sacrifice. Veterans have sacrificed their time, mental and physical health, and in some cases their lives. Veterans have to be brave to do what's asked of them to serve their country. I think it's a very honorable thing to serve your country and protect others.

What are the experiences or challenges veterans face after returning home? After returning from war Veterans can experience many different things. Oftentimes veterans deal with survivor guilt, depression, and anxiety (Best Mind). Veterans struggle with readjusting to normal life, whether they are dealing with disabilities, depression, or other effects of war. Many Veterans are unable to find jobs after returning from war.

While Veterans may struggle to readjust to life, they also receive benefits. They can receive disability compensation, pension, education and training, health care, home loans, and insurance (U.S Department of Veteran Affairs). Lots of businesses offer veterans discounted rates on their products and services. The United States created a day to recognize veterans, on November 11th. Veterans are also a benefit to their communities, the skills they learned in the military can provide aid to others. For example, during hurricane Helene many veterans across the country stepped up to those in need.

In conclusion, veterans and their families should be highly valued and respected. Veterans sacrifice their lives to serve others, even if some people don't agree or respect them. Veterans serve their country with honor, respect, and bravery.

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J.T. Gooch
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What does it mean to be a veteran? Well the dictionary definition of a veteran according to the Oxford dictionary is "A person who has had a long experience in one particular field." Most of the time that we talk about veterans we are referring to those who have served time in the military. There is a good reason that we think like this. Military veterans are very important. They spent their valuable time and risked their valuable life to serve their country. Without them our country wouldn't be in the same powerful position it is in today, in fact it might not even be around.

What is the history of veterans day? When did countries start celebrating people who had fought for their military? Well the first time Veterans Day was celebrated was in 1947 in Birmingham Alabama. A military veteran named Raymond Weeks organized "National Veterans Day," which included many celebratory events. A parade was also held. This event took place on November 11.

Why do we celebrate Veterans Day? The reason is to remember the heroic actions of people who had served in the military. These people risked their life, not only in the sense that they would die, but also because they could be affected mentally for the rest of their life. Most veterans have to deal with PTSD and it can be very difficult for them to deal with that.

To answer the question of what a veteran is, I would say it is someone who is willing to sacrifice their possessions and life to serve their country and protect the people they love. I would say veterans are very important people who did amazing things for their nation. I would say veterans are brave and heroic, they go into battle willingly knowing what they have to lose. In the end, veterans are amazing heroes who have done difficult things in order to save our country. Thank you veterans for your important service.



Lincoln Kohlwey
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Veterans are the backbone of our country. We have many enemies: domestic terrorists, international terrorists, and countries we don't get along with. However, all of these groups are kept at bay by our talented and well-trained military.

Our veterans not only served and protected this great nation in the military, but many of them - the ones that survived the horrors of war - came back and served the everyday citizen by working a regular job. Despite their irregular experiences and PTSD, they still molded back into everyday life.

They have proven their worth - their bravery, discipline, and love of this country - and they deserve our respect. They have marched with their friends and even family sometimes, and watched them be wounded and killed, yet they persevered and we should show them our appreciation.

That's what Veteran's Day is for. We show our appreciation and respect to the veterans that have survived. We recognize the trials and tribulations that they have gone through, and hope they see that we love them. And so, on behalf of all Americans, thank you Vets, we love and appreciate you more than you know.

