

Pride in serving

Business



Silvestre Herrera. Hiroshi Miyamura. Jimmie Howard.

Who are these people? Brave servicemen who served their country with pride. They honorably defended America the beautiful – the greatest land on Earth. A thread of glorious pride weaves its way through our military history, from the American Revolution to Operation Iraqi Freedom. In World War II, Private First Class Silvestre S. Herrera served in the National Guard.

While in France, his unit encountered heavy enemy fire, with a minefield between them and the enemy gun emplacement. Herrera began to cross the minefield, drawing enemy fire away from his platoon. Mines exploded all around him, but Herrera continued to advance. Suddenly he stepped on a mine; the explosion severed his leg below the knee. Despite this, he fearlessly continued until he stepped on yet another mine, leaving him fighting on his knees. His comrades were able to skirt the minefield and capture the enemy.

Is there pride in serving in the United States military? Silvestre Herrera received a Medal of Honor for his actions, and his platoon can be proud of serving alongside this valiant man who faced and fought the enemy on his knees. The American military does not run. During the Korean War, Army Corporal Hiroshi H. Miyamura served as a machine-gunner in the defense of a hill with a squad of less than a dozen machine-gunners and five riflemen. The enemy poured over the hill, yet Miyamura held his position in the face of horrible assault.

As his squad began to diminish, the young corporal jumped from his shelter and single-handedly overpowered at least ten of the enemy with his bayonet.

Returning to the shelter, he treated his men's wounds. Seeing the enemy approach again, he ordered an evacuation. As he disabled a machine gun, the enemy swarmed over his position, but Miyamura bayoneted his way through them to a second gun, and ordered the withdrawal of the rest of the American troops while he covered them with effective fire. Miyamura continued to hold his shelter with his machine gun single-handedly, only withdrawing after killing more than 50 enemy soldiers. While trying to escape, Miyamura was captured, and endured 28 torturous months in a POW camp.

Upon his release, Miyamura received the Medal of Honor and learned that as a result of his courageous actions many of his squad, whom he thought had died, had reached safety. Is there pride in serving in the United States military? Hiroshi Miyamura can be proud of his protection of his squad and his valiant stand against overwhelming odds. The men in his squad can be proud to have served under such a fearless and selfless leader. The American military does not run. During the Vietnam War, Marine Staff Sergeant Jimmie Howard led 15 Marines and two Navy corpsmen as they defended Hill 488 from 250 enemy soldiers.

The night was black; the small but brave group fought side by side, forming a circle just 20 yards in diameter. After repelling the enemy the first time, the Marines heard their enemies taunting them, telling them that they would die in an hour. The Marines shouted back and were answered with gunfire. In response to the enemies' gunfire, the Marines laughed, and complete silence answered them. With little ammunition and no grenades, Staff Sergeant Howard gave the order to throw rocks at the enemy. The enemy mistook the

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rocks for grenades and ran into the open to escape them, thus allowing the Marines to make good use of every remaining round of ammunition.

During the fight, Staff Sergeant Howard was shot in the back, leaving him unable to move his legs until he received medical assistance. Help finally arrived at dawn, rescuing the 12 survivors, who had just eight rounds of ammunition remaining between them. Howard received a Medal of Honor for his valor, and his unit received four Navy Crosses, 13 Silver Stars, and 18 Purple Hearts. Is there pride in serving in the United States military? The men in that unit can be proud of their defense of their position; they can be proud of bravely standing up to their enemies, even though they were outnumbered ten to one. The American military does not run. An Army veteran I interviewed stated, “I am proud to have served in the United States military because we’ve got a great nation with a lot of good people.

I believe in our nation – in giving people opportunity and freedom. It was a win-win situation for me.” In another interview, a Marine veteran remarked, “I am proud to be part of a system that allows us to be free.” Pride abounds in the hearts of all veterans. Recently, my family and I attended a county fair with my 27-year-old brother, who is in the Navy.

My brother happened to remark that he was soon going to be deployed again. A lady who overheard him enthusiastically said, “Thank you.” Pride swelled in my brother’s heart as he was appreciated for his service by a complete stranger. Is there pride in serving in the United States military? That golden thread of pride can reign in every serviceman and woman’s

heart in the knowledge that he or she has ensured opportunity, guarded freedom, and faithfully served our country.