

Preserving the memories of the veterans of foreign wars



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The United States has always been a country of the exceptional. We have been willing to partake in the deadliest and most decisive wars in the world's history to preserve freedom and justice abroad. We choose to remember the "Great Wars" such as the clear-cut WW2 which saw the triumph over fascism and full might of Americas industrial capacity. When the second great war ended, America emerged as a world power both monetarily and militarily with the largest and most well-equipped troops.

A time of prosperity followed WW2. We had many new markets available in desperate need of American products to feed and support the crippled societies of Europe. With American industry booming and the end of true evil with Germanys defeat. America had won a decisive victory and was now ready to return home. The many young men of the greatest generation did not become disenfranchised with the world as the WW1 veterans had been. Instead they were welcomed home as heroes. The US government established the GI Bill granting loans and stipends to the veterans to enable them to continue on with obtaining a college education. Nearly half of college students in 1947 were veterans an unprecedented number. America was keeping its veterans involved and productive. This bill went a long way in supporting veterans of Both World Wars and establishing a thank you for our veterans. Sadly, none of future ventures received the same recognition as WWII.

My grandfather served in the Korean War. He bravely enlisted in the "Forgotten War" and fought to prevent the expansion of communism. Upon returning home from his tours he wasn't welcomed back as a hero. He decided to pursue his own American Dream and reintegrated himself into

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society; picking up his life where he left off. Using the GI bill, he was able to attend Pennsylvania State where he earned an Associate's Degree in Engineering. An opportunity only made possible by our governments support of our veterans. In his eyes, this was gratitude enough.

What came next was the despicable treatment of our Vietnam War veterans. The harshest and most intense war in Americas History was fought by men averaging 19 years old. They were subjected to 240 combat days in a year and sacrificed the most important years of their lives to support American values. The horrors of war used to be limited to soldiers and civilians on the battlefield, but with television in every household every person in America could watch. The counter-culture movement decided to reward our brave boys by creating a 2-front war. Being regarded by the most vocal of groups with phrases such as " Baby-killer", though events were rare it highlights the division in American Society. We seemed to have forgotten how to treat heroes, but instead welcome them with distrust and anger.

I chose to believe that history is repetitive but does not need to be. The most important preamble is to PRESERVE THE MEMORIES AND INCIDENTS OF OUR ASSOCIATIONS IN THE GREAT WARS. If we lose our respect for our men in uniform then the deeds and hardships they endured will have been for nothing. You may be able to enjoy the freedoms, but not respect the costs. America remains the land of the Free and the Home of the Brave as long as we continue to keep the sacrifices of our soldiers close to our hearts.

Memorial Day and Veterans Day is a time of thanks to all of our veterans from all wars big or small and remember the costs that each one of them paid so it will not have been in vain.

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