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What a Veteran taught me about America

There are currently 15.7 million veterans in the US. (https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2025/veterans-day.html). Veterans are people who risked their lives to serve in the army for me, you, and what we call "America" today. They have taught me many things, a few being: valor, unity, and wholehearted patriotism.

Valor means to have great courage and strength of mind.Veterans are people within this country that embody those traits with flying colors– those colors they carry are red, white, and blue. My great grandfather was a veteran, and he was in the Navy during the Vietnam war. He was one of the toughest people I knew as a child. There was always a hat that he wore signaling that he was a veteran and fought for us. Sometimes, at family events when we saw him, he would tell my brother and I stories about what it was like and what he experienced. That was how I first understood true valor. 31.3% of veterans served in the Vietnam war and he was within that 31.3%. The red in our American flag proudly stands for valor just as my great grandfather and his comrades stood with it in the Vietnam war.

Despite your familial descent, veterans are of every demographic, bringing forth the sense of unity that I believe America should have. Learning about the demographics within the military really put into perspective how people from places outside America value it enough to fight for it, just as any American-born citizen could. 1.7 million veterans are women. 9.2% of veterans are Hispanic or Latino, 13% percent are black, and 0.8% are Native American. In this, Veterans have taught me that there's no racial or cultural standards needed to showcase your fortitude by joining the military. A woman by the name of Holly Harrison was the first woman to earn the Bronze Star in the United States Coast Guard (https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2001001.46660/). She also fought in the Iraq war. She is an idol to women who were possibly afraid to pursue their dreams in fear of gender discrimination. The beauty of people from all races and backgrounds joining up together to fight for a central cause is undeniably priceless.

Patriotism is something valued by the majority of Americans, and no one holds it more confidently than a veteran. Patriotism is defined as: a strong feeling of love, devotion, & pride for one's country. Patriotism can bind people together through shared values, like unity as mentioned before. Veterans engage in patriotism by choosing to serve. Not only is this a profound display of patriotism, but also is a significant example of civic engagement.

The United States today is regarded as a "Free Nation" by many. Without our veterans, this title would probably be less applicable, if applicable at all. Appreciation of our Veterans is vital, not just important. They appreciated us & our country through bravery,

solidarity, and authentic patriotism. Since they took their oath swearing to defend and support the United States Constitution, they have become the most indomitable individuals today. For veterans who are no longer with us, they remain the most iron-willed pillar of strength in our hearts.

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