

What Do Veterans Mean to America and Her Citizens

America owes everything to her veterans and those who are hidden heroes. What does the title and the life of a veteran mean to America and her People/Citizens? Well, for America, “veteran” is a term referring to a person who was willing to give up everything they had, and in some cases sacrificing their lives, for her protection and her people. America’s people see veterans differently. We see them as wayfinders doing and exploring things and challenges that we could never do ourselves, as heroes who put themselves through hell and back in order to defend and protect their people and their Country, as Idols who we wish we could become or surpass whether that be their accomplishments or their stories we have all heard from our youth to our adulthood, as warriors who break themselves down to the ground to become bigger and stronger to be able to stand against other countries or peoples who might want to wish harm on America and her people.

As children who were born and raised in America, we have all heard stories about the great men and women who have worked their bodies to the max and beyond, in order to be the great heroes and warriors of American history. We hear about how they are a power to be reckoned with on the battlefield and at home, how they are willingly present when there is a problem or threat, a fight or a natural disaster that requires heroes to be clean up and deal with the situation. We hear about veterans taking down those who want to harm us, and how they stand up for the people and the bullies who are against us.

Veterans have a major standing in our history and memories. One of the most amazing stories that I hear about a lot, especially now in my life, is a myth of a man, a truly inspirational person, an almost impossibly made man named David Goggins. He is and always will be an American Navy SEAL - back when he was serving actively and even now when he is “Retired”.

After getting released from the Air Force for medical reasons and gaining weight up to around 300 pounds and being out of shape while sitting on a couch with a massive chocolate shake and a box of doughnuts, he heard about The Navy SEALs. He got up and went to the mirror and started admitting to himself everything that he was afraid of and began seeing who he really was.

After calling almost every recruiter he could find and hearing “No” after “No” after “No,” David Goggins found a job spraying for cockroaches. On his way home from work one day, he said “This is my last call.” David called a recruiter who was super busy, but he told him to come into the office. Upon entering, the recruiter asked him to stand on a height/weight scale and informed David that he could only be 191 pounds at 6 '1". He was 297 pounds. Determined, he took this information and got to work. He only had 3 months to lose 106 pounds and make weight.

After 3 months, David had lost all 106 pounds through a crazy diet of eating almost nothing and working out non-stop. After he lost all this weight, he went through what's called “Hell week” which is 130 hours of nonstop working out, but he didn't do it once or twice but three times! The rigor took its toll, yet after multiple fractures and double pneumonia, David was rolled back to week one of seal training. In his third “hell week" there was a man who died during the training, causing the training to end 30 hours early. Even with these challenges, David didn't quit. He grabbed duct tape and wrapped his ankles which had stress fractures and inflammation. After about 45 minutes of nonstop pain and struggling, his legs went numb and he couldn't feel his steps which is how David completed the next 22 weeks of training to become a Navy SEAL and the first person in history to complete training as a Navy SEAL, Army Ranger, and Air Force Tactical Air Controller.

David Goggins is an example of the kind of people that the United States gets to call our Veterans. These heroes have not only won our respect from fighting for freedom in places all around the world, for example Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and many others, but they also deserve honor for their sacrifice of time, giving up months, even years and decades of their lives in dedication to protect our livelihood and country.

To be blunt, I think the image of our veterans is getting dragged through the mud. We used to view these wonderful, powerful people as heroes. We used to celebrate them and be grateful for their sacrifices. Nowadays, I think people don't care any more about the time, the pain, the struggle, the sacrifice, and the torture that is often required for soldiers to become who they are and to get to where they are; and, unfortunately, many of these soldiers still suffer from the things of the past through injury and PTSD. I think people are forgetting the difficult sacrifices that veterans went through to allow us to live the way we do with freedom.

Veterans deserve more respect and honor from America, her representatives in government, students in schools everywhere, and her people who seem to spend their days sitting and grumbling about how unfair life is. People don't seem to respect or remember the "Hell" the veterans went through to give them the paradise they are actively destroying and gleefully living in called America. We, the people, must stop focusing on ourselves and give veterans the respect they've earned and deserve from their years of experiencing sacrifice, struggle, fears, and issues caused from saving us - the American people. Respect Veterans - respect our Heroes!