

## Patriots Pen: “My Pledge to Veterans”

### By Gemma Greenwaldt

Do you enjoy the freedom you have? Well, have you thought about where your freedom came from? One word sums it up, Veterans. We need to thank our Veterans for they have undergone so many hardships for our happiness and freedom today. Their hardship included losing friends on the battlefield, being away from their family for long periods of time, injuring their bodies, and losing limbs such as legs and arms. I myself could not imagine such hard and sad things. For it makes me sad and miserable just thinking what those gruesome days, nights, and homesick moments must have felt like. Could you be that brave or courageous when people are dying right beside you? couldn't imagine something more brave than risking my life for my country, and people don't know. Veterans deserve recognition, respect and care. Could you imagine coming home from war and fighting a new norm? Did you know that most veterans need jobs, and help to adjust to the way we live off the battlefield? A General after he retired from the army stated the transition is "pretty tough", and only one in four veterans have a job figured out once they finish serving. The reality of the transition off the battlefield makes me upset. They have done so much for us and deserve to be able to transition easier. Veterans should be able to find a job that fits them but, instead of having an easy time transitioning to life. Most Veterans have a very hard time, and some have post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety to name a few. After talking about what they have done for us, and what they have risked for us, have something to say. I will do my very best to let all veterans know that I respect them honor them, and E every little and big thing they have done for our country and the people in it. I hope that they all find jobs, get help transitioning back to the life that they left to help fight for our country.

### By Aubree Salo

As I go about doing all of the things that I love to do, I cannot and will not take for granted the sacrifices made by our veterans that make it all possible. Without their valor, the opportunities we have today would not be possible. Some of our veterans paid the ultimate price and now it is our turn to return the favor by taking care of their brothers and sisters who also put their lives on the line.

Although the war may be over, at home the fight continues. Many veterans deal with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) because of the horrific experiences they were exposed to. PTSD can make living ordinary day-to-day life extremely overwhelming. It is important that we do not leave these veterans to face their challenges alone. Just as they did not leave us to face this nation's enemies alone.

What can we do to support our veterans now that they're home? In what ways can we

reach out to be positive that they are not carrying their burdens without a friend? I pledge to take the initiative and ask a veteran how I can be of service to them now that their service has ended. Whether it's helping with daily tasks or lending a sympathetic ear, I pledge to make it known to our veteran community that I am more than willing to help.

Sometimes just letting someone know that you appreciate them can go a long way toward brightening their day. If anyone is worthy of our appreciation surely it is the men and women who fought to preserve our way of life. Through acts of kindness and service, we can demonstrate that our gratitude is more than empty words uttered on a few select occasions and holidays. Every veteran has their own story, and we should celebrate not only what they have done for our country, but the incredible person that would make such a sacrifice

Let's make sure that our veterans' lifetime sacrifices do not go unrepaid. They stepped up when we needed them, now it's our turn to step up now that they need us. After all, we are one nation under God and our unity is what makes America a place that people all over the world long to be.

### **By Mary Peterson**

If veterans can do so much for our country, why can't we do the same? We can all find a way to help veterans out, just like they did for us. Let's start here, by writing this essay about why veterans are important and why they matter so much to our community.

I promise to always stand for the flag because it is respectful. If you don't stand that shows how much you don't care for our veterans. The flag helps us remember those who died for us and standing for it is just the right thing to do. Also, By standing for the flag you can show veterans how much you care. If you want to complain that ten seconds is taken out of your day to stand, then you're very disrespectful. Let's all be respectful, kind and stand for the flag promise to honor the people who died for us. To do that \ will have a moment of silence for all the Veterans because it is respectful. They also do a lot for our country.

They did not have to be part of the military, they chose to for us. Please, take off your hat during a moment of silence. Anything kind you do for them helps make up for the lost time, for they had to leave everything behind. Most importantly they had to leave their families and their friends promise to honor Veterans for the promises they made to us. I will do that because they deserve it because they risked their life to bring us freedom across America. Also, if I see a veteran in person, I will thank them face to face for what they did. It is nice and they stopped slavery and every other horrible thing that happened a long time ago. What happened a long time ago was sad, painful and harmful. People did not deserve to be treated like that. Hopefully, history is just a thing of the past because no one should be treated like that.

Lastly, if veterans can do all of that for us, we should do something meaningful for them as well. Most importantly, there is a lot of stuff so don't be stuck on ideas because there is a lot we can do. Without a doubt, I love our country. Thank you veterans for serving our country.

### **By Autumn Salo**

Have you ever heard of Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley or Chuck Norris? You may know them from your music playlist or favorite movie, but did you know that they all served in the U.S. Military? Johnny worked as a morse-code operator and Elvis was an armor intelligence specialist. As for Chuck, he served four years as an air policeman in the U.S Air Force. These men all put their lives on the line for our country before they were recognized for their talents. Therefore, my pledge to veterans is to acknowledge their service to America as a major accomplishment deserving of fame.

Not only did people sacrifice their time, they have also sacrificed by putting their lives back home on hold. This cost them the time with their family and some veterans a lifetime of Post Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD). Elvis put his career on hold. Chuck only found his love of martial arts because of his service. Johnny had to abandon his wife of three weeks when he was deployed. Those are only three stories of the millions of men and women who have served this country. can you imagine what others have given up?

As a student in New York Mills, we are given opportunities to honor our Veterans through the Veteran's Day assembly and the Patriot Pen essay. As an adult, the VFW and Ronald McDonald Ride are ways that we can give recognition. For all that veterans have done for our country, They deserve more. You deserve more than a day, more than an assembly. My pledge is to encourage others to celebrate in as many ways as possible.

The opportunities we have as citizens to participate in and what the veterans have done for us is incredible. When you take the time to consider all the sacrifices, the hard work and the hours invested, they play a huge part in why we are what we are as a country. We owe them so much appreciation. Remember when I talked about those famous guys who were veterans? Well, don't you think they deserve as much recognition and care as we can give them? And not only them but all the men and women who served around the country.

### **By Garrett Uselman**

APRIL 29, 1945 Kinawa, Japan, about 4:00 a.m. BANG!! I spring out of my slumber to find many others doing the same in our dark damp trench. I hear an alarming high-pitched ring in my ears as Sarge begins barking orders while I scramble to my rifle and prepare to launch my upper body over the top of the trench...Just this morning, many awoke and began to stretch as the tender morning air seeped into their nostrils. They looked out a crystal clear window to see the flag flying powerfully outside. And appreciate the safety provided by veterans that now lives in the flag, our flag. Thus, we should respect veterans and what they have done for us and take pride in the freedom they gave us. As a result, my pledge to our veterans is to honor and respect their sacrifice, commitment, and bravery to our country.

Veterans left their families, homes, and lives knowing they might not come back to any of it. They respect our country so much they would go to war for it. They left home to serve not only their families or our nation, but each of us. They knew the risks, for instance, they might not come home alive, but they still served our country.

Their commitment to our country deserves to be noticed and respected. That they put themselves in harm's way so that we could thrive while they took the burden of war. They committed themselves to our country and worked through every day and night for us. They wouldn't back down to the challenge. Furthermore, they did it all for us.

Regardless of the level of danger they put themselves in for us, it had to have been scary for them. The friends they lost and the things they experienced, it scarred them for life. But they didn't stop, they continued working through it and if they fell down they got back up for America, for us. The bravery they had doing it is phenomenal.

Veterans' sacrifice, commitment, and bravery deserve everyone's honor and respect. Veterans sacrificed everything for us. They committed themselves to our country and didn't give up. Nevertheless, they were so brave for us and our country. Therefore, you and I should both give our respect to veterans.