

My Pledge to Our Veterans

A veteran is a person who has given their time and talent to our country as part of the United States Military. Veterans have all made sacrifices and served our country, and many have fought for our freedom and risked their lives. These facts often go unnoticed, and, sadly, veterans can be forgotten and unappreciated. Other times, veterans may be considered heroes. This might be based on their big muscles, tall stature, the uniform they are wearing, or the array of medals they have earned. The veteran I consider a hero looks a little different than this. He has white hair, tells funny jokes, makes the best pancakes, and gives amazing hugs. My veteran hero is my grandpa.

My veteran hero has gentle hands that picked me up when I was little, turned pages as he read me bedtime stories, and held my hand as he walked me to the park. It is unbelievable that my own grandpa's gentle hands are the same hands that gripped an M16 Assault Rifle in the Vietnam War as he put his life on the line for our country. This sparked a realization that a veteran is not only a war hero or military figure, but they are human, too. They are courageous, strong, honorable, and brave men and women who have made sacrifices for our country. They are real life superheroes who also double as fathers, mothers, siblings, grandparents, cousins, neighbors, and workers.

My grandpa's Vietnam War stories taught me what sacrifice looks like. Watching my grandpa become emotional when he hears "The Star-Spangled Banner" taught me what patriotism looks like. Out of respect and gratitude, I pledge to honor my grandpa and other veterans for the service they have given to our country. I pledge to honor them by standing up and putting my hand over my heart when our national anthem is played, thanking veterans for their service, sending cards to veterans on Veterans' Day, donating money to causes that support veterans, honoring the American Flag, and volunteering at hospitals and nursing homes for veterans.

President Kennedy (a World War II veteran) said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." My grandpa gave so much for our country. Through my pledge to my grandpa and our veterans, I am doing something special for my country, too.