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## The Importance of Veterans in America

Veterans are an amazing part of history. America has gone through many wars and battles; veterans are living parts of the past that show the hardships that America has gone through. It also shows what the amazing citizens have sacrificed for our country.

In America, from 1948 until 1973 all men eighteen and older were drafted. These drafts occurred for six conflicts. These conflicts were the American Revolutionary War, The American Civil War, World War I, World War II, The Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In the time of these wars, the men would have to leave their families and hometowns for long periods, often traveling to foreign countries that needed our assistance.

There they would experience great hardships like death and injuries that they would keep for the rest of their lives. In addition to the physical experiences our veterans have gone through they have also encountered mental hardships like fear, and exhaustion, and sometimes see the deaths of the people around them. Since these citizens had to deal with these emotions for long periods, it caused them to later have post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental and physical disabilities.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, also known as PTSD is a mental health condition that occurs after experiencing a terrifying event. Many events could cause PTSD in a person; however experiencing war is the most common event. According to a study conducted by The National Library of Medicine, they used a group of 5,826 veterans and 12.9% of them were

diagnosed with PTSD. That is approximately 751 men and women that are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder in this relatively small group.

While there are many ways to treat PTSD, it is very easy to trigger flashbacks and events that may cause panic attacks or outbreaks in the veteran, even outside of a hostile environment. One of the methods used to treat PTSD is cognitive behavior therapy, also known as CBT. CBT focuses on relationships among thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, it targets current problems and symptoms and focuses on changing pattern behaviors that lead to difficulties in functioning.

Because of the mental conditions that veterans have they may have trouble with joblessness and homelessness. Their need for mental health causes health care to be more expensive and can take up most of their income and make it hard for them to find affordable health care. Because veterans have sacrificed many things for the good of the country the government has instituted programs and policies to assist them with the homeless and jobless issues. The types of assistance are lower rates for insurance and VA loans for houses.

Despite being retired from the military, veterans still serve our country to this day. They provide us service by choosing to work in civilian jobs, starting small businesses, and raising families. Like civilian life, the military also has jobs that they would have to be trained in. These jobs are funded by the government and in different branches; these jobs are identified in different ways.

In the Army, the job that you sign up for is called an MOS. Usually, in the military, the job you have can be applied in the civilian world. In the Army, a 68W is a combat medic. If a soldier were to leave the army they could use the knowledge and certificates from their combat medic

job and transfer it to a medical career in the civilian world. Using the Army to pay for your schooling and training is a great choice and it gives you a higher advantage over people who don't utilize the Army. My Aunt on my mothers' side had this competitive advantage. After being enlisted in the Army for 6 years she was discharged and then had experience transferred to her local and then served as an EMT. She also met her husband and raised her family.

There are many people in my life who have retired from the military, however they still serve us to this day. One of these people is the previous Army Instructor of the JROTC program at North Salem, First Sergeant James Wagner. 1SG Wagner was in the Army for 20 years, from 1990 to 2010. He fought during Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1991, and he also served in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006. Due to these traumatic events he suffers from PTSD and had to undergo therapy; he was also placed on medication by Veterans Affairs to manage his condition. After leaving the Army in 2010 he worked as a JROTC instructor at North Salem High School. In 2021 he retired from the AI position and became a small business owner.

Another person who served is my drill coach and Senior Army Instructor of the North Salem JROTC Program, Lieutenant Colonel Dwight Morse. He graduated from West Point Academy in 1974. He served in the Army from 1974 to 1995. He did not have any combat assignments, however he served overseas in Germany and Korea. His MOS was a 13A, a field artillery officer. In that position, he led units that fired cannons and provided support for infantry units. In 1995 he was hired by North Salem High school for the Senior Army Instructor position. On top of being the SAI, he also started coaching the Lady Viking Unarmed Drill Team in 2008. He has led the team to the nationals in Daytona, Florida over 10 times. And he has brought back trophies from Florida 4 times. He is still the Senior Army Instructor and coach of the Lady Vikings to this day.

Veterans are a great part of America while they are actively serving in the military as well as when they are no longer in the active military. They still serve us in civilian jobs, as small business owners, mothers, fathers, teachers, and other instructors. America as a whole is extremely grateful for veterans' service and to show our appreciation we celebrate national Veterans Day every year to thank veterans for their service. The Memorial Day holiday is there to also remember the ones we lost in combat. It is clear that the ethic of service that Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen learn during active service isn't lost when they retire. Instead, they continue serving America throughout their lives, making our country better. We should be grateful for their contributions.