

## Thoughts on Veterans in the US...

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Continuing some of my thoughts from other day - regarding veterans in this country...

I was raised in a Christian household (Yes - I said a NON-PC word) - we were taught that part of our faith was being "called to serve". Couple that with being raised in a family with military backgrounds - and at least on one side that background stretches back as far as the Revolutionary War - and you can see how I might have found myself - at age 17 - wandering into the recruiter's office to enlist in the Army.

"No greater love hath a man than this, that he would lay down his life for another."

In Basic Training - I found I was not alone. Many of my brothers/sisters-in-arms were there for the very same reason. We supported our country. IF called to do so, we were willing to die to protect our country and the ones we love and hold dear. And not just them - but any American citizen. We were enacting what JFK spoke about... "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country."

This is the feeling that I know lives in the hearts and souls of nearly all American Service men and women.

But with these actions, we also knew that we could not, in reality, expect much from our country in return for our service. We accepted that as fact. We knew from past history. Vietnam taught us this lesson. We knew that those service men and women came home to a country that hated them. But still, as they did - we served. Then came Desert Shield/Storm. After that was over - our fighting forces were extolled as Heroes when they returned. Many of us thought - the country has changed. They have grown and matured from the days of Vietnam. Maybe now... Maybe now we won't be the "wretched few". Maybe now society would see the Armed Forces with respect and dignity for their willingness to serve and sacrifice.

Sadly, we were mistaken. From the current administrations figures:

"The administration estimates that on a single night in January 2009, 75,600 veterans were homeless." (Credit CNNMoney.com writer Jennifer Liberto - 1 March 2011)

75600 Veterans homeless - which I know is actually a very small percentage the homeless in our country (even more sadly). 75600 people who gave months/years of their life in service to country - living on the street. And yet, today, we have bills in Congress that are attempting to do away with funding to aid homeless veterans. Good Job, America! {insert MAJOR sarcastic tone here}

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SIDE NOTE:

Want all the "facts and figures" on the homeless in our country? The latest report published is the "The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (2009)" published by HUD. Apparently, the 2010 figures won't be out til June - it appears to take a year from sampling data to publication of the report. You can either download the PDF attached to this article - or go [http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/povsoc/ahar\\_5.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/povsoc/ahar_5.html)  
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I think people have just forgotten. They have forgotten that without these men and women - this country would not be safe or free. They have forgotten that, without these men and women, they would have NO RIGHTS. Our Government may be treading on dangerous ground with its actions regarding our basic rights - but at least we still have them. Our service men and women (past, present, and future) insure that we will keep them. They fight to protect our Constitution and our country against "all enemies, foreign and domestic." This is part of the oath they all swear to uphold.

For their service - they get sub-par pay and allowances. But they serve.

They may be separated from family and friends - serving in far distant lands - for long periods of time in life threatening environments. But they serve.

They put their life on the line every day, knowing the ultimate sacrifice may be asked of them. But they serve.

They know that, if they pay make that ultimate sacrifice, there are odds that say their funeral will be protested by the likes of the Westboro Baptist Church, etc. But they serve.

They know that, when they finish serving, they are eligible for VA "Benefits" - if they can fight through the red tape enough to achieve "permission" to use it. And They Still Serve.

Look around you, folks. Look to your family, your friends, your community. I don't believe you'll need to look too far - and you will find a veteran. They, or someone just like them, are the very reason you have the freedoms you do. Keep that in mind.