

The Best

By: Graham Ratermann

A young, clean cut man bounds down the last few steps of an airplane and into his wife's outstretched arms. A homeless man in a wheelchair rolls past; his pants are tattered and reveal his missing leg. A CEO of a successful company sits at her desk looking at pictures, remembering the men and women with whom she served. These people are veterans and to me veterans are special because they are brave, committed and they sacrifice so much.

The first thing that makes veterans stand out from ordinary people is their bravery and courage. These men and women confronted fear and pain everyday. They suffered hardships so we could live our lives the way we wanted. Not all veterans ran headlong into enemy fire or dived on a live grenade to save their comrades, but all veterans no matter if they were cooks or fighter pilots did something incredibly brave by enlisting. They signed a contract saying that if it came down to it, they would fight for our country and lay down their lives if necessary. Not all veterans were on TV or in newspapers for their heroism, but they all deserve to be commended for even joining the military.

Veterans show their commitment by giving up many years of their lives to serve and protect. They also show commitment through their actions, when things were tough veterans didn't quit; they sucked it up and kept going. There have been many occasions when veterans showed perseverance and commitment, the winter at Valley Forge was the first. Cold, tired and hungry, those veterans held out and lit the first fires of American resilience. At the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, frozen, outnumbered two to one and

surrounded, American soldiers didn't give up. No, they had made a commitment to themselves, their comrades in arms and to the American people to fight with all they had. A more recent example is the hunt for Osama Bin-Laden. It took ten years but the commitment was there and finally Osama was brought to justice. These are just a few examples of the commitment veterans make.

The last and most important reason why veterans are important is because they sacrifice so much. Many miss their kid's childhood while they're overseas. Many don't see their loved ones for months, even years on end. Some are injured in combat and carry with them physical and mental scars for the rest of their lives. Some veterans even make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. They lay down their lives to protect the sacred freedoms we hold dear.

Veterans are special because they are brave, committed and sacrifice so much. Civilians can't begin to imagine what veterans went through and we are eternally grateful for what veterans did, for giving us an opportunity to live life to the fullest, for giving us that chance to be the best we can be.