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2017 Veterans Day Essay
Contest Winner
3rd Place, 8th Grade

Mrs. Hay
Winslow Twp. Middle School
Grade 8

Some of the most heroic people in our society are veterans. Their pictures do not appear on billboards and their stories aren't consistently featured on a television program. Regardless, they certainly deserve more respect and admiration than what we've given them previously. These strong-willed individuals exhibit bravery on the battlefield and we appreciate everything they have done to protect our way of life. Retired soldiers sacrificed much of their personal lives - and in many cases, even their health - while serving in the military. Veterans are entitled to recognition for the courage they have displayed in action, the protection they provide against threats, and most importantly, the sufferings they've endured in order to ensure our safety.

Imagine the fear you would experience if you had to engage in warfare. The very thought of enlisting in an army itself is enough to frighten the average person, let alone that of being in a real combat situation. In other words, it takes a union of courageous and brave soldiers to defend our country. Not just anybody has what it takes to get the job done. Additionally, these warriors are well aware of the risks involved in their work. There's never a guarantee that they will make it home alive, and they continue to endanger their lives for our sake.

We are incredibly grateful that these veterans have devoted so much of themselves towards defending our country from opposing nations. Their relentless defense is the reason we can simply enjoy our lives and not have to constantly stress about our safety. Of course, hate crimes and terrorism still exist, but definitely in a lesser concentration than they would without our armed forces. Tremendous efforts on their part to defend our nation's freedom and beliefs have really made a difference. We owe acclaim to our veterans because they have fought tirelessly to protect our republic.

Former service members had to temporarily abandon their lives to pursue our country's enemies - and for this, they have received hardly anything in return. Soldiers are required to take a great deal of time away from their families while deployed in unfamiliar areas. As a result, they end up missing family occasions, including significant milestones and celebrations. Furthermore, those soldiers who've ended up surviving in battle likely emerged with crippling physical injuries and irreversible emotional trauma. Troopers contracting conditions in war from paralysis to PTSD are unfortunately stuck with them for the rest of their lives.

You may not realize it even now, but one day simply isn't enough to celebrate these wonderful individuals. Veterans should be honored and praised every single day because of their heroism in combat, the way they protect our nation, and the monumental sacrifices they have had to overcome while securing our union.