

Why Veterans are Important to our Nation's History and Future

Our nation has relied on veterans for as long as it has been in existence. Many of the great leaders of our country served their nation on the battlefield, and returned home with a greater knowledge and experience that helped them be successful. In my own family, there are many veterans, including my grandfather who served in Vietnam and my great-grandfather who served in World War II. My other great grandfather even served and was wounded in World War I. Like many other men, they returned home to their families and jobs and worked hard. While none of my family members sought public office, many veterans in our history have. Men like George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Dwight Eisenhower and Gerald Ford who fought for our freedoms at home and abroad, and then continued in service to our country by taking on one of the greatest challenges-the Presidency of the United States.

Veterans of the Iraq wars and the war in Afghanistan are returning home with new challenges. Dealing with the issues that only other veterans can understand, they are working to better the services and assistance that accompany their return home. Some are running for elected office, in order to initiate change in our laws and government. Others are working in health care, aiding those both physically and mentally scarred during their service. Some are starting new businesses and employing other veterans in order to get our soldiers back to work and contributing to our country and its prosperity.

I had the opportunity to pay tribute to our veterans this year when I travelled to Normandy in France. I stood on the very beach that my great grandfather landed on, and saw the cemetery and museum dedicated to those who paid the ultimate price. The experience was surreal, knowing how many men lost their lives in that place in order to protect our freedom.

We need to support our young men and women who wish to serve our country. Many choose service as a career path, and take the skills and knowledge that they acquire and use it to help others outside of the military. Our service men and women choose to help others, and they are deserving of our respect and admiration regardless of whether they are still in active service.

From our first veteran President, George Washington, to George H.W. Bush, veterans have always been and will continue to be one of the greatest assets of our country. They have experiences that give them a unique perspective on dealing with problems and difficulties that we face. They have answered the call of war and defending our freedom and continue to rise to the challenge of making our country the greatest nation.