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Kemper Memorial Essay

When I was younger, my uncle told me about a small flower. It was a simple rose, standing small yet mighty in the wasteland of a battlefield. It withstood the cacophony of gunfire, the disorientating symphony of land mines whose invisible hand had grasped many souls. It was rooted in the ground alone. After the last explosion, my uncle's vision was blurred. His ears deafened, ringing like a bell, his mind ringing with loss. Through the haze, this tiny rose persevered. He told me, "This rose reminded me of your aunt. How could I not make it out? She would be alone". I knew what that would do to my aunt. She would wilt, her brightly colored personality dulled. How did the rose survive in the debris? How did my uncle survive the indifferent killing? How did my uncle lead his men out of trouble? Some might even say he was a hero. Heroes are often depicted as extraordinary beings possessing superhuman abilities or accomplishing extraordinary feats. Nonetheless, real heroism resides not only in the extraordinary but also in the ordinary. Service to one's country provides a profound opportunity for ordinary men and women to unleash their heroic potential. There are many stories from soldiers like my uncles, showing their extraordinary courage, discipline, and resilience in the face of danger. Finding the reason to keep moving. Soldiers are heroes because they voluntarily put themselves in harm's way to protect and uphold their country and its citizens, often sacrificing their own security and safety for the greater good. Military service to this country allows the ordinary citizen to find the hero within themselves by cultivating personal growth, developing a sense of purpose, and inspiring positive change in society.

Service to the country offers individuals a place to commence on a journey of self-discovery and personal prosperity. The challenges and responsibilities that come with serving one's country push individuals to overcome their limitations, develop resilience, and tap into untapped reservoirs of strength. As a result of training, education, and exposure to varied experiences, ordinary individuals sustain a profound transformation, emerging qualities such as discipline, bravery, and adaptability. These qualities

not only enable them to navigate difficult situations but also empower them to make a positive impact on their surroundings. Thus, the military gives the average person room to thrive.

Service to the country provides a compelling sense of purpose that feeds the ordinary individual's path toward heroism. By devoting themselves to a cause larger than themselves, a person discovers significance in their actions and a deep sense of fulfillment. The knowledge that one's efforts of serving in the military contributes to the improvement of society creates a profound sense of purpose. This purpose fuels the ardor and willpower vital to conquer obstacles and achieve exceptional accomplishments. A person needs to be mentally strong in order to overcome obstacles they face in the military. Therefore, serving allows individuals to grasp a sense of duty.

Heroes are not restricted to mythical tales or fictional narratives; they exist among us, hidden within ordinary people who enroll in the military to serve the country. One of the most profound aspects of service in the military is the transformative effect it has on others. Through their zeal, these individuals inspire positive change in society. They become catalysts for progress, and they hold in their palms the well-being of their fellow citizens. By fighting for the lives of every American citizen, heroes in everyday life work tirelessly to create a better world. Their actions inspire others to follow in their footsteps, generating a ripple effect that heightens the influence of their initial act of heroism. The ordinary individual turned hero serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that each person possesses the capacity to make a difference. By witnessing the heroism of these individuals, others are uplifted to embody their own potential and contribute to the good of this country. This empowerment of others creates a chain reaction, as every person who realizes their ability to implement change is inspired to pass on the torch of heroism, perpetuating a cycle of positive transformation.

In a world that often glorifies the remarkable qualities of larger-than-life figures, it is essential to recognize that heroism lies within the clutch of every ordinary being. Service to the country equips fertile grounds for this heroism to emerge, it nourishes personal growth, infuses a sense of purpose, and inspires positive change in society. Through their dedication, regular individuals mold into heroes, leaving an

enduring mark on their communities and the country. As we celebrate and admire those who selflessly serve, let's integrate the latent hero within each of us and strive to make a difference.

While there are a variety of ways to enforce change, there is one that is most critical. As one can see, our soldiers are our heroes. But the question shouldn't be if they are, it should be how can we help. Veterans are constantly suffering. They're more likely to be evicted from their homes and end up on the street. In a study conducted by the National Library of Medicine, 24% of the homeless population ages 34-44 are veterans. This number increases to 40.8% if the age range increases to 45-54 (Fargo et al). Because the U.S. military recruits heavily from low-income and minority communities, and the states that send the most troops to war are often the poorest states in the nation, the risk of homelessness as a veteran increases dramatically if you're part of a minority community (Thurston). The U.S. military suicide rate, historically low, has climbed significantly since 2004. Four times as many service members have died by suicide than in combat in the post-9/11 wars according to Brown University (Ji). On average, 17 veterans a day die by suicide (Herrera). Mental health facilities and homeless shelters are overcrowded and underfunded. While these statistics are overwhelming, it is prominent we get our soldiers the care they need.

How can we call those ordinary civilians heroes and rely on them if we then disregard their needs after they serve our country. I call on each and every one of my fellow Americans to take care of our heroes. To listen to them, to carry the weight for them, because sometimes the real war isn't a physical battle. My hero, my uncle, could not find the rose in the wasteland as he put a gun to his head.

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