

Freedom Isn't Free

As I sit here in my office on the weekend of Memorial Day I turn on my television and the first thing I see is a program on Fox News about veterans taking their lives. As a retired Marine I know that it happens a lot. Over the last few years I've seen my fellow members taking their lives because they don't get the help they need when they need it.

I know of a lot of members of the military that had to wait almost a year or more to get the help that the government needs to provide them as soon as they get home from the combat fields. If the government would do what they should do this wouldn't happen as much as it does right now.

On average 22 former military personnel take their lives on a daily basis. That number should never happen in my opinion. I know that this is a story that most people will never know about and that isn't right. People should know that veterans need help as soon as they get home.

I'm lucky that I have a great support group in my life and I've haven't had any thoughts about killing myself in a long time. Yes when I get home and didn't get the help that I needed I thought about suicide every day. I know that a lot of veterans can't take the flash backs that they get and they need to be in counseling for it. If there were more people that would speak out about the treatment that their loved that served in the military needs to live a good life I think that the government would do something about it.

I would also like people to do a virtual stimulation of what we go through on a daily basis for the entire time we are in a warzone. I would also like them do it when they haven't slept in about a week because when you are in a warzone you really don't get very much sleep. You might close your eyes for a few hours but you don't go to sleep.

I know that many people think that veterans are like super heroes but we are like anyone else we do need sleep and you never know when you are going to get it when you are on a battle field.

I love that I served in the Marines and all the men and women that I have in my life because of it. The only thing I don't like is that almost half of the people that I served with have taken their own lives. When I joined the Marines I didn't think that I would be hurt because men and women would take their own lives. I always thought I would see them lose their because of a war.

A few years ago we started a reunion of the men and women that served together. When we started we had about 80 people that all served together. This year we will have about 25 people at the reunion. The men and women that aren't coming have either died in Iraq and Afghanistan or they have killed themselves. I know that

when you serve in the military you might come home in a pine box but taking your own life because you don't get the help you need is bullshit. The government needs to be better at giving the help all veterans need because they served this country and this country needs to serve them when they get home.

To all the people that have a veteran in their household please help them when they need it because it means a lot to us when we know people are willing to help us. For the people that haven't been in a warzone or don't have someone that never served please don't turn your back on them because we are just like you but we need a little more help than you do.

In closing this Memorial Day weekend please remember that the freedoms that you have didn't come free. There have been men and women that have given their lives for this great country from the first day this country was born way back in 1776. There will be lives that will be taken because of wars but they didn't die in vain.

From a grateful Marine