

What Memorial Day Means to Me

The steps of the church were lined with family and friends on May 8th of 2023, as we laid my 100-year-old great-grandpa to rest, a World War 11 veteran and a father of thirteen. Just a few weeks later and a couple miles away, crowds lined the streets paying respect to a man they never knew. The body of Corporal Clark Werline, who went missing in action in 1950, was repatriated after his exhumed remains returned from North Korea. Both of these men served in the U.S. military, but only one of them enjoyed the freedoms he bravely fought to protect.

Soldiers who gave their lives never had the chance to have a family, a job, or enjoy their earned freedoms. The sacrifices they made remind me of the heavy burden returning soldiers bear in memory of their fallen comrades. That is the unfinished story of many soldiers like

Corporal Werline. Their hopes and dreams died with them on the battlefields. Their grieving families lived the rest of their lives wondering what their futures might have been.

Memorial Day is one day out of the year when I remember that all the freedoms I take for granted came with a price tag of American lives. I can pursue a career of my choice, help others in my community, and become a contributing member of society because of their sacrifices.

Brave patriots gave us the freedoms of press, religion, free speech, and voting, but it was the future generations of American soldiers who protected those rights.

This Memorial Day I will stand for the flag and kneel for the fallen. I will thank the soldiers who safely came home and listen as they retell stories of those who did not return. I will live my life in a way that will honor the Americans who died fighting to secure the amazing opportunities I have. I will make every day a day of remembrance for the fallen warriors who gave up everything and never returned to the beautiful country I call home.