

## 2017 Grand Sweet Memorial Essay

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The American Veterans have protected the United States of America since the start of the United States Military in 1788. Even before the American Revolution, volunteers risked their lives to protect our rights and freedom. Today, people join the Armed Forces because they believe in the value of fighting for liberty and justice. In addition to Veteran's services all around the world, we should all be thankful for those who serve our country, each and every single day!

First, Veterans became who they are because they possessed the honor, bravery, and patriotism that they needed to stand up for our country. Our nation's Veterans commit their lives to protect us, so that we can continue to live our lives in freedom. They represent our country as a whole; people of every belief coming together and standing strong.

My Grandpa, Terrence Gardner, served in the United States Military from 1966 to 1972, in the Vietnam War. Although it was not a popular War and many people protested it, my Grandpa is still able to proudly say "I served this country." My Grandpa was stationed in California, Japan, the Philippines, and aboard the U.S.S Forrestal. All of my Grandpa's friends were drafted into the war, but my Grandpa chose to serve our country on his own free will. On behalf of his selection, he said that serving our country was an honorable thing to do and his family supported him 100%.

In my opinion, Veterans are heroes of their own kind, as Veterans all fight for a common cause. We can learn a lot from the remarkable sacrifices that these men and women have made. The interview with my Grandpa was the first time I had ever heard him discuss serving our country. I saw a different side of him and I sensed the pride that he still carries for our country. I appreciate my Grandpa and our Veteran's acts of determination and bravery. The definition of bravery is *courageous behavior or character*, and people who serve our country and risk their lives show just that!

