

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## Thoughts of a soldier's father on Veteran's Day

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How do I write about the people willing to do what so many of us were not willing to do? How do I write about heroes? The ones "ready to pick up a rifle, ruck up, and close with the enemy!" How do I write about Veteran's Day when I am terrified because I have a son who joined the Army at age 27 in the midst of a war? A son who was determined to enter Special Forces? A son determined to do his part? A son who joined the Army because he wants to help people? How do I write about Veteran's Day honoring these men and women when I am just a frightened dad?

When I think of where my son may be going, tears of fear well up in my eyes. When I think of his character that got him here, tears of pride well up in my eyes. How is it possible to feel both your proudest and your most terrified all at the same time?

Where does something like this begin? It begins with a little boy who could come up to you and say, "I need a hug". It begins with a little boy climbing onto the back of the couch to look out the window when he hears your truck coming home. It begins with a little boy who at age 2 ½ would kick his shoes off so he could "escape" the backyard using his toes to help him climb a 6 foot chain link fence. It begins with a little boy who at age three was sitting on a neighbor's roof with the neighbor perplexed as to how he got there! It begins with a little boy needing his mom

to make a near continuous supply of red superman capes graduating to a little boy needing an endless supply of camouflage army clothes and a two story camouflage fort. It begins with a little boy seeing a flower close up in the evening; explaining it saying, "God wants it to take a nap". It begins with a little boy rigging a rope from the top of his fort to a swing set 40 feet away and flying through the air hanging on to a laundry basket threaded onto the rope. It begins with a little boy sitting on a lawn chair strapped to a skate board flying downhill on the street in front of your house at over 25 mph! It begins with a little boy who cried when his favorite tree died because he remembered so many picnics with his mom under that tree. It begins with a boy who had a full grown black Labrador sleeping in his twin bed with him until he left for college. It begins with a young man who could holler without embarrassment "Mom, I love you" in front of several hundred college students at his first day of college. It begins with a man who still is OK with his mom giving him advice on gun safety even though he is in Green Beret training! This is my family's military hero? This is a kind son and wonderful husband who wants to be a Green Beret so he can help people all over the world. And he wants to do that while jumping out of airplanes and repelling out of helicopters.

When he signed his enlistment papers I told him how I felt about his decision. I said, "Today you have become the man I wished I had been". Following basic training and airborne training he reached a sentinel goal, selected to continue Special Forces training. I felt an admixture of chest-bursting pride and stomach-nauseating fear. While enjoying the pride of this accomplishment we were walking on base together catching up with one another. I told him I had always wondered about the father's of great men. I assumed great men had to have great fathers but I was wrong. He and I were the proof that "an average good man can raise a great man".

Veteran's Day is this Sunday. Let's make a commitment to our troops, our warriors, our family's heroes. Let's promise ourselves whenever we see a veteran or someone in uniform we will take a moment, engage them, and thank them for taking care of the rest of us. My wife started me doing this well before our son decided to join the military and I have thanked military personnel from ages 18 to over 90. As I shake their hand and thank them they all get tears in their eyes. You realize it is not the medals and ribbons that make them cry. It is you and I taking a few moments to acknowledge them and say thank you. Each of them is a hero and the pride of their family! Take time to notice!

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