

Veterans Young and Old Lead By Example

Russ Meyer, Mayor

Every year we mark a special day to honor our veterans. We memorialize those who are no longer with us and celebrate those who are. As bugles play, we stand beside uniformed men and women, many in their 60's, 70's and older, whom we hold in the highest regard.

A few are survivors of World War II, others are veterans of the Korean, Vietnam, or Gulf War. Their worn faces reveal only some of the horrors they experienced and the brotherhood they shared with their comrades. They are an inspiration to us and a reminder that freedom has a price.

We all wish that today's troops did not have to pay that price. Yet, they are returning from battles with injuries and the scars of war, many in their 20's and 30's. They will face challenges, but I have no doubt they will meet them in the same manner in which they served their country—with bravery and conviction.

We're fortunate in Kentucky to have many who fit this description. In fact, there are more than 100,000 veterans here under the age of 50.

None is a better role model for us than the state's own Marine Sgt. Dakota Meyer. This 23-year-old Marine repeatedly went into enemy fire to save 36 fellow troops and recover the bodies of four friends killed in action. You've no doubt seen news stories of him receiving the Medal of Honor from the president and serving as the marshal for a local parade.

It is so important to recognize and celebrate the heroes among us like Sgt. Meyer. Too often, those in the spotlight do not live the kinds of lives we really admire. But, there is much to respect about those who live up to their military commitment, especially in times of war.

Such bravery and leadership comes from deep inside a person and there is no truer test of what someone is made of. Most of us aren't put to such a trial, fortunately. But we can live up to opportunities to be brave in small ways every day—to step up to help others and to put our welfare below that of our brother or sister.

We do that a lot in Jessamine County. I'm so proud to be part of a community that values public service, sacrifice and discipline. And I'll join with you to honor the men and women who lead us by their examples and inspire us on this Veterans Day and every day.