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English 1317

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“One Day in July” by Nathan Coward was a story kind of close to my own heart. The story shares a lot of similarities with my own life. The drugs and alcohol and the reason that he joined the Army. He enlisted in July of 2000 and I enlisted in August of 2000, both in the infantry. The only main difference was that I went to a combat unit instead of a ceremonial unit. But either way I related to the struggle both before and after serving. My past, like his, has been a struggle that I never thought would end.

“Serendipity” by Ross Petersen was an inspirational story to read. The young soldier in the story may not have spent any time in the war theater but he accomplished a great deal during the time that he served. I can only imagine what the Japanese people felt after the earthquake when he arrived with his unit to help. He was able to save the woman’s life with the bone marrow transplant and become a hero to her family. To me this story showed that the military is not always blood, guts, and glory. When someone volunteers to serve they get to travel the world changing people’s lives along the way, sometimes becoming a hero in the most unlikely ways.

“A History of Transitioning” by John Elbert told the story of how the United States government started programs to help veterans that had been cast aside. It is hard coming from a military life and trying to start over in the civilian world. The story was very informational about the transition. When I read about the Korean War and the forgotten soldiers that served there and Vietnam I felt a kind of almost shame. I know personally the damage that war does to a person and the sacrifices that are made, and I can’t imagine returning home to be looked down upon. The freedoms that those Americans disgracefully expressed were won by the very soldiers that they spit on.

These stories all struck home with me. The experiences by the soldiers in all of the stories should be known all Americans. Freedom was not given to us by God's grace, it was bought with the blood of men and women that marched under the American flag. A great debt is owed to the American soldier and the United States government should be obligated to pay their part. There was a quote from the "A History of Transitioning" that really stuck with me. "Many soldiers become soldiers right out of high school and stay in for a long time, to the point that all they really know is soldiering." People should remember that.