

Sometimes “Thank You” seems inadequate

I never served in the military, but thousands of men and women before me did. To them, I am forever grateful. Today I served at a funeral at the [Rock Island National Cemetery](#). The Rock Island National Cemetery is on an island on the Mississippi River. When you cross the bridge you are greeted with a security gate that always has at least two uniformed guards. When they are told that you are there for service for a veteran or a veteran’s wife, they come out of the little kiosk, snap to attention and salute all the cars that drive by.

As we drove farther onto the island and then into the cemetery, anyone that we drove by stopped what they were doing and either gave a military salute or removed their hat and put their hand over their heart. Today, the island was particularly busy. Workers were all over the grounds preparing for Memorial Day. Every one of them paused as we drove by. I’ve done many services at national cemeteries before. All of them are emotional. Today though, was special. Flags lined the streets, and little flags were planted in neat rows alongside the stone markers.

When kids in my parents’ generation were graduating high school, they were thinking about going to Vietnam. When kids in my grandparents’ generation were graduating high school, they were thinking about going to Europe or Japan. When I graduated high school, I was thinking about going to a party to try and meet a girl.

Today I thought of the people I went to high school with that served in the military. They served for many reasons, and because they served, I didn’t have to. I wish I could say thank you to all of them. Today as I looked out at the lines and lines of markers, I said a prayer of thanksgiving. I thanked God for each of those markers, men, women, husbands, and wives that gave a part of their youth. They put everything on the line so that I could worship, speak, read, raise a family, pursue happiness, work for justice, and grow old in safety.

Sometimes “thank you” just seems inadequate.



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