

Veterans Day 2021

Having served active duty in the US Navy for 13 years and the US Naval Reserves for an additional 9 years, Veterans Day to me is a very meaningful day. The markets are not closed on Veterans Day and that seems to eat at me, but I try to make a point to work a “skeleton crew” on November 11th to honor those that have served - as minimal as that may seem. As I sit here, two years retired from service, I ask myself the question of, “why is it important to me really?” It seems that the older I get the faster the years seem to pass, but the longer the individual days are. I’m in a phase of my life where I’m thoroughly enjoying leading a company, being the best husband I can be, and helping raise our four children - two of which are high schoolers - during a trying time. I reiterate, the days are long.

As life wants to pass by very quickly, I make every attempt not to let it. I try hard but most of the time fail. This Veterans Day I’m choosing to reflect on what makes the day so special this time around. After some introspection I have settled on a concrete thought. Given the current political climate, there exists an ever-present conflict of everything, seemingly just for the sake of conflict.

This year, I choose to honor those that were not allowed to have an opinion while in uniform. What I mean is that while we served, we were all united in one mission – to serve this great country. Yes, we griped, we moaned and complained and had our own views of life – but when the order came, when the job had to get done – there was no question as to what team we were on. While serving, you did not look at skin color, political views, religious views, sexual orientation – nothing – your focus was the mission. Mission was paramount. You served your country. There was no room for selfish intent or people may have died or been severely harmed. For me, being a part of that at times, was magical. I miss that. I do not miss flying fast airplanes, breaking the sound barrier, or dog fighting my buddies – I really do not. I miss the unity. I miss the clarity.

All veterans, defined as those who have put the uniform on in their past, have an opinion. We have earned the right to have one simply by being American. But this

Veterans Day I want to remember that unified mission – where we all fought together. I respect the ones who fought with all their personal interests, opinions, and vendettas in the rearview mirror. We were unified for the greatest nation that has ever existed.

The current division amongst Americans seems to be everywhere, and about everything, and can only be destructive to this great country. Lately, it seems that nothing is sacred from this division. I hope and pray that we can once again come together as a society, but mostly I want to honor those that served – those that understood that singular, unified mission – to serve our country. I miss the absence of everything else.

Let's not only thank a veteran this Veterans Day – but let's learn from their service.

With appreciation for those who served,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JP', followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small hook.

Commander Jake Parsons, USNR (ret), CFP
President and CEO