



### **How we stand up for our country on Veterans Day!**

How do we stand up for our country, even though we can't stand anymore? We may be broken on the outside, but on the inside, we have more determination than one could ever know. When we hear that call, the call of duty, we respond in a minute.

We may have prosthetic arms or legs, or even be confined to a wheelchair; when duty calls we will be there. This Veterans Day, November 11, 2022, we will stand in the streets tall and proud, proud to be military service men and women of all ages.

As the parade comes down Main Street, with high school bands and floats and military vehicles of old in remembrance of days gone by, we will march down the street with pride and remembrance. Sidewalks will be lined with young and old, and old soldiers will stand and salute as the procession goes by.

Little children on the sidewalks will be too young to know the significance of the pageantry passing by, yet they will stand and waves their small US flags in honor as we go by. The camaraderie of everyone in the parade will be a feeling like no other. We will call each other brothers and sisters, special bonds that will never be broken.

A touch of sadness will graze us when we reach the grandstand where the grand marshal will announce each unit as we pass because we know now, in only a few more yards the parade will be over. But it will not be the end, by any means because we know we all, hopefully all, will be back in our same parade places next year.

We have served in different branches: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Merchant Marines, and Coast Guard. We are members of many different veterans' service organizations: VFW, DAV,- PVA and so many more. But we have shared bonding experiences that last the rest of our lives.

There are many different veterans' service organization (VSO) posts across the country that keep us strong, unify us, and fight for the benefits that we earned. Our memberships in VSOs are a new camaraderie that keeps us engaged and helps us stay strong and united. These VSOs help fellow veterans who need a little help. Whether it is assistance with veterans' benefits, advocating for improved health care, finding a job or being retrained, they are there for us, as we are there for them.

I have been a member of the Paralyzed Veterans of America for many years. PVA is an organization created in 1946 out of a group of veterans confined to wheelchairs from spinal cord injuries or spinal cord diseases such as multiple sclerosis. I do not know where I would be today without PVA and the sense of purpose and direction my own involvement with PVA has given me.

It has also been gratifying to help my fellow veterans who are also confined to wheelchairs, through our outreach, our sharing of experiences, mutual support and sporting activities we help each other to learn and grow. Even though we are in wheelchairs, ones that you can see, we see no longer.

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