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Running that first mile at the gym, getting a well-deserved job promotion, or even completing your college applications. To me, those used to be the ‘typical’ examples of prideful actions. It wasn’t until after I read the prompt for this year’s Voice of Democracy contest that I realized pride comes in many different and sometimes concealed forms.

For the soldiers serving in the United States military, they are just doing what is RIGHT. They believe that they are on the battlefield for US, not for themselves. Instead of seeing their family in person, they skype their children, write their siblings letters, and fall asleep to the thought of not being to help out when their parents grew too old. That is worthy of pride. They sacrifice the small things that we all take for granted; a toothbrush, a clean bed, even a warm shower. That is worthy of pride. Every day, for the past ten years, those men and those women fought and continue to fight for our country. They fight for the freedom that most American’s feel too comfortable living in, they fight to secure our nation, and they fight to give us a peaceful country to live in. **That is worthy of pride.** Why don’t we acknowledge this pride? There are about 305 million people in the United States, and only fifteen percent of us think about the war in Iraq daily. That number is disgraceful. That number takes AWAY from the pride that those soldiers DESERVE.

Dakota Meyer. A 23 year old male from Kentucky, was awarded the Medal of Honor from President Obama in September. Meyer ignored orders to stay put and fought his way five times into an ambush in an Afghan ravine, helping to rescue three dozen American and Afghan troops and to recover the remains of four dead American servicemen. While receiving this award, Meyer tried to deflect the attention off himself, and in an interview with President Obama he stated “It may be a platform for representation of the guys who are out there fighting every

day, my story is one of millions, and the others aren't often told." Dakota Meyer. A 23 year old male from Kentucky who did not recognize his actions as prideful, who constantly reminded the United State citizens that his story was one of many, and who tried to steer the attention away from himself. Dakota Meyer. A United States soldier that fought against all odds and risked HIS life to save the lives of other soldiers, American and Afghan. He deserves to know that we, as Americans are thankful for what he did. He deserves to believe that his actions were truly prideful.

Is there pride serving in the United States military? Yes. Do we, as a nation, acknowledge that pride? No. Because we do not acknowledge this pride, our soldiers do not acknowledge it. I am not writing this paper to earn money or to be a winner for a scholarship. Money is not the award I am trying achieve through this essay. I am writing this paper to raise awareness throughout the United States of America that the soldiers fighting for THIS country deserve more than what we are giving them. They deserve to KNOW that their actions are prideful not only to themselves, but for us as well. I hope that through this essay, my voice can be heard, so the soldier's prideful actions can finally be identified.

Remember:

The middle-aged man who missed his son's birth and missed his daughters first day of school deserves to be recognized for his brave actions that often go unnoticed.

The mother of three, who couldn't be there for her children on Christmas, deserves to be recognized for her constant will to fight for our country.

And the eighteen year old boy, right out of high school, deserves to be recognized for kissing his crying parents good bye and walking on that plane to land in a war zone.

These soldiers will only recognize their pride when our country recognizes it.