

Ode to a Rifleman

A Rifleman is not born but is cast in the Rifleman's mold by other Riflemen. These are mentors of great character, who encourage him to accept the honor, sacrifice and duty to defend those things most dear to patriots. A Rifleman learns that not all battles require a rifle, but he is to be ready on a moments notice should one be required.

A Rifleman comprehends that the war for liberty is never won, but that battles must be fought and won every day. He obtains the foresight to know that the battle today is of utmost importance and tomorrow there will be another battle of equal importance. He gains awareness that the interest of his country, liberty and freedom should be foremost in his life.

A Rifleman becomes as knowledgeable of his rifle and gear as he is of his enemy. He grows proficient with the tools provided and is constantly striving to improve. He grasps the knowledge that the path to true perfection has no end, but always, is the most honorable journey.

A Rifleman sees that he is surrounded by battlefields of all descriptions and magnitudes. He garners the ability to choose his battles and his battlefields. He becomes sure of his skills but realizes that pride has no place on any battlefield. A Rifleman learns his job is never finished, that persistence can win any battle, and patience can prevent many ill planned battles.

A Rifleman grows to be a warrior in all walks of life. He prays for peace, is pensive of the future and knows the enemy will never relent in it's pursuit of destroying liberty and freedom. He is thankful for being deemed worthy of the title and honor.

A Rifleman's greatest honor comes with the passing of skills, heritage and knowledge of obligations to those that will and must continue the war. He teaches them that a Rifleman's skills are never accomplished, but continuously pursued. When trained, his apprentices shoulder their arms and move on to continue fighting the war and teaching others.

A Rifleman comes to know deep within his heart that when his replacements are trained, his ammo is low, his barrel is hot, the sun is on the Western horizon and the enemy is scattered for the day, he, an old Rifleman, may go home in peace.

And when, as a Rifleman, he leaves the final battlefield the echoes of his life's accomplishments can be heard fading across the hillsides. Then, his fellow Riflemen can gather around his grave and know, without question, that this warrior was truly a "Man among men", a "Man who knew what he was about."

