

VOICES: Never forget those who gave their lives serving our country

[← Caption](#)

IDEAS & VOICES

By Kathy Platoni

July 19, 2022

Gold Star Families have given us the gift of their sons and daughters, parents, siblings, nieces, and your nephews alike; those who are the true, rightful and most authentic of heroes of this great nation, on battlefields far removed from our homeland. Very few will ever understand the magnitude of the sacrifices made by the loved ones or by their families, left to navigate their way back to some kind of meaningful life after unimaginable loss. This, by default, defines and distinguishes what giving all looks like. And this is expressly what we were all asked to do, simply because we answered that call of duty, the utmost and loftiest honor ever to befall those who proudly swore that oath of allegiance for duty, honor, selfless service and above all, for country, not ourselves. Nothing compares. Nothing ever will.

Unfortunately, while America went to the mall, many of us went to war, instead. The best that most of America could do on our behalf was to stick a "support our troops" magnet on their back bumpers. 99 percent of the American populace simply will never "get it" and the best too many of them have to offer is an insincere "thanks for your service" or "get over it" when we lament our losses.

What has been given up at the altar of freedom is priceless, yet few will ever rise to this occasion, where dying for one's country and laying down one's life for their friends and for the cause of freedom resonates within their souls. We have too often become shameless people outside of the military and Veteran communities in failing to acknowledge or comprehend this.

There will never be a time when these Gold Star Families will be able to unsee, unfeel, or put aside the grief that stems from such overwhelming losses. Wounds may heal, scars may fade, but grief is not finite. Grief has no time frame and expiration date. The burdens they carry will last a lifetime. Despite the empty words of those at the helm, this is not a journey to be walked alone, for their losses are unfathomable. Grief takes no breaks and has no end date.

We must never forget that those who gave their lives lived by the code of duty, honor, and country, not themselves. At the very least we owe the families of the fallen the very same allegiance they offered up to us as servants of our great nation, performing the most noble of deeds for a cause far greater than themselves. There is no price too high that were unwilling to pay in service of our homeland, no struggle or privation that they failed to undertake.

We service members were born for toil and tribulation. This is the very best of what America has to offer, the most precious and priceless of our resources. There is an indelible debt of gratitude to be paid on both scores and on all counts. This is what we owe our Gold Star Families, who have sacrificed far too much to be tossed aside. The cost of freedom is an enormous and enduring one. We can ill afford to turn our backs on those who wear the gold star. It is ours to form the same sacred bonds that sustained us in time of war with the families our fallen and to embrace them. With disregard for their own lives, these valiant American heroes gave their last full measure of devotion.

We must never abandon those who gave their loved ones for that cause. Neither can we leave behind the families of our fallen comrades. It is time to truly become a grateful nation.

Dr. Platoni is a practicing clinical psychologist in Centerville, Ohio, a combat Veteran with 40 years of military service and four military deployments, and a member of Dayton SWAT She was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame in 2019.