

Hello, my name is Bob Dembowski. I am enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Delayed Entry Program. I am scheduled to ship out for boot camp just a few days after graduation.

Ever since I can remember, I have always wanted to be in the military. A few years ago the Iraq war started. I was only 16 at the time but I started to do some serious thinking about what I want to do with the rest of my life. It was a pretty easy decision for me. I knew I wanted to go to Iraq and try to make a difference. People always ask me, "Hey Bob, why do you want to go over there? This isn't our war, we shouldn't even be there." And yes, maybe it isn't our war, maybe we're really not fighting for OUR freedom. But since when is it not ok to help and fight for someone else's freedom? Since when is it not ok to try and make the rest of the world a better place? We're all humans. We're all on the same team, and teammates help each other. When I enlisted in the Marine Corps, and picked my M.O.S. or Military Occupational Specialty, I picked Infantry, and with that I knew I would be at a much higher risk of severe injury or death. I have accepted this, and so has everyone else I know who enlisted and is ready to ship out after graduation. We are all more than willing to give our lives for this country, and to better the rest of the world. Also, we just want to do our part. We want to try and give back to this country what we have taken from it, and we want to show our respect to all military personnel that have given their lives in every conflict and war before us. Because, even though we have holidays such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day, we don't feel that Veterans are truly appreciated enough for the monumental sacrifices they have made in order to make this the greatest country in the world. And it is, the greatest country in the world, and you can thank a Veteran for that.

And don't get me wrong, there are some things I don't like about it, but I feel I have been privileged to have been born an American. I feel it is my duty to do my best now, to try to give other less fortunate people in other less fortunate countries a chance to get even just a taste of the freedoms that most Americans take for granted every day in our country. So please show your appreciation, and thank a Veteran. It has been an honor and a privilege to be here today. I would like to say thank you to all the Veterans.

Thank you, Semper Fi!

Robert H. Dembowski, Jr.
High School Senior - Age 18
May 21, 2005

Speech to Veterans at the dedication of the World War II Honor Roll,
Chancellor Center, Newtown, PA

**Note that Bob speaks about the Marine Corps Delayed Entry Program; a back injury ultimately kept him out, and he enlisted in the Army.*