

An Essay by: Elizabeth Sams

“Dear Veteran”, a Song, written and performed by: Elizabeth Sams

What our Men and Women of Service Mean To Me

It is vital that our country remember and appreciate the value of our Veterans and all men and women of service. Every day our generation is being handed most everything, while our Troops are sacrificing for us. My platform is to teach the kids of my generation to understand that Freedom is not free.

It is clear that my peers, most especially, do not realize that these Troops work to keep our nation safe and strong, while we selfishly take all of our liberties for granted. We need to focus and truly realize that these people leave their homes and families with a possibility of never, ever coming back. They put themselves in harm's way each and every day so that we may enjoy the benefits of America.

I co-wrote the song, *Dear Veteran*, as a way to get people's attention through music. Mom and I spent many hours discussing this issue and we just started writing our thoughts down. The next thing we knew, mom asked me to create a melody for the work, and I did. Then, to complete my community service project I sang it at a Veteran's Event and recorded it.

When a simple lyric in this song can move a seventy-one year old sailor Vet to tears, I thought I must be doing something right. When a military policeman of the U.S. Army has no other words but to tell me I have touched his heart, again, I thought, I can do more with this. When a Vietnam Vet told me that it is great to see young people like me coming up behind him and that he knows that America will be left in good hands, I am speechless and don't even feel worthy of what he said to me.

But yet I know that God has blessed me to fulfill this mission and use my gift when again, a U.S. Marine Corp Officer explained to me that it is his pleasure to have served *me* and *my* family. A U.S. Army, Infantry, Platoon Leader told me that after hearing my message, tears were brought to his eyes after 40 years of holding in memories of the jungles of Vietnam only to bring him peace. By the grace of God, I just feel driven to see this through.

I know I am only 15, but I know that my message through music will reach more people. Every time I speak about our Veterans, I ask people the simple question, “Could you leave your friends and family, to serve our country, knowing that the possibility exists that you could be seriously injured or may never see them again? If not, I ask you to do two things; number one, whenever you see a veteran, simply walk up to them and say “THANK YOU”. Number two; remember all men and women of service, in your prayers, every night for the rest of your life. America would not be the greatest country on earth without them.