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Breathe of Freedom

The power of memory possesses thoughts and deep reflections. Some of these reflections can contain negativity and sadness, some contain positivity and pride. The day which we honor the sacrifices made by our fallen soldiers who died protecting our freedom creates a mixture of pride, sadness and an immense cloud of gratitude. In my perspective, the significance of Memorial Day is honoring the brave lives and immense amount of courage these men and women displayed during combat. It is a day of admiration and gratitude for the soldiers that are now departed from this world. From sunrise to sunset, May 31st is a day of remembrance. On Memorial Day, we honor that lives of 1,196,554 US military soldiers that shed blood and lost their lives in the midst of combat. On this day, we recognized recognition for the sacrifices that were made to protect our country.

In the land of the free and home of the brave, throughout the centuries many brave men and women engaged in battles for freedom and equity. We as Americans also celebrate the act of bravery and integrity that took place in their hearts. Although these wars were dreaded with an eruption of violence and ferocity, there was a beautiful outcome that will forever live in the hearts of all American citizens throughout the generations.

Due to the sacrifices of American soldiers, our country is able to enjoy many freedoms. The freedoms I enjoy, although I am incarcerated, are the right to vote for a president, the right

to have an education, and the right to not tolerate discrimination. It is important to remember it was not that long ago when everyone did not have equal rights. There are many freedoms we take for granted; therefore, it is important to recall why we went to war in the first place and the lives that were lost in the process.

Even though we celebrate the lives of those who have died for our country, it is important that we take care of our current veterans. In other words, it's important to have a day of remembrance for those brave men and women to recognize their sacrifices, but we need to also be aware of the ways trauma impacts those that are living. For example, veterans have a higher rate of suicide than civilians. Unfortunately, this is one consequence of enduring trauma when fighting wars. By taking care of our veterans, we honor the lives of both the living and the dead.

As we all take a deep breath of freedom today, let us remember those who gave our final breath for our freedom. May we make them proud by the choices we make as Americans as we continue to seek peace, justice and equality for all.