

What is a Veteran?

"We are not charities or people to be pitied. Nor are we comfortable being called heroes. We are simply men and women with something in common: We were unwilling to abdicate our responsibility when the country needed us.

We didn't ask for a pinch hitter — we raised our hand and stepped up to the plate. We did our duty because that is what Americans are supposed to do.

Yes, we often need some support navigating the tricky transition to civilian life. That doesn't make us broken. It doesn't make us weak. *It simply makes us human.*

The best tribute civilians can give to us is to follow in our footsteps. That doesn't necessarily mean enlisting in the military. It means accepting your responsibility to be engaged. It means being informed. It means devoting at least a portion of your energy to a cause greater than yourself.

In short, it means joining with us to usher in a new era of American citizenship."

From: Stars and Stripes: The Great Divide: What is the civilian-veteran divide to you? Readers respond. Jeff Hensley, Navy veteran