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VOD Competition

Our Shared Story

What are the greatest attributes of our democracy? To answer this question, we must start with a story. Our story. The shared story of the American people.

It started with a belief in an ideal, one that was simple to write but so much harder to achieve: the belief that all people deserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Giving people these rights was never going to be easy, but the founders of our country didn't expect it to be. They just grasped that it had to be done. The small groupings of American colonies faced a world superpower, against impossible odds, and full of patriotic fervor. The American people had a dream for a better world, and they weren't afraid to fight for it. Bravery defines the spirit of the American people.

But we didn't stop there. Our people were now faced with the daunting task of forming a better country, faced with living out the dream that they had spent so long fighting for. And so out of the ashes of the war was born a nation, one built on a hunger for freedom and equality. Our nation was new, however, and not at all perfect, so the idea of living without discrimination towards anyone was not achieved. Inequality and abuse ran rampant. But this was never to last. Our people were not blinded by the injustice in our country. Instead we advocated for America's true meaning true meaning, a meaning that included equality for all people. Once again, we saw the need to fight for freedom, even if it meant having to fight against our own nation in a civil war. We came out of that conflict burned but refined towards a purer version of our dream for this nation. The need for justice defines the spirit of the American people.

This was not the end of America's struggles. Our people have faced hardships, injustices, and battles that have tested us to nearly the limits of our strengths. We have faced such hardships since the beginning, and we will continue to face them. But we have always overcome. And we have achieved triumphs and happiness as well. Whatever struggles we face as a nation we can beat back, so long as there are people who are able to look past the current darkness towards what our country means, why it was created. Because a dedication to the ideals of our nation is what it means to be the American people, and loyalty defines the American spirit.

So what are the greatest attributes of our democracy? The answer is simple.

The people. The people who are willing to be brave, just, and loyal, whatever the cost. The people who believe in and share the American story. And no one exemplifies this fighting spirit more than our country's veterans. The legacy that was set down at our country's founding is carried on still today. The spirit of our country lives inside the hearts and minds of our noble veterans who were heroically determined to fight for truth, fight for freedom, fight for what is right. Our democracy was formed by heroes like these. Our Veterans are an example to every one of us of what a true American is: noble, patriotic, and selfless.

It is becoming too easy for our nation to fall into fear of the future, too easy to forget what we've come from, what we've already overcome. It is easy for us to find reasons for fear, but that should never be our focus. We must remember what our country stands for, it is laid out for us in our constitution. We must remember why we should always be ready to fight for liberty, and that it is an inalienable right of humanity. We must remember our country's creation, born off of the backs of those willing to sacrifice themselves for what this country to them. Remember also veterans who looked at the world without fear of the future, who were willing to fight for America's values whatever the cost, whether in this nation or another, and remember the people that continue to fight for the ideals of America.

The story of the American people is not finished. As long as we have those who believe in it, our story cannot be finished. The people of our nation are what makes our Democracy great. Let us therefore never forget those who best live out our shared story, those who embody and defend what it means to be American: whether on our shores or across the world. Whether in the Halls of Montezuma or Shores of Tripoli, flying into the wild blue yonder or climbing high into the sun. Let us never forget, and in doing so, we keep our story alive.