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### *My Unforgettable Hero*

Hero. The word hero is used to describe a lot of people. To some people it's someone who saved a life or is an inspiration to another person, or someone who did a remarkable feat. What if I told you my hero was all of these? My hero was a decorated veteran, a family man, a carpenter, an unforgettable personality, and the man of the hour. My hero was called Poppy. He was my grandfather.

Serving 13 years in the U.S. Army and 10 years in the U.S. Air Force and fought in two wars, the Korean War (1950-1953) and Vietnam (1954-1975), he experienced quite a bit of history, but he also made some of his own unbelievable history. He was a POW while in Korea. He and six others were each shot once and then tossed off the side of a steep cliff. He and one other survived the fall. After all that tragedy, he still led the way back to camp and would spend the next eight months in the hospital. He received three purple hearts and a bronze star.

He retired from the military in 1971 and devoted his life to helping others. He ran his own service station and was a master mechanic. Whenever people were stranded, he would offer his house instead of a hotel. One time my dad recalls a bus breaking down with over twenty people on it, and they all stayed with my Poppy because he invited them in without hesitation. He was always helping people.

Poppy was also a carpenter who made wooden toys for his grandkids, took care of my grandma, and was even an Acolyte at church, but he was even much more than all of that. The way that my hero helped everyone around him is very difficult to describe, but he showed me

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that it's a choice to be a great person. By following the Word of God he lead other people to

follow God's Word. Before he passed, I always told myself to be like him. Through my eyes

there was no one better, and he taught me by following God I could be the best I wanted to be.

He did this by showing love for everyone and encouraging them all the time. I remember in fifth

grade I had to build a wooden derby car for a class project; instead of taking over with his big

gentle hands he showed me the way. I had been working on it for a couple hours, and he was still

by my side, waiting patiently, telling me I could do it. He knew that if he told me how it

wouldn't mean as much, so he stood by my side encouraging in the most graceful way possible.

Don't mistake him for a soft guy; he was a man of discipline and expected discipline from

others.

Poppy was also a crossing guard. One time while guiding three kids across the street, a car ran a stop sign. Seeing what was going to happen, Poppy immediately shielded the kids from the oncoming car, and the car hit him instead. He kept the kids safe, and he suffered minor injuries. He was always giving, even if it meant his life.

He made you smile even if you were having the worst of days. There was just something about him that made people feel special. His laugh would make you laugh because you could hear the joy in it. He also loved giving big bear hugs. They were awesome.

There is not enough time or space to write about how Poppy was a hero not only to me but to many others. While poppy has passed away, he will always live on as my hero.