

RESPONSIBLE STATECRAFT

VETERANS DAY 2021

Afghanistan vet symposium: How do you feel about your service today?

Most spoke about the pride they felt in uniform, but disenchantment with the war and a somewhat dismal view of the future.

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For this Veterans Day, just two months after the end of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, *Responsible Statecraft* asked several recent veterans who served in that country if they would share their thoughts, responding to this one question:

“This is the first Veterans Day in 20 years in which the United States is not conducting combat missions in Afghanistan. How do you feel today about your service, and do you think your own outlook about military service and the future of the American military operations overseas has changed? If so, how?”

Dan McKnight, USMC, United States Army, and Idaho National Guard, founder and chairman of the organization Bring Our Troops Home



Dan McKnight in Afghanistan

I will never regret my 13 years under the command of the United States military. I am proud to have given something of myself to the nation which has given me so much. The lesson of my youth, and the lesson I impart to my children, is that Americanism is synonymous with service. Although I increasingly ask myself: service to what?

A humble republic, the society of law and liberty bequeathed to us by our Founding Fathers? Or a global empire, the gross rejection of representative government, which sends our service members to every corner of the Earth to supplement its own domination?

I believe the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan was a positive thing, albeit tactically mishandled. I'm happy no future soldier is going to risk his life walking the same mountains and dirt roads I did, fighting a war that doesn't make his neighbors safer or freer.

Unfortunately, the structure of American military operations overseas has not changed. We are ruled by a president who claims the authority to take our country into war anywhere, any time, for

however long, with no accountability or debate.

That is why we still have thousands of soldiers occupying Syria and Iraq. It's why our military is intimately involved in Yemen, the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere. And now we are even deploying troops to Taiwan.

I swore an oath to protect and uphold the United States Constitution, which says only Congress, the people's representatives, can declare war. Until this is enforced, we will not have a government worth serving.

For more information: [BringOurTroopsHome.US](https://bringourtroopshome.us) and [DefendTheGuard.US](https://defendtheguard.us)