



No One Left Behind

It has been only 60 days since the withdrawal in Afghanistan and we still have hundreds of U.S. citizens stranded—not including the thousands of our friendly counterparts who fought alongside us for 20 years. However, the President and his administration seem to have moved on and are slow rolling any progress in getting our citizens out of harm's way and home.

As a Green Beret and Ranger qualified Infantryman (and even as a Cadet in the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets), I was always taught one very simple platitude—“**No One Left Behind!**” Whether it was in Ranger school where we drug our Ranger buddies up the hills of Dahlonega, Georgia or during the Special Forces Qualification Course where I carried my battle buddy and a 100-pound rucksack for kilometers; these words proved to be valuable advice during the course of my 6 deployments overseas, to include Afghanistan and Iraq. While on active duty and now as Veterans, we stand by this adage for a variety of reasons—loyalty, duty, and honor.

Now more than ever, and even after we shed our uniforms and are no longer traversing foreign soil, these words are equally important . . . but in a much more different way.

Some 726,000+ Veterans call Virginia home, meaning that roughly 1 in 10 Virginians are Veterans. The Commonwealth yields the second largest Veteran population per capita in the United States. Unfortunately, in the 2017 gubernatorial election, 40% (i.e. almost 300,000) of Virginia's Veterans NEVER VOTED! To put that into context, the 2017 Virginia gubernatorial election was decided by only 230,000 votes. That means that the Veteran population ALONE, could have decided the outcome of the election.

Needless to say, WE as Veterans left our comrades behind. But we can, and will, learn from our mistakes. I encourage everyone reading this to call 10 Veterans, ask them if they voted, and if not, BE A GOOD BATTLE BUDDY and pick them up and take them to their nearest polling location. And more importantly, do it EARLY. The worst-case scenario is that you and your Veteran buddy get to reconnect and tell old war stories (even if you don't believe every bit of it!).

BLUF (for the non-military folks: Bottom Line Up Front): There is simply no excuse. The polls have been open early, 6 days a week, and 8 hours a day. When polls close on Tuesday, November 2nd, our Veterans should stand proud knowing that NO ONE WAS LEFT BEHIND! We can shake hands and know that Virginia's Veterans stood up and spoke. Ensuring that every Veteran's vote counted, and we left no one behind.

Send questions or comments to info@americanveteransvote.com.