

Created for The US Department of Veterans Affairs

This video for middle school students explains why we celebrate Veterans Day, with Jennifer Love Hewitt as host and narrator. The challenge was to write the piece in Ms. Hewitt's "voice" and communicate the sacrifice and contribution made by our veterans. I researched her background and found opportunities to tie the presentation to her own life experiences to create a piece that is personal, emotional and effective. The program is shown to school children across America and is on the [VA website](#) .

**They Who Serve
Honoring Our Nation's Veterans**

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

We see Jennifer Love Hewitt in an informal setting. Perhaps in a comfortable room in her house. She speaks in a friendly conversational tone, with directness and warmth

Hi. I'm Jennifer Love Hewitt. I feel really lucky to be doing what I'm doing, and I'd like to thank you for your support. But I'm not here to talk about me. I'm here to talk about some other people who need your support. People you probably don't think about too much.

But the people I'm talking about live right here, are part of your community, probably part of your family. I'm talking about tens of millions of people who gave their time, their sweat and blood, and sometimes their lives to serve our country.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

We see men and women looking larger than life in heroic poses from recruiting posters for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. Or from old recruiting TV spots. Music from the next scene plays in the background.

I'm talking about our veterans. And not just the men and women who fought in wars. I'm talking about everyone who served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

We see footage of a small town Memorial Day or Veterans Day Parade. Parade music continues in background of this scene.

What do you think about when you hear the word, "veteran?"
Some old men marching in a parade? Mmmm, I don't think so.
You know, there's a lot more to it than that.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

Start on camera. As she talks, dissolve into shots of Ms. Hewitt visiting at the Bethesda Naval Center and Walter Reed. We see her interact with patients and staff. Asking questions, actively listening, smiling at someone's comment.

Let me tell you about something that happened to me.

Not too long ago I decided to visit some of our newest veterans who were wounded in the Iraq war. I wanted to hear their stories and see what it was like trying to make a life for yourself after you were wounded like that.

Boy, some of them just amazed me. What they'd been through. Their grit and determination to get their life together after they'd been hurt. And the people who were helping them recover. Wonderful people. Let me tell you, it was inspiring.

But the thing that really got to me was how young they were. They were just a few years older than you. That's right. Many of them were my age.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

And it really got me thinking about why they served and what we can learn from them. And not just them, but from all the vets who've served over the years since we became a nation. You know, back in the days before MTV.

Do you know anyone who is a Veteran? My granddad was.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

We see lots of faces of vets; head shots looking at the camera. All ethnic groups, all ages & genders. Some are smiling, some are serious

I'll bet there were vets in your family, or in your friends' families. Millions and millions of Americans served our country in the Armed Forces. Who knows, maybe you will too.

<< We hear from some student volunteers about vets they know and what they know about them. Shot like man in the street interviews, but with students. We'll get six or seven comments, such as "Yeah, my dad was a vet." "My mom was in the Air Force." "My brother was wounded in Desert Storm." And so on. >>

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

Okay, and on Veterans Day we're supposed to honor veterans. But why? It's all about war, right? Well, not really. That's not why people serve.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

We see men and women at worship. Jews, Christians, Moslems.

It's about protecting the things we take for granted -- like being able to talk about what we believe without being afraid. Being religious, or not being religious, without someone arresting you. Being able to travel where you want.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

We see political rallies. Democrats, Republicans, Independents. We hear the rally sounds in the background. (This must feel non-partisan)

You know, in some countries, you can get thrown in jail for talking against the government or even for playing music. Here, you can work hard to elect people to represent you and you don't have to worry about being locked up or shot if your candidate loses the election.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

In America, thanks to our military men and women, we have lots of freedom and many opportunities.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

As she continues speaking, dissolve to moody silhouette images of soldiers on watch. Perhaps from Desert Storm or the Iraq War.

So, I'm glad they're there -- ready to fight for our nation and protect us. And I'm glad for all those who came before them, and all those who will follow.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

You know, another thing I learned talking to veterans is about sacrifice. The kind of sacrifices they made to stand up for America.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

We see news reel footage of troops departing to go off to war. Starting with the Iraq war and going backwards in time. If no newsreel footage is available, then use photos or historic newspaper illustrations. Images show fighting men and women, their families and loved ones in leave taking.

Lots of people who served in Iraq left families behind to wait for their safe return. Others left behind girl friends or boy friends. Or a good job. They certainly left behind all the fun stuff we like to do. Veterans all the way back to the war that made us a nation have made great sacrifices, sometimes even giving up their lives.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

Dissolve or superimpose full frame of the American Flag, slowly waving in the breeze. Then dissolve and pull out from flag on Iwo Jima Memorial. Perhaps footage of "flags-in" at Arlington National Cemetery (placing flags at the graves of Americans buried at ANC. We hear very low as from a great distance Aaron Copeland's "Theme for the Common Man" or a similar piece.

Why? They believed in something bigger than themselves. More important, they believed that they were keeping us safe and free

from harm. That they were protecting our way of life and all the freedom that we have here.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

Dissolve to aerial circling of Statue of Liberty. Slow zoom into torch. (I've seen stock footage of this) Music continues to end of scene.

That's why we're honoring veterans now. To say, "thank you."
"Thank you for all you've done."

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

As you've probably figured out, I'm not a veteran. So I can't tell you first hand what it's like to serve. But you can find out for yourself by inviting some veterans to come talk to your class. It's easy to do and your teacher can help. Just ask the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW. They have an ongoing program where you can meet and hear stories from real veterans.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

Images of the Web site featuring the Statue of Liberty cover of the "Honoring All Who Served" Teachers Guide. Superimpose the Web site address.

There's a Web site where you can find out more:
WWW.VA.GOV/VETSDAY. It has lots of stuff about veterans and Veterans Day. And suggestions about projects and things you can do. Check it out.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

Footage of student volunteers at the VA Medical Center. Can be shot the same day you shoot Ms. Hewitt with vets at the Medical Center. We hear the sync sound lightly in the background.

Or you can volunteer to help at out at Veterans' Medical Centers or other places that help our veterans. Volunteer your time and you can get to know some vets. You'll get valuable experience and training. And the Disabled American Veterans, a great veterans service organization, offers generous scholarships for

qualified students. Volunteering is cool. Did you know there are already over 24,000 students just like you who volunteer? Want to know more? That's right. Check out the Web site.

<<We hear a few on-camera mini-testimonials from student volunteers about why they volunteer and why they like doing it.>>

Jennifer Love Hewitt (vo)

Footage of students interviewing vets. Shots of other students in class writing letters and valentine's Day cards for vets. Sync sound lightly in background.

Some other ideas? There's a Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress. You can talk to veterans about their memories and experiences, or record them on audiotape or shoot them on video. What ever. You'll learn something and make your own bit of history at the same time. The other thing is to write a letter or send a valentine to a Vet on Valentine's day. They sure will be glad to know you're thinking of them.

Jennifer Love Hewitt (oc)

Okay. I hope you've got a better idea about Veterans and why we should honor them. Because they're out there drawing a line in the sand. Saying, "We're standing tall to keep our nation and our people safe and free." And one day, not too long from now, it might be you out there; standing shoulder to shoulder with them.

Well, thank you. And thanks for listening.

Music. We see the logo of the Department of Veterans Affairs, screened down over a white background. Supered over it we see the words:

Presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs

For ideas and information, please go to our Web site at
WWW.VA.GOV/VETSDAY

Scholarships available to student volunteers working with Disabled American Veterans through the Jesse Brown memorial Scholarship Program. Please see our Web site for further information.

We would like to thank Jennifer Love Hewitt for graciously donating her time and energy to help America's veterans and America's youth.