A Soldier's Sacrifice
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As of May 24th of this year, 6,857 American soldiers have died in Operations Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, Enduring Freedom, Inherent Resolve, and Freedom's Sentinel. Another 52,441 have been wounded in action. That's almost 60,000 men and women who have sacrificed themselves for this country in recent conflicts alone, not to mention the 1.3 million current military personnel who have committed to do the same if the need arises.

What makes a person willing to give his or her life for a cause? Motivation varies by individual, but ultimately it comes down to a belief that something or someone else is more valuable than oneself. Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of sacrifice. He died, not just for a single country, but for the whole world. Although He was the Son of God, the most important man to walk the earth, "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8) to save us even "while we were enemies" of Him (Romans 5:10), wholly unworthy for Him to trade His life for ours. Yet He willingly went to the cross for us.

Christians strive to follow in His footsteps, however imperfectly. Every aspect of our lives belongs to God. Paul writes in Romans 12:1, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." We embrace an attitude of prioritizing the needs of others, to "do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). By our sacrificial service to God and to others, each of us becomes "a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:3), enlisted in the kingdom of God, for which we live – and even die.

Sources:
https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf
https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/demographics-us-military
New American Standard Bible 1995