

Walt Kowalski; A Genuine American Hero

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A hero is defined as someone who is acknowledged for their courageous and selfless behavior or actions. Clint Eastwood's character Walt Kowalski, in the film *Gran Torino* is a stellar example of this definition of a hero. Walt was more than a decorated war hero; he helped his neighbors and community. Eastwood's character generated opportunities for Thao, a young man who didn't have a father and lacked guidance. Walt saved Thao's sister, Sue from an unfavorable situation as well as gave his own life to protect her and her family from a local gang. Walt proved throughout various stages of his life that he was selfless and willing to do the right thing no matter the situation. Walt did whatever it took to preserve peace and save his friends and community from harm. No matter the circumstances Walt's morals and integrity would not falter. His actions would be above and beyond the average man's. The movie highlights certain heroic events in Walt's adult life beginning with his service in the United States Army during the Korean War.

Walt was awarded the Silver Star during the Korean War. The Silver Star Medal is the third highest award for valor in the United States Armed Forces. Although the film vaguely indicates what exactly Walt did to be recognized for his valor and heroism, he makes statements about witnessing the horrors of war, including killing at least thirteen men. Walt's statements along with the images of the medal are explicit instances of Walt's

heroism during the Korean War. Although this film is not exclusively about Kowalski's war time actions, it provides more heroic depth to his reputation and personality. Kowalski's character was not an overnight development; he had been performing heroic deeds throughout his li...

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...y out of trouble. Kowalski's character impacted everyone in the movie, whether they were a good or bad person. Since Kowalski's character possessed these selfless traits, he is portrayed as a genuine [hero](#) by definition. Kowalski displayed heroic traits as well as the ability to forgive Thao for attempting to steal his car. He gave all and asked for nothing in return, even rejecting praise from the community for his actions.

Works Cited

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