

Healing and Hurting: Memorial Day Reflections 2025

Breast cancer advocate Megan-Claire Chase honors her grandfather, a Buffalo Soldier and a college-educated Black veteran.

May 29, 2025 By [Megan-Claire Chase](#)

I know I haven't shared much since the passing of my beloved 20-year-old son, my cat, Nathan Edgar aka Baby Natey. The grief has been overwhelming, and I'll write more about that along with some health and advocacy updates another day.

This morning, I woke up with my maternal grandfather heavy on my heart. I wanted to share a few reflections in his honor below.

This Memorial Day, I find myself again toggling between healing and hurting. I stay determined to find pockets of joy, but it often doesn't feel authentic or appropriate.

How do we, as Black Americans, allow ourselves to feel joy in a country where certain people in power don't bother hiding their racism, corruption, or vile intentions? How do we smile freely when we're constantly bombarded by policies and rhetoric meant to silence, exclude, or erase us?

Florida used to be my happy place. It held some of my most fond memories. From childhood through my early 30s, I spent nearly every holiday, summer, and birthday with my grandparents in St. Augustine. My grandfather and I shared a birthday: July 3rd. I could drive to their house on Prince Road with my eyes closed.

I haven't been able to look at Florida and this country the same. The place that once felt like my home away from home now feels like hostile territory. And while I deeply miss my grandparents, I'm strangely relieved they aren't here to witness what Florida has become under its current leadership.

My grandfather, Grampsy, was a proud, intelligent, and haunted man. As a Buffalo Soldier and a college-educated Black veteran, he lived through unspeakable racism and sacrifice. He served this country in WWII as a radio operator with the 365th Infantry, and he carried the weight and horrors of that service and its contradictions until the end of his life.

He was a walking history book, full of wisdom, stories, and pain. The erasure of Black history happening now in this country would've gutted him. The policies and censorship being pushed

today directly disrespect people like him—people who built this country while being told they didn't belong in it.

My Grampsy died at 96 years old on August 16, 2016. I was diagnosed with invasive lobular breast cancer almost a month later on September 15, 2016.

Here's a snippet from his obituary:

"An Army veteran of World War II, he served in the AT CO 365th Infantry as a radio operator. He had the distinction of being a Buffalo Soldier, earning several medals. Mr. Chase was honored by the Jacksonville Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club..."

I think about him often, especially on days like today. I think about the weight he carried so that I could carry mine.

I remember William Joseph Chase, Sr., my Grampsy, this Memorial Day. I also honor every Black veteran who fought for the freedom they didn't fully receive.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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