



## 2019 Veterans Day Essay Contest Middle School Honorable Mention: Jaqulynn Stewart

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### Who I Look Up To

My dad's name is Michael J. Stewart. He served in the United States Army for ten years. His main job in the Army was a Combat Engineer, which is one who uses a lot of explosives to blow up buildings and bridges.

There are a lot of reasons why I look up to my dad, but before I share them here are some of the things he did in the Army. He was a rescuer on 9/11 by finding victims that survived and died as the result of a plane crash that hit the Pentagon. My dad served in a unit called the MDW Technical Rescue Engineers at Fort Belvoir, VA. MDW stands for Military District of Washington. My father was at the Pentagon doing rescue and recovery operations as a first responder as a member of the QRF team which stands for Quick Reaction Force. He helped find people, including those who passed away. He told me "it was tough removing deceased bodies while at the same time feeling honored knowing I was giving closure to the families of those victims" (Stewart, Oct 12).

After 9/11 my dad received orders for the 40th Engineer Battalion in Baumholder, Germany. From there, he deployed to Iraq and was away fighting for 15 months. It was a hard time for my dad because he was living away from my mom in desert heat. He was part of the initial invasion force called Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. My dad left the Army hurt and received a medical discharge after training for a second tour in Iraq. He hurt his back which eventually led to back surgery (Stewart, Oct 12).

My father gives me a lot of inspiration. I do not want to be in the military someday because I am a little scared. I look up to him because he is courageous. My dad did a lot of important things, such as wanting to help and rescue people. He wakes up early every morning to do something useful everyday. Even if it was training for the army, it was useful. He inspires me by wanting to wake up early too because things will get things done faster. In school I will try to help out as much as I can. My dad works hard every day so I will do my best and work hard in school. One thing my dad learned in the military is



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“do the hard right over the easy wrong” (Stewart, Oct 12). To me that means do right things no matter how easy the wrong choice is.

Since the army, he has had many operations such knee, neck, back and knee replacement surgery. He fights through the pain daily and still maintains the same happy dad that I love. He has shown me to persevere through any challenges that I come to. When I grow up I want to be smart, brave and loving like my dad. Lastly, I want to dedicate this paper to my dad because of his help, courage and how much he loves me and I love him too.

### **Bibliography**

Stewart, M. (2019, October 12). Personal interview