



Virginia War Memorial Veterans Day Essay Contest 2021 Contest Prompt

“None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.”

- President George W. Bush, September 11, 2001

Prompt: Write about an American who served in the United States military following the attacks of September 11, 2001 who inspires you.

This year, we are reflecting on the 20 years that have passed since the surprise attacks of September 11, 2001. To honor those men and women who served in the months and years following 9/11, the Virginia War Memorial is calling on students to write about a service member who inspires them.

Subjects of your essay may be someone you know personally or not, and the subject may be living or deceased. When selecting the subject of your essay, consider your family, members of your community, or others whose stories resonate with you personally. He or she may be from any branch of the military, and have served at any time during the window of September 2001-today. Consider what lessons they have taught you, and what we could all learn from their example. Your essay should focus on their time in service, though you may also address their time as a civilian if relevant.

Develop your response through research, using interviews and/or primary sources if possible. Feel free to utilize newspaper records, first person accounts, military records, letters, or more to tell us about your subject and why they inspire you.

Successful essays will have a clear focus, address the theme directly, and use a combination of cited sources and personal experiences. Students must properly cite their sources in a bibliography (APA or MLA style) and include the bibliography with their submission. Entries will be judged on clarity of thought, proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and adherence to the contest theme and guidelines.

The Virginia War Memorial Veterans Day Essay Contest is open to all Virginia Middle and High School public, private, or homeschooled students. A winning entry will be chosen from the 6th-8th grade group, and from the 9th-12th grade group. Submissions must be between 500-750 words, incorporate at least one primary source, and include an APA or MLA style bibliography.

Winners of the 2021 Essay Contest will receive \$250 gift cards and their teachers will receive \$100 gift cards to be used in the classroom. Awardees will be invited to read their winning essays at the Commonwealth's Veterans Day Ceremony, to be held Thursday, November 11, 2021 at 11:00am.

Entries are due through the Virginia War Memorial's website by 11:59pm on Sunday, October 17th. Entries received after this time will not be considered. To submit your essay and review rules and guidelines, please visit <https://vawarmemorial.org/learn/contests-scholarships/essay/>. Contact Morgan Guyer, VWM Assistant Director of Education at morgan.guyer@dvs.virginia.gov with additional questions.

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation proudly supports the educational and patriotic programs offered by the Virginia War Memorial.