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Mrs. Jackson

Global Issues 3Y

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September 11 Scholarship Prompt

On September 11, 2001, Naveed Shah found himself sitting in his algebra class in Springfield, VA. when the north tower of the World Trade Center was hit. The eighth grade class turned on the television to the south tower getting hit shortly afterwards. With notebooks open they later heard news on the attack at the Pentagon which began to worry and panic those in the school building, being about 10 miles away from the Pentagon.

As a Muslim immigrant, the attacks of 9/11 made Shah feel a sense of duty to this country. As topics of hostility and distrust rose towards Muslim-Americans, Shah felt a pressure to prove them wrong. He joined his student government in high school and soon later made the decision to join the Army after graduation. In a recent interview with Stars and Stripes, Shah comments “ ‘I felt very strongly that it was an honorable profession. It was a really important thing to do for me personally as somebody who felt a very strong kinship to my adopted homeland.” He felt a special connection to home and its importance of freedom and democracy. He was deployed to South Korea on an assignment where he later went to Iraq from 2009-2010. Shah was also invited by former President Barack Obama to the Capitol in 2016 for his final State of the Union address, where he sat right next to former First Lady Michelle Obama. In 2012, he was selected for Storm Hill and went to IAVA’s D.C. office to complete a legislative and advocacy internship. Now retired, Shah is an active member in the military veterans community.

He is also Chairman of Communications Committee of the Fairfax NAACP and Vice President of the NOVA Democrats. When he isn't volunteering, Shah is a real estate agent working with Keller Williams Realty in McLean Va.

Reflecting on the past Shah states, “ I was trying to represent people like me to the best of my ability.” He spent the 20th anniversary of 9/11 at a peaceful protest outside the Capitol as “part of a rally to call on Congress to repeal a war powers measure that gave wide-ranging authorities to the president after 9/11.(Stripes.Com)”

Naveed Shah inspires me to not live by stereotypes. After the attacks on 9/11, eyes were on him as a Muslim-American. Many stereotyped Muslim-Americans as terrorists. Shah made it important to him to prove them wrong. He joined the Army not only as a honorable profession, but to also serve his adopted homeland. He represented Muslim-Americans, which inspires to not live by the stereotypes, but to rise above. Naveed Shah rose above his circumstances, and became a leader and continues to help service members in transition from active duty to civilian life.

Works Cited

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<https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2021-09-10/war-on-terror-americans-military-service-attacks-2838073.html>. Accessed 26 Sept 2021.
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