

Virginia War Memorial 2021 Veterans Day Essay Contest

**The Two Military Veterans Who Inspire Me**



*My Parents Joseph and Terra Moreno in Iraq in 2004*

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My name is Joseph Patrick Moreno and I am in sixth grade at the Basilica School of Saint Mary in Alexandria. Writing about one veteran who served after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 is hard because I have two veterans in my life who are very important to me. My parents both served in the United States Army after September 11 and they both have taught me many lessons on service and sacrifice that all of us can learn from.

My dad inspires me with his hard work and service to our country. He is a father of 8 and I am the second oldest, he is a lawyer and also a cancer survivor. In the Army my dad gives advice to soldiers and commanders about things like the use of weapons, the treatment of prisoners and how to be sure the Army is obeying the law. My dad joined the military in April of 2001 and his first assignment was with an Army Reserve unit in New York City. He met my mom in that unit. Five months after joining the Army the attacks of September 11 happened that took down the World Trade Center, it was actually just a few miles away from where he was working. My dad served three tours after September 11 in Germany, Iraq and Africa and earned the Bronze Star Medal. My dad is still serving in the Army Reserve to this day and is now a lieutenant colonel.

I chose my mom because of her courage and sacrifice. My mom joined the Army Reserve when she was just 17 when she was a junior in high school. She joined to help serve and protect others and risk her life for them. After September 11 my mom was deployed to Iraq and had to leave college for a year. She and my dad were stationed at Balad air base in Iraq in 2004 which was also called Anaconda. You may be wondering what she did so my mom used to drive trucks all around the country of Iraq and in Kuwait. She was constantly on the road driving all day sometimes for a day or two or sometimes 2 to 3 weeks. She used to have to sleep on top of the truck that she drove and she was constantly in danger of getting injured but she risked her life to help the people of Iraq. My mom earned the Combat Action Badge which was created in 2005 for soldiers who served in combat after September 11. And that is just a

few reasons why I chose my mom for this essay because her bravery inspires me.

My parents each risked their lives serving overseas for our country. Because of them one day I would like to join the military. I would like to serve and protect America. I think we could all learn a lesson from serving in the military, like learning how to use a firearm, maybe go into combat or being an officer. I think serving in the military is a great thing. I respect anybody who can join any service like the Coast Guard, Air Force, Navy or Marines but I would probably pick the Army like my parents. From their time in the Army my parents have taught me about military values like courage, honesty, integrity, and protecting your fellow brothers and sisters.

I wrote this essay to tell people about my parents and encourage people to join the armed forces. Every day soldiers are putting their lives in danger to protect others. It is not about money because people in the military do not always make a lot. My dad left a law firm to serve overseas and my mom had to leave college and finish later after she came home from Iraq. But it makes you brave and part of something more than yourself. So I hope that when kids hear about my parents and grow up they will consider going into any of the armed forces to serve America. For these reasons I am proud of my parents and their decision to join the Army and serve our country after September 11.

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Interview of Staff Sergeant Terra Moreno, United States Army, on October 11, 2021.