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James River High School

11th Grade

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**Inspiring Generations: The Life and Legacy of  
Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Arthur Bachman Jr.**

My grandfather, Ernest Arthur Bachman Jr. , is and will always be one of the most significant figures in my life. He was born on February 22nd, 1948 in Nashville, Tennessee. After attending High School in Marietta, Georgia he went on to attend the University of Georgia. He graduated in 1970 with a BS in Forest Resources. Then he moved to Virginia and began attending the University of Richmond for his master's degree in Business Administration. My grandfather's dedication to his education and his diverse academic achievements helped encourage me to be the hard-working student I am today.

In 1970, he was commissioned into the military as a Second Lieutenant all while he continued more of his militaristic based education. In November of 1990 he received what would be his last promotion, Lieutenant Colonel. Things began to heat up along the Persian Gulf when Iraq refused to withdraw from attacking Kuwait. The United States wanted more control over the remunerative oil supply in the Middle East. In which triggered America to send over 500,000 troops to help Kuwait defend themselves. My grandfather and his brother were among the first troops to be deployed. My great uncle, Micheal Bachman, was a Lieutenant Colonel and flew the HC130 search and rescue on active duty as well as flying the refueler in the Air National Guard. He went on

short term deployments to Kuwait. My grandfather was commander of the 176th Combat Engineer Battalion Group. His job was to be in charge of the first night's invasion into Iraq. It was his idea to light breach lanes with chemical lights.

Growing up he loved to tell stories about interesting things that happened when he was over there. I will never forget the story about the night before the invasion, when he almost blew up his truck. He was cooking on a hot plate and caught his sleeping bag on fire. It would not have been a night invasion if the truck had blown up. On his truck were all the chemical lights they needed to light breach lanes at night. He described himself to me as the bookends of the war. He had duties to fulfill in starting the war and ending it.

I was told that he tried hard to bring a tank home and put it in his backyard, but was unsuccessful. However, he had a great deal of other neat items he was able to bring back. I loved walking through his house because it was a museum of everything he'd ever fought for and everything he had ever loved. My grandfather was not only a brave soldier but he was also an archeologist, private pilot, photographer, farmer, avid fisherman, and when I was born he became a part time teacher to me.

It was during my elementary school years when he started to teach me about the American flag and what it represents. To much of my surprise, I was chosen to do flag duty in 5th grade at Robious Elementary School. I was thrilled with my duty bestowed upon me and I couldn't wait to tell my grandfather. With that I started to learn more about the flag and what it means to Americans. Everyday at school, when I look upon the flag with my hand over my heart and say those meaningful words, a warmth comes over me and I always remember what my grandfather accomplished. It is because of

him that my intentions are to join the military after college and continue my family's legacy of serving and making positive impacts for our country.

## Sources

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The U.S. military deployed 500,000 combat troops to Saudi Arabia in record time, a logistical feat that demonstrates the need for well-trained Guard units.

Bingham, Jane. *Living through the Gulf Wars with Iraq*. Raintree, 2013.