

Grades 4-5 | Prompt: If I wore the Military Uniform

WRITTEN BY: CHARLEY MCGREGOR – FIRST PLACE

There are so many people out there who are serving for our country. If I was one of them, I would feel a sense of pride and courage.

At school, sometimes there are times when I feel weak and that I can't do anything to solve the problem. If I wore the uniform, I would dedicate all I had to my country. Bravery would be all I had. My fear would be long forgotten. All my worries would be behind me, and my focus would be on my country.

Courage is a weird word. To have courage you must be a fighter. You have to be able to get through the hardship and pain. On the battlefield there will be sorrow and you will have your rough moments, but that is when being a fighter matters most.

I know that if I wore the uniform, I would be a leader, not a follower.

CONCORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | FIFTH GRADE



WRITTEN BY: LINCOLN ADAME – SECOND PLACE

If I wore a military uniform I would be like my mom, who was in the United States Navy! I would be proud, because my mom went to war on a very large Navy ship. She wore a white uniform, and it had patches with different colored ribbons. My mom earned the ribbons because she was brave and protected our country!



So, if I wore a military uniform I would be like my mom and I would also defend and help guard our country. People who wear military uniforms are important because they love our country and keep us all safe.

LONE OAK INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL | FOURTH GRADE



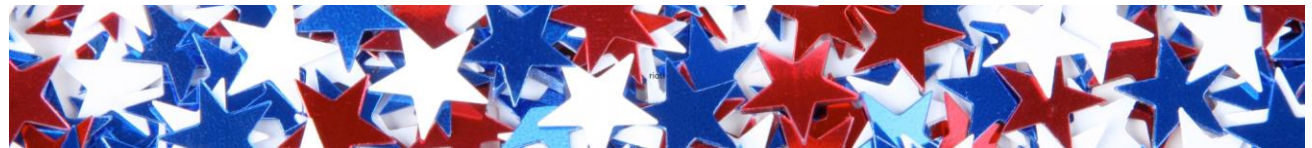
WRITTEN BY: JAIME MENDOZA – THIRD PLACE

If I wore a military uniform, I would choose to be in the army. The army not only fights for our country, but they protect the whole country. They are also brave because they would give up their lives for our country.

An interesting fact is that the army has been around for 248 years. That is longer than two people's lives combined. The army is strong. They have to go through really tough training. They also have to be away from people they love for long periods of time.

I love my country, and I would protect and fight for all the people. I am brave and strong. That is why it would be an honor to be in the army.

REIDLAND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL | FOURTH GRADE



Grades 6-8 | Prompt: If I wore the Military Uniform

WRITTEN BY: FAITH MOSS-MENSER – FIRST PLACE

Wearing a military uniform is an immense responsibility that carries both honor and sacrifice. If I had the opportunity to wear a military uniform, it would not only be a privilege, but also allow me to get a deeper understanding of the sacrifices made by these brave men and women in uniform.

The uniform represents the dedication and commitment of those who have served before me. Putting on a military uniform would give me a sense and newfound perspective of the challenges faced by our service members. This would gain a relatively deeper appreciation for the sacrifices made to selflessly protect our nation and honor.

Wearing a military uniform would allow me to have a greater connection with my fellow service members on a level that is not as easily achieved as a civilian. The military uniform represents more than just a piece of clothing; it symbolizes the sacrifice made by those who have served and the values that hold dear. To all veterans I bid a great thank you for your service.



WRITTEN BY: ARISSA MOSS-MENSER – SECOND PLACE

I would like to start by giving all of our veterans a profound thank you for your service, for sacrificing life and limb that we may have a great nation full of opportunities. With that being said, if I were to wear a military uniform it would give me a sense of understanding of how proud of this country I would be in order to risk my life to protect it and all of the civilians within.

To understand what it would be like to wear one of these particular uniforms I would have to gain a greater knowledge and understanding as to the question, why? As a civilian it is hard to comprehend the countless challenges and experiences veterans go through.

Upon wearing a military uniform, I would gain a deeper and more profound appreciation for military personnel. The uniform represents the dedication and commitment of the ones that serve to protect us. The physical and mental demands for military service is unparalleled and by experiencing them firsthand I would contain a greater knowledge and appreciation for the sacrifices they had made.



WRITTEN BY: ELLIOTT BIDWELL – THIRD PLACE

I am in the Paducah Tilghman Marching Band. In the marching band, each person must wear a uniform that represents our school, director, and the band as a whole. When I wear my uniform, I feel a sense of pride I am a part of a group working together to make music with each other. This is reflected in the way we take care of our uniforms. We must fold them in a certain way and make sure everything is hung up correctly. Band members also have to keep jackets and gloves in pristine condition.

I imagine my experience might be like that of a military veteran or service person. I hope when they wear their uniform they also feel a sense of camaraderie, knowing they are not alone when they are protecting our country. I imagine those serving in our military are proud to wear their uniform, too. The respect for the uniform extends to the way service people must manage its care. Uniforms must be cleaned gently. They cannot be put into the washer or dryer.

If I were to wear a military uniform, I would keep my head high and always be honored to serve my country.



WRITTEN BY: TRISTAN MOSS-MENSER – HONORABLE MENTION

I would like to start by saying what a wonderful and beautiful country we serve. I also want to thank all of our troops for their service and all they do to protect us from terrorism, foreign and domestic. Now, if I were to have went to my aunt's house and she were to allow me to do so, I would like to have tried on his uniform and just imagine what he went through and what he had seen.

My great uncle Louis Tynes was in the United States Marine Corps, which from my knowledge is the first ones that go into battle. He had fought in the Vietnam war but he had never talked to my dad about it and my dad was always told not to ask those who fought in that war to share their stories because of possible "flashbacks," so out of that respect, even though he wanted to know, he respected what he was told and never asked.

I would feel like a hero wearing that uniform and I must say to those that lost life and limbs for our great country, Thank You For Your Service..



Grades 9 – 12 | Prompt: Our Veterans, Our Families, Past Present & Future

WRITTEN BY: ERICA WURTH – FIRST PLACE

I remember one summer day when my great-grandmother led me to a chest in her bedroom and pulled out a photo. My great-grandmother explained to me that this photo was my great-grandfather in his early 20s in a military uniform. At this point my great-grandfather had passed away so I asked my great-grandmother about this part of his life, she told me about his struggles and time away from home. Immediately, I felt a sense of gratitude for his service and amazement at his courage. Knowing that my great-grandfather served instilled a sense of pride in me about our family. I also learned that I had great-grandfathers who served in WWIL, the Korean War, and a great-uncle who served in the Vietnam War. It is honorable to know that courage of a past military member runs in your veins. Not only does this courage and pride that

comes from military service run through the families of veterans, but also through the communities that veterans are a part of.

The way that veterans are honored in Paducah year after year makes me proud to be a part of this community. Paducah has made a habit of welcoming veterans of all ages to honor them and their insurmountable courage. It creates a community that feels like a family, allows the amazing qualities of veterans to continue to be shown and the rest of the community is able to take pride in the veterans it has produced. Paducah has a Veterans Day parade, a breakfast ceremony, and has recently participated in the Honor Flight. These events have heavy community attendance, from the elementary school students at the parade to the businesses that sponsor the breakfast, leading the community to participate in honoring and interacting with the amazing men and women that have served. I believe that it is essential to continue this tradition of family for veterans in Paducah as the years go on. As the soldiers of today become veterans, it is important that we welcome them back into the community with open arms to make them a part of this family as we have done for so long. Paducah's veteran family has been honored in the past, will be honored in the present, and will continue to honor and inspire people to create veterans of the future.

PADUCAH TILGHMAN HIGH SCHOOL | ELEVENTH GRADE



WRITTEN BY: RYAN BIDWELL – SECOND PLACE

Are you a part of any close groups? While not family in the traditional sense, I can find a sense of camaraderie in my fellow church members or even such a simple group as my band class. It is in these groups I find veterans and those who may someday become them.

There are a number of veterans who frequent my church. We, as a church community, do not shy away from appreciating them. On occasions such as Veterans Day, we may even engage in a prayer on their behalf. These brave soldiers of the past are seen in our church family and are appreciated.

Among my school's band members, there are a few who are a part of the ROTC program. These fellows intend to pursue a career in the Army, Navy, and other armed services. My classmates and I are very aware of this, and we frequently comment on the ROTC members impressive displays of commitment. As the future veterans of our world, they will be given great Respect.

As for the here and now, it is important look back and hold veterans of the past in high regard while simultaneously encouraging and appreciating those who will follow the path. Reflection on the present state of affairs grants a firm understanding of what others have given for you, and how you could in turn serve your country.

Familial ties are crucial in life, and seeing how those ties through the lens of time is just as important. Veterans have done so much for us as a nation, and we owe them greatly.

Appreciating the past veterans and those who serve in the future will optimally lead to enjoying right now for what it is - a present.

PADUCAH TILGHMAN HIGH SCHOOL | ELEVENTH GRADE