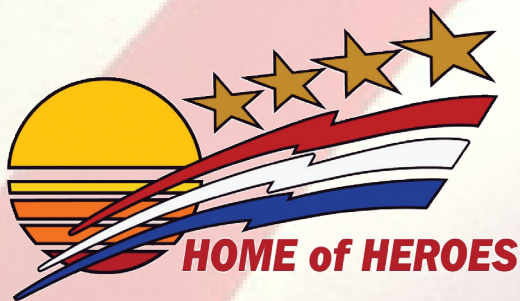


8th Annual Pueblo Home of Heroes Association essay contest

**“Of the living Medal of
Honor recipients, which do
you admire the most and
why?”**

Sponsored by the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association
and Pueblo City-County Library District



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The mission of the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association is to preserve and expand the memorial dedicated to Medal of Honor recipients; to advance the history of the Medal of Honor; honor the legacy of those who have received the Award nationwide; to promote democratic ideals; and encourage among the people of the United States, and especially its youth, citizenship, character, integrity and selflessness as epitomized by the Medal of Honor.

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2016 Pueblo Home of Heroes Association essay contest

“Of the living Medal of Honor recipients, which do you admire the most and why?”

The Pueblo Home of Heroes Association, in cooperation with the Pueblo City-County Library District, is pleased to announce the winners of its 8th Pueblo Home of Heroes Association essay contest.

The following guidelines were required:

All entries must be typed.

Elementary School level – grades 4 and 5; 300-500 words.

Middle School level – grades 6–8; 400-700 words.

High School level – grades 9–12; 500-1,000 words.

There were a total of 364 entries - 266 elementary school level, 61 middle school level and 37 high school level.

The 2016 Awards Ceremony is dedicated to the memory of John Verna, long time member of the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association.

The Pueblo Home of Heroes Association and Pueblo City-County Library District wish to thank teachers and parents for encouraging their students and children to participate in this essay contest. It was clear to the judges that the contest achieved its purpose of encouraging students to look at the stories of many Medal of Honor recipients and find a story that was special to them. Many of these heroes will be in Pueblo in September of 2017 and all winners of the awards this year and next (plus a guest) will be invited to a breakfast with all the Medal of Honor recipients one of the mornings of the Convention.



Colonel Donald "Doc" Ballard

Medal of Honor Recipient

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Hospital Corpsman Second Class, with Company M, in connection with operations against enemy aggressor forces. During the afternoon hours, Company M was moving to join the remainder of the 3d Battalion in Quang Tri Province. After treating and evacuating 2 heat casualties, HC2c. Ballard was returning to his platoon from the evacuation landing zone when the company was ambushed by a North Vietnamese Army unit employing automatic weapons and mortars, and sustained numerous casualties. Observing a wounded marine, HC2c. Ballard unhesitatingly moved across

the fire swept terrain to the injured man and swiftly rendered medical assistance to his comrade. HC2c. Ballard then directed 4 marines to carry the casualty to a position of relative safety. As the 4 men prepared to move the wounded marine, an enemy soldier suddenly left his concealed position and, after hurling a hand grenade which landed near the casualty, commenced firing upon the small group of men. Instantly shouting a warning to the marines, HC2c. Ballard fearlessly threw himself upon the lethal explosive device to protect his comrades from the deadly blast. When the grenade failed to detonate, he calmly arose from his dangerous position and resolutely continued his determined efforts in treating other marine casualties. HC2c. Ballard's heroic actions and selfless concern for the welfare of his companions served to inspire all who observed him and prevented possible injury or death to his fellow marines. His courage, daring initiative, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of extreme personal danger, sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

Winners

Elementary School

1st Place	Nicholas Schmitz – Belmont Elementary School – Mrs. Espinoza
2nd Place	Eli Schwartz – Corwin International Magnet School – Ms. Quinn
3rd Place	Aiden Bennett – Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Sweckard
Honorable Mention	Tyler Austin – Highland Park Elementary School – Mrs. Turner
Honorable Mention	Sara DeHeart – Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Sweckard
Honorable Mention	Jordan Vela – Cesar Chavez Academy – Mr. Rael
Don Ballard essay	Jacquelynn Dernier – Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Galli
Don Ballard essay	Joseph Sandoval – Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Galli

Middle School

1st Place	Carlie Sweckard – Corwin International Magnet School – Ms. Nickell
2nd Place	Collin Velbis – Daystar Christian School – Mrs. Velbis
3rd Place	Makayla Ayala – Roncalli STEM Academy – Ms. Vivoda
Honorable Mention	Mailee Holley – Highland Park Elementary – Mrs. Cahill
Honorable Mention	Diego Luevano – Heroes K-8 Academy – Ms. Webster
Honorable Mention	Grant Velbis – Daystar Christian School – Mrs. Velbis

High School

1st Place	Cailey Sweckard – South High School – Ms. Abraham
2nd Place	Michael Bui – Centennial High School – Major John Freeburg
3rd Place	Zack McDaniel-Garduno – East High School – Mr. LeMasters
Honorable Mention	Brett Hund – Centennial High School – Major John Freeburg
Don Ballard essay	Dianne Anderson – Centennial High School – Chief Bell
Don Ballard essay	Isaac Elliss – Centennial High School – Major John Freeburg

The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Nicholas Schmitz

Of the 79 living Medal of Honor recipients, I admire William “Kyle” Carpenter the most. At age 26, he is the youngest living recipient of the Medal of Honor, which I believe is a great example that young people can have great courage and bravery even in the face of great danger. Mr. Carpenter earned the Medal of Honor by placing himself in front of an enemy’s grenade in order to shield his friend and fellow Marine from the deadly blast. He succeeded in saving his friend’s life, even though both men suffered severe injuries. Mr. Carpenter’s actions are admirable not only because of the danger he put himself in, but also because it shows his extraordinary character and commitment.

It would’ve been easy for Kyle Carpenter to give up hope and let his injuries take command over his life, but this isn’t what happened. Since the day of Nov. 21, 2010, after five weeks in a coma and dozens of surgeries, he chose to live life to the fullest. He even went skiing, snowboarding, jumped out of a plane, and ran a marathon! I admire him for not allowing his injuries to ruin his life, and for all of the strength and bravery it took to heal and stay positive. He shows us all that we should enjoy life, do our very best, and persevere especially in tough times.

Finally, I also admire Kyle Carpenter for inspiring my generation to strive for the very best, and to truly appreciate all of the heroes who serve in the military and fight to keep America safe and free. I admire Mr. Carpenter for earning the Medal of Honor, but also for his determination to continue helping others and for inspiring everyone else to do the same. Kyle Carpenter teaches us that even kids like me should aim for success, stop at nothing, and work hard to achieve our dreams.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Eli Schwartz

The Medal of Honor recipient I admire most is John P. Baca. He is a very respectful, responsible and caring person who got hurt and almost died to save his country. Mr. Baca was born on Jan. 10, 1949 in Providence, R.I. He grew up in California where he had a rough childhood. John was arrested numerous times for petty crimes and theft. He even had to stay in a kid's jail.

Mr. Baca joined the Army at age 17 but was kicked out for bad behavior. He was drafted back into the US Army on June 10, 1968 and was sent to Vietnam where he was a Specialist 4th class. John received the Medal of Honor on March 2, 1971 because he and his platoon ambushed the enemy at night which made his job even more dangerous. In addition to that, a grenade was on the ground in front of the platoon and John put his helmet on it then hurled himself over the grenade to protect his comrades. After the grenade exploded, John kept fighting and destroyed the enemy base.

One day while on patrol, Mr. Baca saw an enemy soldier. Not wanting to kill him, he convinced the North Vietnamese Army soldier to surrender and they took the opportunity to exchange personal information. He had great compassion for the Vietnamese people which was demonstrated by his not killing the soldier.

Once Mr. Baca recovered from his injuries, he went to college and was an activist for Vietnam Veterans and homeless rights. In 1990, he went back to Vietnam with the Veterans Restoration Project where he worked with members of the North Vietnamese Army to build a health care clinic near Hanoi. The same soldier he spared, was there when he dedicated the clinic.

The thing that inspires me most about Mr. Baca is his selflessness and quick thinking under pressure. I hope to be a great person like him when I grow up.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Aiden Bennett

A rare few, who live and walk among us and look like your average Joe but they are anything but ordinary. Out of the 79 living Medal of Honor recipients, Dakota Meyer stands out like a sore thumb because of his actions of heroism. Dakota took seven trips to get the bodies of his fellow soldiers. With that I was so stunned, I thought he came out of the screen and shot me with a stun gun. An average man from Kentucky he is, but he has a heart of gold. As you have read, Dakota is just so noble and valiant.

There is a meaning to being a hero, and that reason is not jumping from buildings or wearing a cape but helping others. Dakota is a true hero because of this. Right now, I can picture him with a cape on. He would look so cool! Dakota Meyer is so self-sacrificing, so bold. He could have ran, but he stayed, kind of like a superhero. Justin Bieber is ok (I didn't say great) but what did he do to save the country? He sings and dances. Dakota might not be able to pop and lock but he works to save America. What's better a Grammy or the Medal of Honor? Heck, Dakota Meyer is so brave he might as well be a lion. Here's why. Going to a predawn meeting, Dakota and his platoon was ambushed by over fifty enemy fighters with rocket propelled grenades, (or as some people call it RPG's) mortars and machine gun fire. As I have already told you, Sergeant Meyer seized the initiative after hearing that multiple soldiers had been cut off and discharged. Dakota took seven trips to retrieve the bodies. Dakota is my superhero.

Dakota Meyer may look as average as you and me, but his heart is filled with gallantry. He does not run away from the danger but to the danger for the sake of others. Now that's the superman I know.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

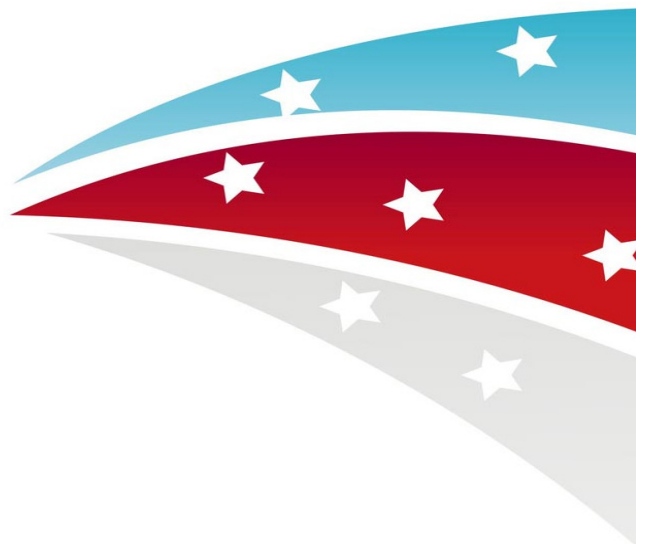
Tyler Austin

Ty M. Carter is the Medal of Honor recipient I admire most.

The reason why I admire Ty M. Carter is because he served in the Marines and the Army and fought for our country. He risked his own life to save many soldiers and he is very brave. He was stationed in Afghanistan on Oct. 3, 2009 when his unit was attacked by 300 enemy fighters. They attacked from higher ground which made it hard for Ty and his unit to fight back. The enemies attacked in the early morning while he was in bed. That's when Ty heard all of the gunshots, grenade launchers and machine guns. He ran into the fight through bullets being shot at him to save another wounded soldier. While he was trying to save the wounded soldier Ty M. Carter was also shot. He picked up the wounded soldier after he was shot and sprinted to a Humvee which was their car. He was able to retrieve a radio to communicate that his unit was under attack. He went back and forth a lot of times to save and protect his men. The fight lasted a long time but Ty M. Carter would not quit. There were 10 men in Ty's unit that were killed in this fight.

President Barack Obama called Ty and said you will receive the Medal of Honor at the White House in October. On Oct. 26, 2013 they made speeches and talked about what Ty M. Carter did during the war and this major attack on their military position. Ty's family was in the crowd and they cried when they heard how brave he is. When they finished Barack Obama put the Medal of Honor around Ty's neck and that's when everyone clapped. Ty Michael Carters' picture will be hung at the river walk at the Center for American Values. He deserves the Medal of Honor Medal because of his bravery and because he put his men's lives before his own.

The other thing I admire about Ty is that he was a soldier that was a specialist. Ty Carter was also a great swimmer when he was a kid and I love swimming the same way. He loves country music which I listen to a lot. The shocking thing about him is he wants to be a soldier for life even after he was in terrible battles. The last thing I liked was his dream to teach other people how to use a gun safely. He was born on Jan. 25, 1980 and is still living today and is 36 years old. He grew up in Spokane Wash. and is married and has 3 kids.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Sara DeHeart

In matter of life or death, all 79 Medal of Honor living recipients have gone above and beyond the call of duty. William Kyle Carpenter inspired me because he stood out among all the others. William Kyle Carpenter was an ordinary soldier at war, but his act of friendship and courageous deeds hold him apart from the rest of our heroes. He was born in Mississippi in 1989, and joined the Marines in 2009. During the war of Afghanistan, bold William Kyle Carpenter demonstrated true heroic deeds that showed he deserved the Congressional Medal of Honor. I was inspired by this Mississippi born Medal of Honor recipient who showed courage for his friend.

All our soldiers have done brave acts, but William Kyle Carpenter went above all. I was in awe to learn he covered a grenade with his own body to save his fellow Marine. He forced himself toward the grenade and became seriously wounded from the massive blast. To his fellow Marine he showed true friendship by saving him and caring about his safety. When he saved his friend, he took my breath away showing bravery and friendship. After reading his story, I felt strength from him that I could do anything and help anyone. He helped me to have more courage, think like a hero, and act like one as well. His brave act demonstrated his strong value of friendship and that act has inspired me to have courage.

Being a hero takes strength and commitment, but being a true hero is much more. To receive the Medal of Honor you can show no hesitation and do what's necessary. When my hero saved his friend, he stepped forward toward the grenade and started to cover it. When at war, you have to have courage in doing selfless acts. A famous sports player and a hero have a small amount of similarities and a lot of differences. Peyton Manning is someone everyone knows and thinks he's a "true hero." They're similar because they both have to understand the importance of teamwork in order for their teams or platoon to know they can work hard and be a good leader to play or serve their team with one hundred percent effort. I think the difference between the two is that Carpenter has literally put his life on the line for his fellow Marine, where Manning has not.

With the risk of life or death, William Kyle Carpenter is a true hero. I hope everyone in America will think like him whether or not you're in the military.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Jordan Vela

William D. Swenson was born Nov. 2, 1978. He joined the United States Army in 2002. Swenson is the sixth living recipient of the highest military award for his service in Afghanistan. He is the most awarded Army officer since the Vietnam War (1954-1975). Swenson has received 17 military awards including the Purple Heart Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Service Medal, and the Medal of Honor.

On October 2013, President Obama gave former Army Captain William D. Swenson the highest military honor, the Medal of Honor. He was awarded the medal as a recognition for saving American and Afghan lives during a battle with Taliban in 2009. Swenson risked his life by repeatedly entering the kill zone of the battle to save the lives of others. It is believed that he helped save the lives of at least a dozen Afghans. He is an American war hero for risking his life during the battle to save the lives of others. Swenson acted with great courage.

There are many reasons why I have chosen William Swenson as my American hero. I admire him for being so brave. He is lucky to be alive. I look up to him for being a great American soldier. Swenson is such a great soldier that he has the most awards and recognitions for his service in the Army than any other living soldier. He left the Army in February 2011. However, he courageously returned to serve again on March 2014, he was accepted back onto active duty and currently serves as a plans officer. I admire that of him for returning as a Medal of Honor winner since it is not common. After being awarded the Medal of Honor, Swenson was included into the Pentagon Hall of Heroes. After the presentation he said, "I look at this crowd and I see the strength of a nation and I see the strength of a fighting force, one that I fought proudly with. I look at my fellow Marines, Army, Navy and Air Force, a team that I fought side-by-side with as brothers. It's the proudest moment of my life and I'm honored and privileged to know these men."

It is awesome that Swenson's bravery that got him the Medal of Honor was recorded. Helicopter pilots that were present at the scene had cameras on their helmets that recorded the action. The videos can be seen online.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Jacquelynn Dernier

The Medal of Honor is something that you receive when doing something special like saving others while risking your life. You basically need to do something courageous, like Donald E. Ballard did! These are some facts that make me admire Lt. Col. Ballard.

Donald E. Ballard spotted an enemy soldier leave his secure place and throw a lethal weapon. With the first bomb he saw, he knew he had enough time to throw it back, but with this one, he knew he couldn't. Lt. Col. Ballard fearlessly threw himself onto the lethal weapon to protect the wounded soldiers he had planned to save. Ballard waited for the weapon to explode, but unexpectedly, it didn't! Lt. Col. Ballard is a person who saves people when needed, and that is very brave of him.

I admire Lt. Col. Ballard because he protected other men. He risked his life and went beyond the call of duty while defending a U.S. Military institution against a fierce attack by hostile forces. I love that he had no gun, and still wanted to join! When he got into battle, he only had the guns on the ground. He was in the Vietnam War. He also served as a Navy Corpsman. He was courageous and brave enough to even go out to war. He started out as a dentist and wanted to be in the Navy as a dentistry man, but dentistry was plentiful, so he went in as a Navy Corpsman. He was brave and laid on top of the grenade and caused it to fail. He acted courageously calm, like nothing happened, then went on and threw the grenade and continued to treat the wounded marines again. He was amazingly only thirty feet away but still was fearless, courageous, and brave to do what he did. He noticed the two grenades first and protected. That is bravery that I admire. He prevented from any harm being done. I totally admire that he ran through an enemy fire to a wounded marine. I can't believe he actually still kept going even though he might have been tired! I love that he put others before him and wanted to keep going instead of just quitting on his team. I love that he didn't give up. I like how he is not a quitter! He was courageous and brave and I admire that.

Clearly, I really admire Donald because he saved people before he saved himself. I think that I would really love to do what Lt. Col. Ballard did. I would cause the lethal weapon to fail, save the wounded marines, then go back to saving the other wounded marines while the war was still going on. I think everyone should admire Lt. Col. Ballard because he is a true American hero that I really admire.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Joseph Sandoval

The American hero I admire most is Medal of Honor recipient Donald E. Ballard. He was a Hospital Corpsman Second Class with the United States Navy. I chose Corpsman Second Class Ballard for three reasons: 1) because he is a fearless, selfless leader, 2) because my father (my biggest hero) also served in the Navy and 3) because my grandpa served in the Vietnam War.

Donald Ballard was born on Dec. 5, 1945 in Kansas City, Mo. He went to school in Great Lakes to be a dentist. He enlisted in the United States Navy as a corpsman in 1965 at the age of 20, training on the USS Sandoval and the USS Cambridge. He served four years active duty from 1965 to 1969. After a short assignment at a Navy hospital in Tennessee he was selected to serve as a corpsman in the United States Marine Corps. His shipmates called him "Doc."

He achieved the Medal of Honor for his actions on May 16, 1968, because he evacuated two Marines with heat stroke when his unit was ambushed by the Viet Cong. He rushed to the aid of a casualty, applied a dressing and directed four Marines in the removal of the wounded man. Then an enemy soldier threw a grenade and without warning Doc shouted "Grenade" and threw his body on it. Luckily, the grenade did not go off. But, because of this selfless act of courage, Doc received the Congressional Medal of Honor, from President Richard M. Nixon and General Westmoreland on May 14, 1970. According to NBC Nightly News President Nixon stated, "The country has a lot to be thankful for, having men of your caliber. I am very proud of you." He was wounded in action eight times and earned the Purple Heart.

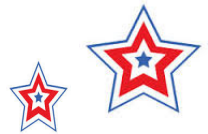
Doc Ballard was inducted into the National Guard Hall of Fame in November, 2001. He is the only living Kansas Guardsman to have received the Medal of Honor. He is also the subject of a memorial statue at the National Medical War Memorial in Kansas City, depicting Ballard during the action for which he received the Medal of Honor.

I believe that he achieved this honor because of his acts of bravery, leadership and selflessness to protect his brothers in arms.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Carlie Sweckard



Our country has been blessed with brave warriors who courageously prove themselves on the battlefield by going far beyond expectations for a soldier and willingly sacrificing themselves for others. In America, we award these remarkable men the highest honor possible, The Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor can only be awarded by the president of the United States and will forever distinguish this soldier as a true American hero. Of all the gallant living Medal of Honor recipients, I admire Sammy Davis most of all.

Sammy Davis was born in Dayton, Ohio into a family with military experience. His father had served in WWII, and was one reason that he was familiar with the military. While he was working in a bowling alley as a teenager, Sammy Davis saw a broadcast of Ronald Reagan awarding the Medal of Honor to a soldier and he knew then that he wanted to be a soldier. It was in 1965, after he had graduated from high school that he enlisted in the army where he was immediately trained and sent to serve in Vietnam.

Nov. 18, 1968 was the day that Sammy Davis distinguished himself as a true American hero. Sammy Davis became a cannoneer and was sent west of Cia Lay in Vietnam. When his battalion came under mortar fire from the Viet Cong, he bravely used a machine gun to cover his gun crew, but there were just too many Viet Cong soldiers and they flooded in around him. He was thrown from his gun by a large blast that also hit his sergeant in the chest. Sammy Davis was knocked unconscious and became injured from the vicious blow. When he became conscious again, he found the will to get up and go back to his weapon to protect his fellow soldiers. He found the parts to the howitzer had been blown everywhere on the ground so he searched for them and started to load it one more time. He said, "I thought I could get away with one more." It worked, so he continued firing until he realized there was a soldier on the other side of the river shouting for help. He decided he had to go get him even though he was weak from his injuries and couldn't swim. He used a mattress for a raft and made his way across the river. When he arrived on the other side of the river there were actually three wounded soldiers. He asked God for strength that day and made several trips to save the three men across the river and many others as well.

Who would imagine that a soldier would learn the true meaning of love during war? I admire Sammy Davis greatly because during the brutal battle, he found that he would sacrifice himself willingly to save his brothers. Isn't self-sacrifice the greatest expression of love? He loved his brothers who fought with him on the bloody ground in Vietnam enough to save them or die trying. He also realized how much his fellow soldiers loved him as well. Sammy found his wounded sergeant who lifted up his hand so he could hold it, and it was then, when he looked into his sergeant's eyes that he could see that his sergeant loved him. All of the times that the sergeant drilled his troops to make them work so hard, it was out of love, to give them the best chance for survival in war. In the end, it was love that saved all of the survivors in that vicious battle in Cai Lay. How many Americans today truly understand the selflessness of love? How many of America's famous athletes, singers and movie stars are willing to sacrifice themselves to save someone else? With his courageous deeds, Sammy Davis proved to his brothers on the battlefield that he loved them enough to sacrifice his own life for them. The true heroes in America are men like Sammy Davis, a valiant soldier who learned that the greatest weapon in war is love.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Collin Velbis

What would pass quickly through your head if in an instant you had to make a decision of life or death? What if you had to hurl yourself onto a detonating weapon of mass and bitter destruction which could ultimately mean goodbye to everything you know and love? Robert D. Maxwell stood face to face with this same and deathly situation on Sept. 7, 1944. Robert D. Maxwell did not even consider giving up, and through his background, bravery, and education he is a hero and role model to all that hope to make a difference in their community and world. And even though he was only a technician during the war, he still showed everybody globally that he and every other low ranking person in society, or even in war, can still do immense, unbelievable things.

On Oct. 26, 1920 in Boise, Idaho a hero was born. Little did his parents perceive that he would go on to be awarded the Medal of Honor, two silver stars, and the Purple Heart award! Robert made his home with his grandmother in Cottage Grove, Ore., and was a timber helper in Colorado. He joined the army from Larimer County, Colo. in 1942. He became a technician fifth grade, and soon went to battle in the North African Campaign. Robert was assigned to be a battalion “wire man” and carried a hefty roll of cable. His position was to string telephone wire to the commander post. During the war, he carried a M1 Garand rifle, but later was interchanged to a non-combatant, and carried only a 41 caliber pistol. Soon something would occur that would change both his military and normal life forever.

“Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world,” said Nelson Mandela. And what a legitimate statement that was. Education is a power that Robert used to make his impact in society. He received his high school diploma from Bend Senior High, at the age of 79 in 2000. From 1966 to 1986 Robert taught Mechanics at Lane Community College, which named its veterans center after him.

Bravery is one of the many characteristics that make this man extraordinary. One example of bravery he showed was on September, 1944 near Besancon France. Along with three other men he was defending the battalion observation from countless German enemies. Armed with only a machine pistol, they desperately tried to fight off the swarming enemy. The Germans were closing in and were ten feet away from the battalion observation. Flack and machine gun fire, had broken through, and were invading the observation. Machine guns, automatic pistols, and grenade launchers were sailing upon Robert and his men, but he kept fighting. Then, in an instant something would happen that would change everything. In the confusion of all the combat, a grenade was hurled into the midst of Robert and all those around him. Without hesitation, Robert took a blanket, and launched himself squarely upon the detonating grenade. The force of the explosion permanently maimed him, and gave him severe shrapnel injuries in his head and foot. But, all in all, salvaged the lives of all the men in that confrontation.

On April 6, 1945 Robert was rewarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry beyond the call of duty. Through Roberts’ background, education, and courage, he has shown what it is to be a real servant and hero. Through all the chaos of warfare, Robert kept his cool, remained brave, and ultimately saved the precious lives of all fighting beside him. “Robert, I salute you, and thank you for everything you did and are doing for our beloved country.” John 15:13 says this, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Makayla Ayala

At some point in everyone's life, we all admire someone whether it's a family member, or someone on the news, or even someone fighting for our country. We look up to those people as our heroes because heroes don't always wear capes. Some are protecting our cities from danger, others are working normal jobs to get through their struggles, and many are overseas fighting for us. Those are the people I admire, and Lance Corporal William Kyle Carpenter is one to remember. Lance Corporal William Kyle Carpenter is someone I greatly admire for his bravery, his courage, and his strength to keep going.

Carpenter was fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2010, and it was in this time that he did something remarkable and admirable. His quick thinking is what saved a fellow Marine from a grenade blast. Corporal Carpenter and his fellow Marine, Lance Corporal Nicholas Eufrazio, were stationed atop a mud hut when a grenade was thrown on the rooftop. Carpenter was able to jump in between Eufrazio and the grenade causing him to take the brunt of the blast. Sergeant Jared Lilly, one of the first Marines to arrive after the blast, told New York Times, "When I got to Kyle, he was face down, so I grabbed his arm to try and roll him over and instantly realized his arm was broken. Then I grabbed his flak jacket and he was just dead weight." After they were able to roll Carpenter over, that was when Lilly "realized how catastrophic his injuries were".

Once conscious again, Carpenter recalls hearing his "buddies" yelling at him, telling him he was going to make it. According to Carpenter, it sounded as if "they were a football field away." Death was something that Carpenter had accepted as he tried to explain this to his fellow Marines. Corporal Carpenter had one last thought that he had made peace with God before waking up again several weeks later in Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The blast Kyle Carpenter had endured blew away "pretty much everything from the eyes down" meaning he lost his right eye, had shrapnel from his head removed, and his shattered arm, which was broken in more than 30 places, repaired. Much of Kyle Carpenter's face was also reconstructed during his recovery.

Corporal Carpenter was awarded the highest military honor of the nation, the Medal of Honor. During the ceremony in which Corporal Kyle Carpenter received his medal, President Obama said, "Corporal William Kyle Carpenter should not be alive today. But we are here because this man, this United States Marine, faced down that terrible explosive power, that unforgiving force with his own body- willingly and deliberately- to protect a fellow Marine." Corporal Carpenter said he would "wear the medal on behalf of his fellow Marines," that as Obama put the medal around his neck he felt "the history and weight of the Nation" and that he wear it for "those who have been wounded on distant lands who still continue to fight in battle... for those who have given it all. I can never express in words what you mean to this nation." Two and a half years after the hospital. Corporal Carpenter was released and is now medically retired from the Marines.

On countless occasions, we lose those who fight for us to have our privileges because of their courage and bravery. Not all are as lucky as Corporal William Kyle Carpenter to be able to survive something as tragic as what Carpenter endured. President Obama said, "If any American seeks the model of the strength and resilience that define us as a people, including the newest 9/11 generation, I want you to consider Kyle. After everything he's been through, he skis, he snowboards, he has jumped from a plane." The strength that Corporal Carpenter has to be able to continue after all he has experienced is very admirable and should never be forgotten. His strength, courage, and bravery is what inspires and motivates me as a person to do good in this world and to never give in.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Mailee Holley

Hershel W. Williams (nicknamed Woody) was born Oct. 2, 1923 in Quiet Dell, W. Va. He served in World War II, 21st Marines, 3rd Division of the U.S. Marine Corps. Woody's story isn't like most, it's different and inspirational and that's why I decided to write about him. Woody gave up everything he had to fight for our country when he was 19. He wanted to join the Marines in 1942 and sadly got rejected because they claimed he was too short. A few months later he tried again and the Marines dropped it's height rules and he happily enlisted right away. Woody was then deployed to the Pacific, and was placed in the Flamethrower Demolition unit.

Woody participated in the invasion of Guam, which to him was extremely horrific. He was then sent to Iwo Jima the year after. They needed to take cover on that island somewhere because they were in an open zone. That's when they realized the beach was clear and undefended, since it was clear they could get to the jungle, which was an advantage for the soldiers. But, unfortunately all the jungle cover had gotten swept away and the beach became a slaughterhouse. Woody was thankfully a survivor though.

Woody and his group were supposed to be at the beach Feb. 20, 1945 but there were so many Marines stuck there that there wasn't even close to enough room for them. They eventually landed the next day with still several people stuck, but they were able to manage. On the beach there was volcanic ash that was getting to be so dangerous that it was impossible to make or take any cover. The whole fight got worse especially because there was nowhere to hide. Woody's Unit had actually landed with 6 flamethrower men, but they were all murdered in two days.

On February 23, Woody heard a strange noise that sounded like somebody yelling. That's when Woody witnessed the American Flag being raised on Mt. Suribachi. After viewing the flag, they went forward finally getting the advantage and assaulting the Japanese. But, Woody's team wasn't the only one getting an advantage. The Japanese guard was up and they had good defense.

That didn't stop Woody though, he charged through the Japanese gunfire. Never looking back he just kept moving forward and fighting back as best he could for what he believed in. He saved many people that day. He may have not been able to save them all, but he did save a remarkable amount. Woody took a big risk and if he wouldn't have much more people would have died that day.

To win the Medal of Honor you can't just do the minimum or average. You have to take a risk, and that's exactly what Woody did he risked himself to save his men. Woody truly made a difference and he makes me want to take a risk and to do the impossible no matter what the circumstances, and that's one of the reasons I admire this man. I also admire Woody because what he went through and saw was so difficult and emotional and he stayed strong and he never gave up even when things got hard. He just kept moving forward through the storm and because of that he made it.

After Iwo Jima Woody went back to Guam for more training. In 1945 he was informed to go to Washington to receive the Medal of Honor. He was so grateful and honored to have President Harry Truman place the medal around his neck.

Later on Woody became a lay minister in his church and helped bring people closer to God. And from that day forward he still lived on with pride and joy for his country.

Mr. Hershel Williams was and still is a great man. He did what most people can never even come across doing. After Woody won the Medal of Honor and after what he had been through he said, "You have never lived until you have almost died. For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected will never know."



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Diego Luevano

Many soldiers have received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Clarence Eugene Sasser proves that he deserves it the most.

Sasser was born on Sept. 12, 1947 in Houston, Texas, and he is currently 69 years old. He was in Division 9 and Division 60, and he worked with the United States Army in the Headquarters Company. On Jan. 10, 1968, Sasser was in Ding Tuong Province, Republic of Vietnam. He was working as Company A medic when they were attacked by the enemy.

Company A was making an air assault when a fortified enemy attacked. The enemy attacked with machine guns and rockets, which, when all the smoke cleared, resulted in thirty casualties. Without thinking, Sasser ran through enemy fire and saved one man before sustaining a painful injury in his left shoulder from rocket fragments. Refusing to be aided, he ran through more enemy fire, helped more wounded soldiers, and searched to see who else needed help. He continued his search even after sustaining more wounds, which immobilized his legs, and even that did not dent his determination to help others. He crawled one-hundred meters to help other wounded soldiers. Even through the agonizing pain and blood loss, this man encouraged others to crawl two hundred meters to safety.

Sasser is a unique man and the most deserving of all to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. Sasser stands for the phrase, “No man left behind.” His heroic feat proves he deserves the Congressional Medal of Honor. He did something neither I nor most civilians could do. He was a “Superman” going through gunfire and persevering through his own pain to save the lives of others so they might live to see their families again. Sasser was a soldier waiting for his time to come. He has proved to America that he, above all other male and female soldiers, more than deserves the distinguishing Medal of Honor.

If Clarence Eugene Sasser does not deserve the Congressional Medal of Honor, then who does? Not many people could or would be willing to perform the same acts of bravery as this man did to save the lives of his comrades and total strangers. Sasser is the true definition of “A real-life super hero.” He would and did do anything possible to save people he may not have known because he believes all life is precious.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Grant Velbis

“Duty. Honor. Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, and what you will be,” said Douglas MacArthur. When I hear this quote, I think of Wilburn K. Ross, my hero. Ross is a Medal of Honor recipient who is mainly known for his calm attitude in the face of danger. From his simple beginning to his heroic feat in France, his story is amazing, thought provoking, and inspiring all at once.

On May 22, 1922 in Strunk, Ky. Ross was born. As he grew up, he began to enjoy hunting and fishing, and he did a lot of it. Another activity that he participated in, was to place a match in the crook of a tree and then try and light it with a bullet from his rifle. His firing accuracy was phenomenal, and he proved this once again when his cousins invited him to go on an overnight camp out. After it had gotten dark, the boys heard a rustling in the grass, and they assumed it was a rabbit. Ross fired at the sound with his rifle, and shot the creature dead. When they turned on their flashlights, it turned out to be one of his uncle's calves! At the age 18, Ross began work in the coal mines, but soon decided otherwise. He was going to go into a career of ship welding, when he received his first draft notice. He didn't apply right away, but when they sent him another one, he consented. Soon, Ross was off to the army! His lack of fear for hard work, marksmanship, and cool attitude contributed to his military success years later.

Dashing to find a place to set up his machine gun, Ross carefully surveyed the area. It was Oct. 30, 1944 near Jacques, France. Ross was a private in the United States Military, and he and a rifleman were set up in position to block a German attack. The opposing soldiers shot the rifleman through the head, but fortunately he was not killed. Ross then picked up the man's rifle and picked off the German soldiers one by one. This did not go unnoticed by the enemy, and they returned fire. One bullet was aimed straight for him, but it collided with the rifle instead, and he deemed it useless. After that, Ross returned to the machine gun, letting the bullets fly. In fact, he was shooting so rapidly, he had to stop firing when he could to let the engine cool down! Meanwhile, a commander that he believed dead was actually keeping mental note of Ross' actions, which then led to his receiving the Medal of Honor. Ross remained at his post for 36 hours, blocked 6 German attacks, and single-handedly saved his company. If that isn't an exceptional example of bravery and steadfastness, then I don't know what is!

Ross' heroic exploit and interesting past are thoroughly thought provoking. His simple upbringing that led to his daring act of valor reminds me of David from the Bible. In 1 Samuel, it talks about a brave lad named David, who, with the Lord's help, faces up to a giant, not even the king dared to fight. This is similar to Ross and his brave actions. Another lesson that comes to mind, is how even the men and women in the humblest positions can accomplish things too. People tend think that position is greater than character. Because of this, many persons look down on themselves because of their ranking, but in fact, it is the opposite! Despite being a Private, Ross saved lives and served his country anyway.

His life, his exploits, and the lessons we can learn from them, are only a few of the reasons that Wilburn K. Ross is my hero. Even though he was in a lower rank, he still defended his company without any thought for himself. When asked by Military VA Loan how he stood up to his fear, Ross jovially replied, “I had to do something. If I didn't do something they'd kill me.” His service to his country and his fight for freedom is very much appreciated by all of us.

The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Cailey Sweckard

It was incredibly hard to choose which of the living Medal of Honor recipients I admire the most because each and every one of them has my utmost respect, yet William D. Swenson's actions have proven to resonate with me the most, due to his display of leadership, compassion, and what I believe to be the embodiment of a true American. He is a man to look up to, a true hero for his valor and integrity.

Former Army Captain William Swenson earned his medal through his actions on Sept. 8, 2009 in Ganjgal, Kunar in the province of Afghanistan. The hero's first nomination was allegedly lost, yet he was rightfully awarded his Congressional Medal of Honor on Oct. 14, 2013. Swenson was the center of some controversy because the man has guts, he spoke out, which is not easy to do, about being denied aid on the battlefield, leading to three Army officers being "reprimanded." Every second can be the difference between life and death on the battlefield, I admire Swenson immensely for acting quickly, leading with every ounce of effort he possesses. It is not shameful to want to fix our mistakes, to make our nation greater.

Swenson wants America and its military to be great, because he loves his country, and he knows the price paid on the battlefield. Captain Swenson became his own help when help was denied to him, and I admire him for this exceedingly. He accepted the award graciously standing tall for his brothers, inviting all of his fellow soldiers to his ceremony, and the families of the fallen, and asked they be recognized by President Obama. He left no one out, he respects the heroes of our country and made his honoring event honor them. When he received his medal he showed minimal yet respectful reactions except for in two occurrences when he burst into enthusiastic applause admiring his fellow soldiers and their families, allowing one to see his character shine and observe how he is a man with strong morals.

Swenson was ambushed by Taliban while on a mission and denied needed air support, so he took action without the aid and led a group into enemy fire multiple times to try and recover the injured. He valiantly went into the "kill zone" several times going back and forth gathering injured Americans and Afghans, the last time trying to reach three Marines and a Navy Seal. He recovered the bodies of his fellow soldiers having to ride through intense gun fire, then getting out of the vehicle, to get his four fallen brothers. He worked alongside Dakota Meyer another Medal of Honor Recipient who has my utmost respect, on that day. They weren't going to leave the men they fought with whether they were dead or alive, they would not disrespect their brothers like that. Swenson and his honorable mentality has my respect even though he never asked for it and doesn't need it. Captain Swenson made himself a target to enemies by holding a bright orange marker to get the attention of a helicopter so one of his injured soldiers, Sgt. First Class Kenneth Westbrook, could get access to medical attention. After loading him onto the helicopter he kissed his wounded friend on the head in reassurance and immediately went back into the battle.

I entirely admire Swenson because of his character. In my opinion what elevates him is that he not only risked his life going "above and beyond" for our country and his "brothers," he also spoke out against injustice. When he stated that he was disappointed that he and his men were left with no assistance on the battlefield due to other's mistakes in judgment, many people gasped at his boldness. Why should we not address the problems that we have so we can become better? This man is a leader, he was on the battlefield as he did even more than what others expected of him, because he expects more of himself, and he continued to be a leader as he refused to swallow his opinion. People exercise free speech constantly about things that are not life and death, Swenson spoke out about something really important and I admire that immensely. He doesn't talk just to hear his voice, his words and actions mean something, they save lives, and they honor the truly honorable.

Captain William Swenson is a true hero, all of our soldiers are. NFL football players and pop stars should not be the people we admire the most. Their actions are nothing compared to the way our soldiers risk their lives. William Swenson has integrity, his every action is honest, and humble and compassionate. The valiant actions of Captain Swenson and our other soldiers go unknown while everything about the rich and famous is documented and celebrated. The really admirable heroes are fighting for America, a country that was made to be something to take pride in and Swenson holds onto the core values of our Nation that so many today have lost. He protected his men during battle while simultaneously protecting our country, he showed leadership and he wants to help our country be great.

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society stated that William D. Swenson was being awarded "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." That statement is the lead of every exceptional account of a war hero's actions because all of their doings have that in common, they courageously disregarded their own safety because they respect their brothers. Medal of Honor recipients are made of different fibers than average Americans, they are tirelessly humble and strong. Captain Swenson is not only all of those things, but he is truly moral. I admire him immensely because he respects others, he recognizes others sacrifices, and he believes that America is something to speak out for, something worth fighting for.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Michael Bui

I was asked what Medal of Honor recipient do you admire the most. I knew many but who of the many did I admire the most. I researched the Medal of Honor recipient's and the one that I admire the most is Allan Jay Kellogg, Jr. Why did I choose Allan Jay Kellogg other than all the other honorable recipients?

I chose Allan Jay Kellogg because he is the man I would want to be, he didn't care just for himself but for others no matter what he had to do he wanted to get his comrades back home safe and sound. He put his life on the line to defend them, he showed no fear in his course of action only the thought of his comrades, many would not have thought for others but for Allan Jay Kellogg it was his main mission.

I also admired Allan Jay Kellogg for his service in Vietnam, my family was living in Vietnam during that time, my grandmother would tell me how thankful she was how many of the troops would help her and my grandfather, they did their very best to do what they can and for knowing Allan Jay Kellogg was serving during the Vietnam War; I want to thank him and all those who helped my family and other Vietnamese families get through those times. Allan Jay Kellogg comes from a great branch of the military that I look up to, the Marines "the few, the proud" he showed me the exact definition of what a Marine is. The Marines taught him how to be great and knowing that it will teach me the same way it taught him to be.

These are the reasons why I chose Allan Jay Kellogg, JR. He is man that cared for others safety, him and others are of great honor and one day I do wish to see and talk to a Medal of Honor recipient. I want to thank him and all other Medal of Honor recipients for their service and their actions they did to protect others from harm's way.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Zack McDaniel-Garduno

There is no better example of a true American than a Medal of Honor recipient. The Congressional Medal of Honor is an extraordinarily awesome and selfless feat for any American to earn. A Medal of Honor recipient shows an outstanding amount of courage and bravery, and they also express gallantry and intrepidity while risking their life above and beyond the call of duty during a confrontation against an enemy. The actions of Medal of Honor recipients are executed with self-sacrifices that distinguish themselves above their comrades. While all the Medal of Honor recipients are admirable, I admire Specialist Ty M. Carter the most because of his phenomenal actions at Outpost Keating, in the Nuristan Province, Afghanistan, on Oct. 3, 2009. Ty displays all the traits that are required to receive the Medal of Honor.

First, are the courageous feats that Ty Carter had performed in the event of a battle. On Oct. 3, 2009 Specialist Carter and his comrades were awoken by an attack from 300 enemy fighters. Carter took up a forward battle position, and he also ran 100 meters through heavy enemy fire twice. He then opted to stay and defend the position. Carter managed to place accurate, deadly fire on the enemy armed with only an M4 carbine rifle. In the time span of several hours, Carter held back the assault force, and prevented the position from being overrun. All of Carter's actions were critical to the defense and prevention of enemy capture of Combat Outpost Keating. Carter's constant drive to fulfill his duty above and beyond gave him the bravery to perform these and more courageous actions.

Next, is the selfless and sacrificial behavior fulfilled by Specialist Ty Carter. With no concern for his safety and his wounds, Carter charged through a gauntlet of enemy rocket propelled grenades and machine gun fire to reach and aid a seriously wounded soldier who had been bound in an exposed position. Carter carried the soldier to cover and performed first aid on the soldier that extended his life. Through his ambition, Carter again navigated through enemy fire to check on an injured soldier. Carter also recovered the squad's radio which allowed his team to coordinate an evacuation plan. With the aid of his comrades providing covering fire, Carter helped move the wounded soldier through heavy enemy fire to the aid station which was 100 meters away. In the line of duty Carter always put his fellow soldiers' lives above his own life. On that day Carter fought to save the lives of his fellow soldiers.

Last, is why I admire Specialist Ty Carter so much. I admire people who think of others before they think of themselves. Carter risked his life and sacrificed so much in order to keep his fellow soldiers safe and also to keep the country he fights for safe. Admirable people are courageous and show bravery at all times. Carter could have just fought to the standards of his call to duty, but he went above and beyond to do his job. Carter fought with bravery and courage throughout that whole day. Finally, I truly believe that Carter is a true American through his actions on October 3 2009.

Clearly, Specialist Ty M. Carter is deserving of the Medal of Honor because of his brave and selfless actions on that day. Carter is the most admirable Medal of Honor recipient because, he is not only brave and courageous, but he also acts with utter selflessness. I will never be able to live up to the standards of the men who have received the Medal of Honor, can you?



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

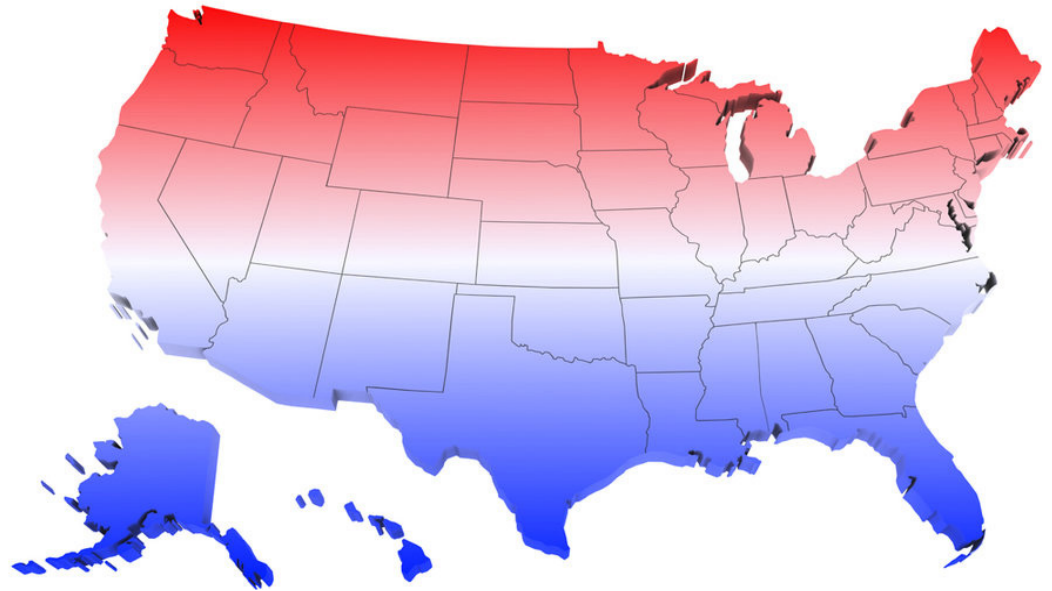
Brett Hund

“The valiant never taste of death but once.” William Shakespeare was correct in saying this, but sometimes people’s valiant efforts are not in vain and in fact live to tell the tale. In America, the heroic efforts performed by people are awarded by giving them the Medal of Honor and one that lived to tell the tale was Pfc. Arthur J. Jackson, who bravely single-handedly protected his unit’s left flank, taking out pillbox after pillbox and ended up being an essential part in taking the southern sector of the Island of Peleliu in World War II. I admire his efforts because he showed relentlessness and that even the little guy can save the day.

“Be relentless and then you will break through.” Pfc. Jackson took this to a literal effect, breaking through the lines and taking machine-gun positions, but I take this to a more figurative meaning. Pfc. Jackson showed me that, in life, the only way to get anywhere is to be relentless. Not in such a way that you emotionally or physically hurt people purposely, but if that is what it takes, then do it. Don’t take no for an answer and fight for what you believe in with nothing to stop you. Pfc. Jackson also showed me if you are relentless, you could further your efforts and help many people in the process. He also taught me a little bit about the little guy.

Many people don’t think of lower classed people as people that can make a difference, whether it be with military or socially. Pfc. Jackson showed that even if you are lower ranking you can pick up that

pace and save the day. I admire this because it shows that even though I am seen as a non-essential person, I can still show up, do something beyond my duty and be seen as a hero. Even the little guy can do something significant. This is something that will inspire me throughout my life.



The valiant will taste of death but once. The valiant and smart will live to tell the day. I want to be valiant and smart so that I can be the one to tell my story. Pfc. Arthur J. Jackson showed me that being relentless is the key to succeeding and even the little guy can swoop in and save the day. He has shown me many keys for success in life and career.

The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Dianna Anderson

Donald was a Hospital Corpsman Second Class in the U.S. Navy. Ballard received his medal of honor on May 14, 1970 in Quang Tri-Province, Republic in Vietnam. Donald was in Company M, and in the 4th Marines. His nickname was “Doc” which I think is awesome. Donald served in the Navy for 5 years and in the National Guard for 27 years. That is a long time to serve your country, and to be away from your family. If you had any at that time!

Ballard was a brave man in my eyes. Because he treated two marines from heat exhaustion, and directed aid to the other wounded marines near a fire. Also, was throwing grenades, while being a hero! There are other incredible things this man did, but I thought those were my favorite. To save someone’s life is a remarkable experience to accomplish. Donald Ballard ended up getting the highest American award, which was the Medal of Honor!

When Donald got his medal he received it from Richard Nixon and General Westmoreland. That must had been an honor to meet the President. For being honored because of his heroic behaviors in 1970, this man was devoted to serve his country more by thinking about joining the Candidate School, as an officer. That would have to take some time and devotion to accomplish! Most people don’t or can’t put their minds to something to something that extreme! He had to say “no” to the school, that was okay because he went on to do better things, like joining the Kansas National Guard in 1973. The accomplishments and struggles this brave man must have gone through is wonderful for our country!

Probably, no one else could do what this man has! While he was in the National Guard, he was an Ambulance Platoon Leader, a Company Commander, and was tasking Medical Detachment 5. Those were a lot of tasks to do day after day, but this man successfully accomplished it. After a few years Donald got promoted to Colonel, by Major General James F. Rueger. Donald was a Special Assistant to the Adjutant Guard, until he retired in 2000. This man Donald Everett Ballard, was a brave and hardworking soldier that served, and put in the hours to call himself a hero!

That is why I am proud to say I look up to this man, Donald for serving our country, all those years. “Thank you,” is all we can say for your bravery.



The Medal of Honor Recipient I Admire Most

Isaac Elliss

I thank Mr. Ballard for his heroic actions in the Vietnam War. I am very grateful for what this man has done for his friends, family, country, and myself. Ballard, Donald E. For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life and beyond the call of duty while serving as a HC2c. With all circumstances, while taking enemy fire, Mr. Ballard threw himself on top of a hand grenade. Fortunately the grenade failed to detonate and Mr. Ballard continued to assist his comrades. It amazes me how someone could be that heroic for his friends without thinking about himself in return.

Mr. Ballard has been a great inspiration towards me and has taught me to always do the right thing for others, regardless whether the consequences may affect me. I will continue to live by the inspiration he has given me and always do my best to assist others even if they can't do anything for me. I will be very honored to take what he has done and use it to assist my friends, my family, anyone who may need it including himself. I will always try my best so I can live another day helping others for the betterment of this world. The greatest reward I can achieve by doing this is knowing that I helped the people around me.

Once again, I thank Ballard, Donald E, for his actions in the Vietnam War and I am grateful that I can take after him and help out anyone who may need it. We all appreciate what you have done and we are all very grateful for what you have done for this country, your friends, and us. I will continue to live by Mr. Ballard's actions for the better of our world.

