

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest



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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**Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest**  
**Forty-one Medal of Honor recipients came to Pueblo last year for their annual convention. If you took part in this convention in any way or attended an event with a Medal of Honor recipient, what impact did that experience have on you?**  
**Or if you did not participate, what does it mean to you to live in Pueblo, the “Home of Heroes?”**

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association, in cooperation with Pueblo City-County Library District, is pleased to announce the winners of its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Pueblo Home of Heroes Association essay contest.

The following guidelines were required:

All entries must be typed.

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

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

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

Select a Medal of Honor recipient other than our local Pueblo heroes.

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association judges:

Elementary School – Chris Bolt and Don and Mary Gray

Middle School – Nathan and Mary Cape

High School – Gary and Karen Micheli and Michael Sumida

There were 345 entries - 98 elementary school level, 81 middle school level and 166 high school level.

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 evident from the essays that the contest achieved its purpose of soliciting outcomes from the students in Pueblo County to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society Convention held in Pueblo in September 2017 and of what our kids feel about living in the Home of Heroes. We were delighted to read so many positive experiences told by these wonderful students and we plan to share many of them with the Medal of Honor recipients and their Society.



# Winners

## Elementary School

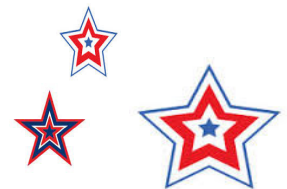
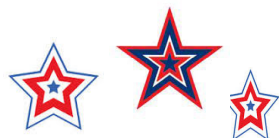
1st Place	Kiersten Kinney – Corwin International Magnet School – Mr. Hutchins
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Benjamin Buchanan – Swallows Charter Academy – Ms. Smith
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Wyatt Pace – Corwin International Magnet School – Mr. Hutchins
Honorable Mention	Abigail Fadenrecht – Prairie Winds Elementary School – Ms. Pacheck
Honorable Mention	Hannah Garcia – Belmont Elementary School – Mrs. Leyh
Honorable Mention	Grant Spangler – Swallows Charter Academy – Mrs. Maher

## Middle School

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Kyra Burton – Pueblo School for Arts and Sciences – Ms. Rodell
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Patrice Sais – Heroes K-8 Academy – Ms. Webster
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Madison Tatinski – Corwin International Magnet School – Ms. Bogart
Honorable Mention	Shayleianna Bachicha – Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Robson
Honorable Mention	Alyssa Durning – Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Robson
Honorable Mention	Gabe Stecker – Homeschool – Ms. Stecker

## High School

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Sara Salazar – Pueblo West High School – Mr. Dilcher
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Kaleya McCollum – East High School – Ms. Vivoda
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Grant Lisi – Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Emond
Honorable Mention	Ukiah Fox West-Duran – East High School – Mr. LeMasters
Honorable Mention	Thomas O’Conner – Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Emond
Honorable Mention	Chloe White – Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Emond





Kiersten Kinney

Corwin International Magnet School – Mr. Hutchins

## Home of Heroes

Last school year, in my fourth grade year, I entered the Pueblo Home of Heroes writing contest. After submitting an essay about Peter C. Lemon, I won third place. Then in the early fall of 2017, I joined the other contest winners at a brunch with Medal of Honor recipients. At the brunch I met and ate breakfast with Medal of Honor recipient, Robert M. Patterson. While there, I learned many things, and heard many stories from Mr. Patterson. I'll never forget that morning I had with Robert M. Patterson.

The first thing I did when I met Mr. Patterson was shake his hand and take a picture with the funny, kind Medal of Honor Recipient. But while taking the picture, Mr. Patterson slipped a smooth token into my hand. As I studied it I noticed that one side was flat and had a golden outline of a medal, with a blue outline of a ribbon holding the medal. Above the medal, the coin read, "Medal of Honor," and under the medal is written, "United States Army." Curious, I flipped the coin over and examined a picture of young Robert Patterson, and his full name above his picture. Under the picture is the word, "Vietnam," signifying the war he was in. Around his picture is a woven gold design. It is to this day, the most cherished thing from the writing contest. While joking around, he explained to me a secret about the coin. That secret was, when you walk into a room with someone, slam the coin that he gave me down onto the table. If the other person doesn't have a coin that outranks yours, then they owe you an ice cream! For a while we joked around about how to make spitballs, but there were no paper napkins for him to demonstrate, that was a bummer!

Then I even had a chance to meet a local Medal of Honor recipient, Drew D. Dix came over to the table I was sitting at and I was able to take a picture with him. A cool thing was, a woman I was sitting next to is someone Drew Dix saved while fighting. Something that really amazed me, was that when you think of a Medal of Honor recipient, you think of someone different than ordinary people. But they're normal citizens that did outstanding acts of heroism.

These people at the convention put others' lives before theirs. And that just amazes me just thinking about it because most people wouldn't risk their lives like these people did. After eating breakfast with Medal of Honor recipients, I realized how amazing these people are to have risked their lives in a whole new way. Having fun with Robert M. Patterson, was amazing and I still can't believe that I met Drew Dix and Mr. Patterson. This experience also helped me open my mind and think of what they did. The Home of Heroes brunch was one of the best experiences of my life!



# Benjamin Buchanan

Swallows Charter Academy – Ms. Smith

## What it Means to Live in the Home of Heroes

What does it mean to live in the “Home of Heroes”? For me it means pride. Since I was the age of six I have had a passion for our military and its history. As I learned more about the military I learned about the Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is a symbol of going above and beyond, a medal of highest due respect for heroic actions in the field of combat. As General George Patton once said, “I would trade my immortal soul for that medal” and I can see why. I think William J. Crawford put it well when he said, “Money is nothing, if you lose your country.” So did Harold A. Fritz “America- love it or leave it, many have died to protect it.” Our lives would never be the same if we lost our country.

The members of our military commit to selfless acts, including the sacrifice of time and life, say what you want to say, but if those selfless men and women didn’t protect us we could be speaking German or Japanese right now. We might not exist if those people hadn’t protected us. “What is it in the water out there in Pueblo, all you guys turn out to be heroes?” President Dwight D. Eisenhower said that as he placed the Medal of Honor on Raymond G. Murphy, Hero in Korea. The reason why I saved that quote for last is because it explains it perfectly. We have four “Medal of Honor” recipients, which is the most per capita.

Now, another reason I feel prideful that I live in the “Home of Heroes” is that we, the people of Pueblo might not have the luxury fanciest buildings or tallest skyscrapers, but we have something better. We have pride, and that pride lies within our Medal of Honor recipients William J. Crawford, Carl L. Sitter, Raymond G. Murphy, and Drew D. Dix. We have our heroes and to me, that’s all the luxury I need.



Wyatt Pace

Corwin International Magnet School – Mr. Hutchins

## Home of Heroes

I feel really proud that I live in Pueblo, the “Home of Heroes.” It makes me feel great that so many people are daring and kind in Pueblo, Colorado. It’s amazing that Pueblo produced Medal of Honor recipients. Pueblo has more Medal of Honor recipients than any other city in the United States. President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “There must be something in the water in Pueblo, Colorado.”

The four Medal of Honor recipients from Pueblo are Drew Dix, William Crawford, Carl Sitter and Jerry Murphy. Drew Dix is the only Pueblo recipient still alive. He served in the Army in the Vietnam War. Carl Sitter served in the Korean War in 1950. Jerry Murphy served in the Marines during the Korean War. William Crawford was in the Army during World War II. He is the only recipient from Pueblo who served during War World II.

After William Crawford retired from the Army he worked as a custodian at the Air Force Academy. He must have been a humble man who wasn’t boastful. I don’t think most heroes would serve as a janitor. But, he often mentored the cadets while he was sweeping their halls. He didn’t receive the actual medal till forty years after World War II in 1985 when President Ronald Reagan delivered the medal at the Air Force Academy where he still worked as a janitor.

One reason I am proud to live in Pueblo is that when you walk downtown there are so many military monuments. There are statues recognizing the recipients. There is also a Veterans’ Memorial Bridge on the Riverwalk honoring veterans from Pueblo. My grandfather’s name is one listed on the bridge. The Center for American Values is a museum honoring Medal of Honor recipients from all across the US. There are so many veterans in Pueblo, that’s why there are so many patriots.

I predict that there will be more Medal of Honor recipients in Pueblo in the future. But, it also makes me sad that so many people from Pueblo have died in America’s wars. But, recipients like the ones in Pueblo, saved lives. I’m also proud of the culture in Pueblo. The culture in Pueblo is proud of family, faith and our country. I think that our culture helped make Pueblo more heroic.

The heroism of Pueblo’s veterans and the culture of Pueblo are that Pueblo is the “Home of Heroes.” I have many people to look up to, right here in Pueblo.





Abigail Fadenrecht

Prairie Winds Elementary School – Ms. Pacheck

## Pueblo Home of Heroes

Even though I was not living when four soldiers of Pueblo, Colorado received the Congressional Medal of Honor, it made my life in Pueblo even more amazing. It changed the way I look at things the way I did before I knew that Pueblo is a home to heroes. I learned about who received the Congressional Medal of Honor, and saw the impact on my life.

In 1953, soldiers William J. Crawford, Carl L. Sitter, Raymond G. “Jerry” Murphy and Drew D. Dix received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Each of the recipients were in different areas, but their hometown was the same. In 1993, Colorado Representative Scott McInnis read about these soldiers and decided that Pueblo was the first city to have four living recipients. This award is the highest military medal any soldier could receive.

Of course, the impact of my life is based on what we see, and do, every day in Pueblo, and the people in my military family. Every day, at any school in Pueblo, we recite the Pledge of Allegiance. During any event, we sing the National Anthem, all to respect the ones who have served. Most of the time in the suburbs, helicopters pass over people’s homes. Personally, this makes me think of the Air Force and everyone in it. Like most people, I live in a military family. My grandfather was a soldier in Vietnam. My great, great grandfather was awarded the Purple Heart, along with a Silver and Bronze Star after World War II, and my cousin is currently serving in the Marine Corps.

Being born and raised in Pueblo where so many medal recipients have lived has shown me how our community encourages patriotic values. It is important for our community to pass on through the generations how special our freedom is.

Fighting for our freedom, love for our country, community and people, pride of where you came from, and accomplishments are all things that our amazing city encourages for every citizen in it. Our community wants us to cherish what we have for our country, and to fight for those things when they are taken away from us, to stand up for ourselves, others and our nation. Pueblo is a place to be proud of what we have and to show being brave about what we have fought for. Our country is very valuable, even though there are some things that are not, because our country has freedom and pride in everything. Everyone in Pueblo would like to keep our country safe and peaceful because of the Congressional Medal of Honor recipients.

Since my life is impacted by Pueblo “Home of Heroes”, and by my military family, I am very proud to be one of many young citizens of Pueblo, Colorado because of the city I live in and because of the four recipients that received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1953.



Hannah Garcia

Belmont Elementary School – Mrs. Leyh

## Home of Heroes

I feel honored about living in Pueblo, “Home of Heroes.” To begin, we have a lot of everyday heroes working hard to protect us from everyday enemies. My grandpa is one of them. He was in the Air Force. He used to tell me all about how he jumped out of airplanes. That counts as a hero to me. Another example is a police officer. A police officer does not only arrest bad guys, they make sure everybody is going the speed limit so nobody gets in a car crash. The next everyday hero is a firefighter. They help a ton. They save people from fires and they even save animals from fires! Next, there is the Center for American Values. This place has all the Medal of Honor recipients from Pueblo and all over the country. They have the Medal of Honor in their museum.

Did you know that there are three different types of Medals? There is the Air Force Medal of Honor, the Army Medal of Honor and the Navy Medal of Honor. Each of them have a blue ribbon with 13 stars for the thirteen colonies. You get the Medal of Honor by putting someone else’s life before your own life. You can also get it by doing a valor action against the enemy. The reason for feeling honored to live in Pueblo is that there are so many role models that we can look up to. I am talking about the Medal of Honor recipients that we have here in Pueblo, Colorado. One of the Medal of Honor recipients is Mr. Crawford or also known as William Crawford. William Crawford fought in World War II. He got the Medal of Honor because during the battle, Crawford moved forward twice through the continuous fire and using hand grenades and his rifle, he destroyed the enemy’s gun nest.

The next Medal of Honor recipient is Carl Sitter. Carl Sitter was stationed in Korea and he was in the Marines. Sitter received the Medal of Honor because he exposed himself to enemy fire to lead this rifle platoon. When he was hurt he didn’t want to leave his mission.

The next Medal of Honor recipient was Drew Dix. He was in the Army and he was stationed in Vietnam. He saved firefighters that tried to save other civilians from a burning building.

The last Medal of Honor recipient was Raymond G. Murphy. He also goes by “Jerry.” Murphy was stationed in Korea and he was in the Marines. Murphy received the Medal of Honor because he was wounded in battle. Obviously, I feel very honored to be able to live in Pueblo, “Home of Heroes.”



Grant Spangler

Swallows Charter Academy – Mrs. Maher

## Untitled

I have seen 41 Medal of Honor recipients. They are wonderful people. I saw several from the war in Afghanistan, even more in Vietnam, and one from World War II. Many of them don't remember what they did because they were just doing their duty. It changed my life to see how many people risked their lives to keep America free. I now always feel safe knowing people are protecting me and millions of other people. Truly I was moved by how many people helped today's standards. To me, living in Pueblo is not just living in a normal city, it is a huge honor I can enjoy. I like to visit the Home of Heroes Memorial. I also loved the Lieutenant Dan band concert with 41 Medal of Honor recipients. I have met many veterans and am good friends with a few but seeing a Medal of Honor recipient is a great honor and changed my life. I saw one from World War II. I was excited about this because I love World War II history. It was a wonderful experience seeing these recipients. Many do not know what they did except their duty. But others remembered what they did. A couple said they only did what was expected of them and did not deserve an honor as great as the Medal of Honor. Many saved the lives of other soldiers in battle. It had a huge impact on my life that someday I might be a soldier myself. These people are my role models and probably many other children's. Someday I hope to be at least half as good as one of them. So, I am glad this event came to Pueblo. It was a very positive impact on my life. I also want to thank these great people for their service to our country.





Kyra Burton

Pueblo School for Arts and Sciences – Ms. Rodell

## How I was moved during the Medal of Honor Presentation

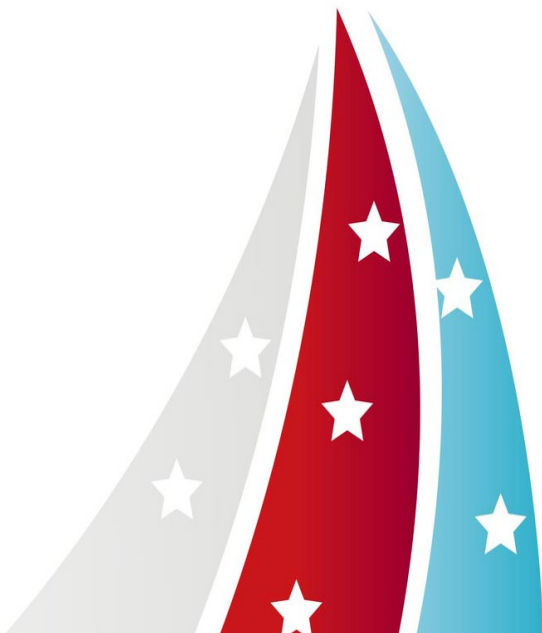
As a proud student from Pueblo School for Arts and Sciences, I was very lucky to have the honor of meeting the two Medal of Honor recipients, James McCloughan and Hershel Williams. This experience had a very significant impact on me. This presentation really opened up my eyes to what I don't see on the battlefield. Now I am even more grateful for my rights, freedom, and my country overall.

Hershel Williams was the first one to present. His speech about how your name is very important was very moving. He said that your name is what makes you different from everybody else and that made me appreciate my name a lot more. I always thought that your name was just a title that we got once we were born, now I know that our names are much more than I thought. Hershel Williams also said that we should appreciate our teachers a lot more than we do already. We should appreciate our teachers because without them, we wouldn't be able to get a big job, and make a big earning. Our teachers are very important when it comes to our lives and education. Without them, we wouldn't be successful. Hershel Williams' speech probably impacted me the most out of the two speeches.

The second and last to present was James McCloughan. To start off with his presentation, he sang America the Beautiful. When James sang America the Beautiful, I attempted to sing along with the rest of the school. I wasn't very good because I didn't know the words to the song, but I still gave it my best try. I remember that James McCloughan said that he was a medic in the Vietnam War, and he can't unsee the things that he saw during that war. He said that sometimes he would have to entirely drop what he was doing to save someone's life as a medic. After James McCloughan's presentation I was really upset about how the Vietnam War veterans were treated once they got back from Vietnam. It was really horrible the way that they were treated because at least they tried and we as in most Americans didn't appreciate that and thought that instead they should just be extremely rude to them. Yeah, that will totally fix all of their problems.

This assembly really had an impact on me. It opened up my eyes to what goes on in the part I don't see of war. It also made me believe in myself a little bit more because Hershel Williams and James McCloughan were normal people, just like us and with a huge amount of bravery and selflessness, they became heroes. I thought that I could never be like them, but now I have more belief in myself. I am now more grateful for the military because they fight so I don't have to and that is extremely kind of them. I think differently of the military now

because of that presentation and I am very proud of my military and my country. This presentation has probably been my favorite assembly that I have been part of all the time that I have been at this school. Another thing that was pretty cool was that Hershel Williams flipped the coin for the Super Bowl. I thought that it was really cool that I met him in my hometown and now I'm seeing him on TV flipping the coin for the NFL. I think that this assembly was very extraordinary and inspiring, overall I just really loved having the honor of these men speaking at my school.



# Patrice Sais

## Heroes K-8 Academy – Ms. Webster

### Home of the Heroes

I think if there were more Medal of Honor Recipients, the world would be a better place. The Medal of Honor is the highest military award offered to someone in the armed forces. Webster's dictionary defines a hero as "a person admired for achievements and noble qualities". Medal of Honor recipients are true heroes in my eyes. Pueblo has four Medal of Honor recipients: Drew D. Dix (Army), Raymond G. "Jerry" Murphy (Marines), William J. Crawford (Army) and Carl L. Sitter (Marines).

Staff Sergeant Dix is one of Pueblo's Medal of Honor Recipients. Dix saved a nurse trapped in a house in the city of Chau Phu while fighting in Vietnam. He also led a task force and saved eight civilians from a building that was under fire. My mom is a nurse and his story touches my heart in many ways. A huge "thank you" to Dix for representing Pueblo, Colorado and our country.

Lieutenant Murphy saved many wounded Marines while wounded himself. He went against orders and made several trips through heavy fire to move wounded soldiers to safety. He was wounded during all of this, but he still kept going. Murphy's action showed true bravery. I remember when my brother broke his arm at school and no one knew it was broken. He went the whole day doing school work, went home and did homework, and no one knew it was broken. My brother was very brave to handle the pain, and that is nothing compared to what Murphy went through.

Private Crawford earned his medal of honor for service in Italy. He attacked German soldiers and helped a wounded soldier. He was captured and became a prisoner in a Nazi camp for over a year. I have seen movies about World War II, and I can't imagine how he must have felt being a prisoner. I can barely handle being grounded.

Pueblo does have four Medal of Honor recipients, but Pueblo also has many non-medal heroes. My mom is a hero to me. She is a nurse and helps mentally ill elderly people. My Uncle Gino Velasquez fought in the Vietnam War; my Uncle Jesse Medina fought in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. My brother Jeremy Aragon trained as a Pueblo Sheriff Explorer and helped officers crack down on underage drinking and smoking. I am happy to have great role models in my life.

Other non-medal heroes in our community are police officers, firefighters, judges, nurses, doctors and teachers. Every day these people make a choice to help others. They help keep us safe, well, and smart. I believe these people have big hearts to do the jobs they do. I hope one day that I can be a nurse and help people too.

If you drive around town, you can be reminded of our Medal of Honor heroes. There are statues downtown at the Convention Center that were made in honor of the recipients. The Pueblo Riverwalk has a memorial of Pueblo Veterans. There are streets named after the recipients, and my school is Heroes Academy. Seeing these reminders of our heroes reminds me that I can be a hero too. I can learn at school and stay away from drugs. I can be a good person while I am out in public. I can use good manners when I speak to people. I won't be a bully and speak up when I see someone being bullied. Mariah Carey sang, "There's a hero, if you look inside your heart." This means that change first starts inside us.

Pueblo has past, present and future heroes. Past heroes of Pueblo are the Medal of Honor recipients and our Veterans. Present heroes are our service people. Future heroes can include me and my friends.

I am proud to be a Pueblo citizen. I can learn from these Medal of Honor recipients and do good things with my life. They made a way for me to be able to have the freedom I have.

Freedom to go to school, play outside, and even vote when I'm old enough. I hope one day that I can be a good role model. I gladly salute Pueblo's Medal of Honor Recipients.



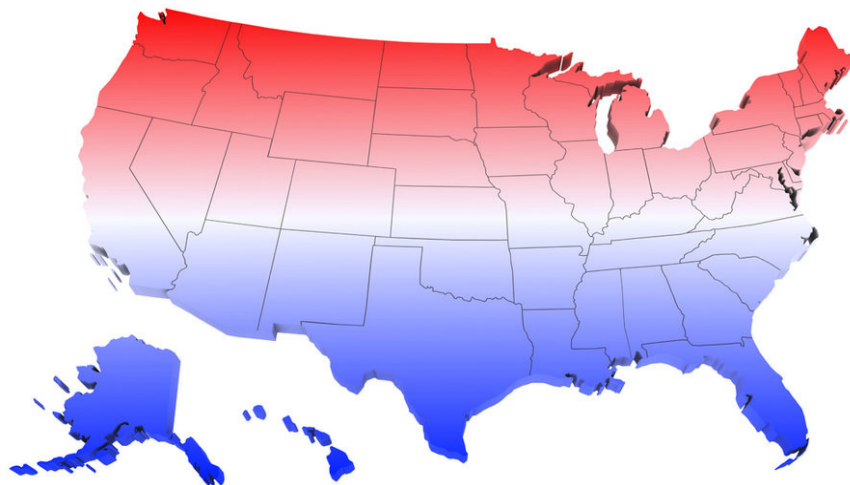


Madison Tatinski

Corwin International Magnet School – Ms. Bogart

## Home of Heroes

It means so much to me to live in Pueblo, Colorado, the Home of Heroes. Having grown up here, I have learned so much about our hometown. During a recent summer, I decided to do some research about our Pueblo heroes. I took many trips to the Riverwalk to visit the Center for American Values. I have also traveled to the Convention Center to see the memorials outside and inside. The idea that four Medal of Honor recipients originated from my hometown is fascinating. It blows my mind to think of what these men had to go through to receive this exceptional award. It must have been such an honor. Looking at the memorial and learning all about these important heroes has inspired me to do well for our city, country, and world. These men have made a huge impression on me. They have been a great example that no matter who you are, you can make a difference on our Earth. I am astounded that our city does not have the only Medal of Honor winners but our state has many honorees as well. To me, these men are great role models for young people like me. They teach us to fight for what we believe in and that hard work and standing up for each other can greatly pay off. Yes, it is not likely that everyone who believes this will win a special prize or even be publicly recognized, but you can receive gratitude and the feeling of accomplishment. Everyday I push to work hard and go above and beyond what is expected of me. President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "What is it... something in the water out there in Pueblo? All you turn out to be heroes!" I believe that this is one hundred percent true. You do not have to receive a Medal of Honor to be a hero. You can be a hero to lots of people, or one person. People in my life have taught me how to be a hero everyday! You can be a hero to yourself by beating your high score or getting a good grade. You can be a hero to one person by helping them carry groceries or holding a door open. You can be a hero to many people by doing simple tasks everyday. These idols have encouraged me to make simple heroic actions part of my everyday routine. I try very hard to be a role model like these men and do things to inspire others. I use every opportunity presented to me to give back to our community, volunteer, help others, and show kindness. Doing things to be heroic makes my heart feel happy and it makes me feel like I am making them proud. I am so honored to be a part of Pueblo, the only city to have four Medal of Honor recipients and a city that is proud to support our military. Pueblo may be small in size, but we are definitely not small when it comes to our pride in our hometown heroes. These men were amazing men who displayed large amounts of courage, pride, and strength. As I get older, I hope to have the same qualities that these four amazing men did/do. I want to have courage and be kind. I want to be strong and proud of who I am. I think that everyone should strive to have these qualities and should aim to be their own hero. Heroism is part of what this town is and what our culture is. Courage is part of what defines us and we are proud to show it.



# Shayleianna Bachicha

## Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Robson



### Home of Heroes

“Dad! Can we go there, to Pueblo, the Home of Heroes?” the child asked.

“Why? Pueblo is such a small town, why don’t we stay here at the farm, and go ride some horses?” The father asked the child.

“You don’t understand, even though riding horses is fun, you can learn different things. Like Pueblo, Colorado is the only place in the whole United States with four Medal of Honor heroes!” the child exclaimed. Continued the child, “Special Forces Drew D. Dix, was in Vietnam in 1968. It all began when Dix was pulled off of his beloved A-team and reassigned to Central Intelligence Agency, he had to lead the Provincial Reconnaissance Unit to fight the communist aggression. What earned Dix his Medal of Honor was a fifty-six hour battle against two Vietnam Cong battalions, Dix led and outnumbered at least thirty to one small contingent of troops. Determined to rescue the civilians and restore Chau Doc, Dix took matters into his own hands. Because of that, Drew D. Dix was the first enlisted Special Forces to have been awarded the Medal of Honor.

There was also, “The Fighter,” or William J. Crawford, he was in the World War II. When Crawford was young he learned to defend himself by boxing, as a soldier during World War II, his fighting skills were put to the test. In Italy, 1943, is where Crawford’s path to the Medal of Honor began. Before he took matters into his own hands, he found three German machine guns nests, and unable to alert his fellow soldiers of the awaiting ambush, he went alone. He single handedly engaged the enemy-with only his rifle and grenades, he destroyed all three enemy emplacements. Crawford volunteered to stay behind with an injured friend, only to be captured. He endured nineteen months in a Nazi prison camp. When his hometown golden gloves experience came to the surface, he was put to the test, and knocked out a Nazi guard, during a fight. But back at home his family thought Crawford was killed in action, and the Medal of Honor was presented to his father posthumously. Crawford then was reunited with his family in 1945, and they went back to Colorado to live a humble life.”

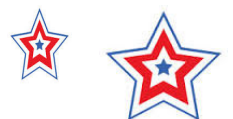
“The Captain” aka Carl Sitter. On November 29, 1950 at the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea Captain Carl Sitter received his fateful orders to take East Hill. He and his team traveled to East Hill and were outnumbered at least twenty to one, they engaged the Chinese troops for three nights. During the battle Sitter felt as if he were protected by an invisible shield. Even though he was wounded several times he refused evacuation and instead led his men to safety out of the Chosin Reservoir trap, he made sure to leave no one behind. At the age, seventy-seven, was Carl Sitter’s death, just one month prior to graduating from a seminary University with a four year degree.

Raymond G. (Jerry) Murphy or “The Lieutenant.” February 3, 1953 a cold day, turned grim, quickly. Murphy was the third platoon leader with the assignment of evacuation. Lieutenant Murphy felt as if his fellow Marines might be in trouble, during the progress. So he started to carry out his fellow Marines, in this process he was wounded. Eighteen Marines were killed, 70 others were wounded in the attack on Ungok. At the age of 77 Raymond G. (Jerry) Murphy died. April 6 he saved many wounded Marines even while he was wounded himself, he was found dead at a veterans nursing home in Pueblo, Colorado. Murphy’s death leaves 110 recipients alive, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

The father answered, “Fine!” he chuckled, “we can go, that is a lot of facts!”

“Yay!” The child happily yelled.

“Wow! So there were four, Drew Dix, William J. Crawford, Carl Sitter, and Raymond G. (Jerry) Murphy, they all risked their own life for others, and because they did that we have each other.” The father paused, with the face expression that he was, thinking. “Yes, we can go to Pueblo, Colorado, but now you have to explain this to mom.”



Alyssa Durning

Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Robson

## Home of Heroes

Patriotism and pride course through the veins of this Home of Heroes. Love for our great country ignites a flame within the people of this city, inspiring them to protect those who cannot protect themselves. Because of this commitment to others and the defense of our freedom, this makes Pueblo a truly extraordinary place to live.

Pueblo is well known for being the “Home of Heroes,” the hometown of four Medal of Honor recipients: Carl Sitter, William Crawford, Raymond Murphy, and Drew Dix. These courageous men saved countless lives in the face of almost certain death. While the accomplishments of these four famous soldiers are widely celebrated, many other veterans can also be found throughout our town. The Veteran’s Bridge over our Riverwalk holds the names of thousands of Pueblo’s brave veterans who so selflessly served our country. But these names don’t even begin to describe what our veterans faced to protect our freedom, both foreign and domestically.

Many citizens of Pueblo have military experience of their own or veterans in their family. These soldiers return home with awe-inspiring tales from their service in troubled lands. For many, their experiences affected them deeply. In my own family, military service runs deep. In the Army, my papa was one of the soldiers who protected James Meredith, the first African-American student enrolled at the University of Mississippi. This occurred during the violent protests against integration that claimed the lives of two innocents and injured a total of three hundred people (Biography.com). My papa also served in South Korea as a Private First Class monitoring classified documents and code books. In his spare time, he helped at the local orphanage, built a playground and a bathhouse with running water for the children, and threw birthday parties for the orphans. After returning from military service, my papa became a firefighter, furthering the good he has done for our country and our city.

While our town is famous for our four Medal of Honor recipients, there are other veterans within our community who deserve our thanks and appreciation. There are heroes fighting for us every day in different ways who deserve recognition. Many of our police officers, firefighters, doctors, and even volunteers are veterans who work non-stop to build a better Pueblo for us and future generations. This dedication is what makes living in this unique city so special to me.



Gabe Stecker

Homeschool – Ms. Stecker

## Meeting Medal of Honor Recipients

I had the opportunity to go to a lunch with several Medal of Honor recipients, and was privileged to talk to some of them. It was truly amazing what these soldiers do to protect us and their comrades. It makes me feel safe, at home, and like I need to be out there, helping them.

I like it here, in The Land of the Free, the Home of the Brave. It makes me feel safe to live here, because people like Staff Sergeant Petry, who lost a limb to protect our freedom. These soldiers are willing to die to protect us. They put themselves in so much danger, it is unbelievable. Staff Sergeant Petry, who picked up a live grenade, is very selfless. I do not think I could go near a live grenade, much less pick one up! It is truly amazing, what these soldiers go through to protect us.

Do you feel at home here? Well, I do! Why, you might ask? Because I know that there are people protecting us at all times. Take Staff Sergeant Dix, a local hero, for example. He did everything to rescue civilians during the Vietnam War. He heroically rescued 14 US and free world civilians, captured 20 enemy soldiers, and 15 weapons, in two days! He also rallied other soldiers to keep fighting.

Awesome, right? It gives me a cozy feeling inside, knowing that there are soldiers that will do anything to ensure our safety.

Do you ever feel like you need to give back to someone who helped you and did not expect anything back? Well, that's what I feel like when I hear about soldiers fighting in wars, providing security for special events, and going to special events with Medal of Honor recipients. It feels like I should help them in the field, in their houses, and in every way possible. I was going to go into the National Guard when I grow up, but seeing what these soldiers go through, the National Guard, well, just does not cut it. I want to be out there, helping them. I want to feel like I have the ability to help them protect our freedoms, and no matter what it takes. Even if I need to be a medic, I feel like I need to be out in the field, helping those soldiers who die for our country. I want, no I need to help them in any way.

In summary, meeting these soldiers made me feel safe, at home, and like I need to help them. It was truly awesome, to meet Medal of Honor recipients, talk to them, and get to know them.



Sara Salazar

Pueblo West High School – Mr. Dilcher

## One Spark

Silence. Everyone is talking aloud to their friends in the back hallway, except for me. I am in the hallway physically, but mentally I am very distant. I'm about to meet real life superheroes and I do not speak a word. I ponder quite a bit as my florescent green converses drag on the floor and leave subtle marks. "Keep cool Sara, stay calm." I talk to myself a lot when I get nervous and that day I was bouncing off the walls with anxiety. Today would be the day that I get to meet a superhero and I could not mess this one up.

"Alright guys, these are really important people. We need to treat them with the upmost respect." Its time, my knees are buckling, for I am so nervous I forgot to bend them while standing at attention. The bus that transported the recipients and families arrives and it's as if the world slows down. The minutes drag along; it feels like I've been waiting my whole life for this very moment and it could not be here soon enough. Friends, family, and recipients gather by the door as fellow cadets start to escort them to their seats. I'm up next. A tall, slender man approaches me with a large smile and eyes filled with optimism. Robert Foley, the same man who had come to our school a few days' prior walks up to me as if he had known me my entire life. "Hi I'm Robert, what's your name young lady?" I start to mutter, but I can't seem to get words out of my mouth. He looked at me with a concerned frown. "Are you alright?" he asks. I nod and try to reorganize my thoughts. By this time my brain had totally caught up with what I was doing and I finally introduced myself to him and marched my way into the auditorium where the rest of the recipients sat with their families and small talked about how nice the venue was.

Although he had no earthly idea who I was, what my intentions were, or how I even got here, Robert Foley continued to talk to ME. Out of all people in the world, he decided to have a conversation with me. He had asked about how I got into JROTC, and if I was seeking to join the military. I responded with a simple, "No." I was expecting a disappointed frown, an odd look, or even a "Why are you here then?" but all I received back was small grin and a head nod. "What do you want to do when you graduate? He politely asked. I told him about my plans to be a Forensic Pathologist. He looked at me with a lit face. "Ah dead people huh?" I laughed and continued walking.

This man had no idea I was. All he knew was I was a girl named Sara who wanted to work with dead people. Despite that he was unfamiliar with me he treated me as if we had known each other personally. There was not any disrespect, awkwardness, or silence. It made me think a lot about our golden rule. He was a prime example of "Treat people how you want to be treated." From there on out, I wanted to set an example just like he did that night. When I had finally arrived to the place he chose to sit, I thanked him for his time and began to gesture towards a handshake. To my surprise he leaned in and gave me a hug. "No, thank you for showing me to my seat, I would have been lost without you." I said my final goodbyes and continued to head towards the hallway once again.

While sitting in the crowded hall, I began to think about first impressions; how extremely important they are and how much they can improve somebody's day. I made a promise to myself that I would try as hard as humanly possible to be as great of a leader as Robert Foley had become. That night changed my perspective of how people nowadays treat others. I wanted to start a chain reaction. No, I was not going to earn a medal of honor, go into the army, or save the world. But I was determined to be a better individual. I know I cannot change the world overnight, but I knew if I wanted to see a difference in how our society acts, I needed to look in the mirror, and make a change. That evening of the award ceremony I was reminded that first impressions matter and that random acts of kindness may not change the world, but it can mean the world to another. Always be polite, always be kind, and always strive to treat others how you want to be treated. It only takes one spark to start a fire, one person with kindness to light up thousands, and one person to start a chain reaction in the negative world we live in. I will not give up until society is filled with optimism and positivity. I hope others will follow my path as I take these small but very meaningful steps towards enlightening those around me.

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# Kayleya McCollum

## East High School – Ms. Vivoda

### Home of Heroes

As I entered the auditorium it felt like I entered a room full of emotion. I had no idea what I was about to experience. As I entered the room of people I had no clue what the Medal of Honor was or even knew a Medal of Honor recipient existed. Both Medal of Honor recipients, Sgt. Ty Carter and Specialist John Baca both impacted my life when they came to talk to each and every student that attended my school's auditorium that morning. As the JROTC marched in with the flags, it felt as if it was a regular assembly, but to me it felt more respected. For a second I felt I was the only person who had no idea what was going on. As the JROTC marched down the aisles, silence grew throughout the whole auditorium. And everything was silent from that point on. "It's just amazing, they did that for our country, for us to be here at this school learning," said a student from East High School. And I most certainly agree with him. Hearing the story of war come directly at me is a life changing experience. It makes me realize what I should be grateful for.

Sgt. Ty Carter received his Medal of Honor in 2013 for saving the lives of his fellow servicemen in the war of Afghanistan. As Sgt. Ty Carter spoke his words of knowledge it felt so inspiring. It was drilled in more and more each time he spoke. As he told the story of his time in Afghanistan I created an image. I saw him in war, as I pictured every moment in my head. "I know who the heroes are. I remember their names every day. I see their faces because I actually saw some of them die in front of me. Recipients, I don't think are heroes, I think they are just gentleman trying to live life after a severe trauma," said Carter. He impacted my life by teaching me that not everything should be about me. Even in the moments of his life that he spared out in war, what he has done for our country he doesn't take much credit for. He helped me to believe that the people that died for our country are heroes. Sgt. Ty Carter has impacted my life in a positive way.

The amazing specialist, John Baca, received his medal of honor in 1971. John Baca jumped on top of a grenade and saved eight men. His story was heartbreaking, and as he told it, caused utter despair to soar across each row and column throughout the room. He shared the heartbreaking story of how a fragmentation grenade was suddenly tossed in to their center. Baca unhesitant, without thinking twice about his own safety, covered it with his own helmet and laid his body down on it with his back to the sky. He smothered the explosion and saved the eight men from serious injury or death. It touched not only my heart but the hearts of my fellow peers as I saw tears flow down their faces, including mine as well. As he continued to tell why he got the Medal of Honor he began to lift his shirt. The room was speechless as in front of us we had a beautiful human being with the scars of battle on his stomach. He is a hero to me. He taught me that morning, to value our lives and to value the lives around us, because every life is precious. He taught me to be caring and bold. The vibes that came from the auditorium that day were just so spectacular, that at that moment the school came together in sorrow and saw something so precious in unison.

Being part of Pueblo, "The Home of Heroes" is honestly such a great thing. Being able to be a part of a community that has such passion for the people that have done great things for our country is such an honor. Being able to meet the Medal of Honor recipients is such a joy too. I believe that Pueblo, Colorado is an amazing place, the home of four Medal of Honor recipients. The Medal of Honor is the highest award that can be given out to a member of the United States Armed Forces. To me, being part of Pueblo means having empathy, to have empathy for those that have served for our country such as John Baca. They have empathy



and thank the people that go through trauma during their years in and out of war. It means to be caring just like Sgt. Ty Carter has taught me. And in general, it means helping each other out. We are a community of boldness and braveness. With amazing people all around.

I will never forget my experience. Nor will I forget the tears I shed for the amazing men that came to our school that morning. Seeing those men tell us how they felt was amazing. And being able to meet two of the nation's most amazing men was such a great opportunity. These men impacted my life majorly, knowing I live comfortably because of those men make me love life even more. They make me more grateful than ever. This was an amazing once in a lifetime opportunity to be able to hear the voices of actual heroes. From the moment that I walked into the auditorium to the second I walked out, I was inspired by the great souls. Watching us come together as a school and show respect to those men were amazing. Both men that visited our school left a legacy that follows us each and every day. It's people like them that make Pueblo, Colorado so great. They left an impact on my life. And left a mark on our nation. We are the "Home of Heroes."

Grant Lisi

Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Edmond



## Home of Heroes

The only time I have been in a situation where I had the pleasure to see a Medal of Honor recipient was when Robert Foley came to Pueblo West High School and spoke in front of the student body. He led with explaining his appreciation for the staff of PWHS and how they manage the school's system. His speech was about values and accomplishing the right thing. He didn't explain how he got the Medal of Honor because he doesn't have to. For him to come and speak to the future of Pueblo at the school where respect is a way of life. Respect has been displayed in the past with great pride as Robert Foley explained respect can start healing one of the worst wounds in the United States history the civil war. He explained that the Union was to receive the surrendering Confederate forces in a low valley each lined regiment after regiment of troops. The Confederates marched forward down the valley as they did this a union bugle sounded and the Union soldiers went to the position of attention. This act startled the Confederate commander leaving him stunned. The Confederates drew closer to the Union lines as another bugle sounded and regiment after regiment came to a rifle salute. The confederates laid down their arms, battle flags and tears left their eyes. On the Union side, absolute silence.

The way Robert Foley spoke about the respect for the Confederate army gave me chills. Knowing this was a step into a new direction for America that started with respect. Our school motto is respect is a way of life and Robert Foley acknowledged this statement as being impactful to himself.

I was deeply impacted by his words about our school. To know I am a part of this school fills me with pride and to know that we gain respect as much as we share it around our school by a highly regarded man such as a Medal of Honor recipient. The Pueblo West High school website has our motto on the front page showing our pride in that statement. No place is perfect but the first way to repair anything is to show respect no matter what if you want the healing process to begin. If it is something small like a disagreement or large like the Civil War each needs to be closed in a respectable way. If everyone show a little respect for others, then thing would be better. Living in Pueblo West is great, everyone is nice if you just respect them a little. I personally didn't know Pueblo West was the home of heroes until mid-freshmen year but since then I have looked at Pueblo differently, feeling pride for where I live even though I was not born here. Walking downtown Pueblo seeing landmarks and historical buildings such as the Steel Mill that was a main producer of steel during WWII, shows the beautiful history our town has played in war even though it's not actively in the middle of it. The people of Pueblo is a different story being home to four Medal of Honor recipients. Thinking about my future has been hard but I believe Pueblo has heavily influenced me to choose to go into the service. I am proud to say I grew up in Pueblo.

Knowing I live in the home of heroes fills me with pride knowing that every part of the town loves its history from the school system showing respect and being part of the Medal of Honor recipients' lives to downtown Pueblo dedicating the soldiers from Pueblo who received the highest awards to a soldier of the United States.



# Ukiah Fox West-Duran

## East High School – Mr. LeMasters

### Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor is an award that I have heard about all my life. Despite living in Pueblo, Colorado who has the most Medal of Honor recipients I had yet to meet a live Medal of Honor recipient, until I came to East High School and met a living Medal of Honor recipient.

During an assembly I got to meet both Staff Sgt. Ty Carter and Specialist John Baca. Both of them had amazing stories to tell. What they said inspired me and helped change the way I perceive the world, and even made me more philosophical.

For those who don't know what the Medal of Honor is, It is the highest honor in the military. This medal is awarded for gallantry, and intrepidity at the risk of their own life above and beyond the call of duty. Every recipient of this medal is handed the medal personally by the President of the United States. From the time of the Civil War to now, there have been 3,517 Medal of Honors given to soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsman. A little less than half of these medals were given out during the four years of the American Civil War. The youngest person to ever receive the Medal of Honor was Willie Johnston, who was 13 when he received his award.

The advice that Sgt. Ty Carter had to give to us could apply to almost everything in normal life, not just the military. People fear the unknown, but if we educate ourselves on what we can know and can learn about, then that will make us not afraid to pursue what we want in life. Sgt. Ty Carter said that there will always be hard times, like when he suffered with PTSD, but what matters is our ability to adapt and become resilient. He reminded us that mistakes are something not to shame, but instead embrace and learn from. Afterwards I read up on him a bit more and found out that Sgt. Bradley D. Larson was saved by an ACH, or steal helmet. NSRDEC is a Research and Development Company that makes the gear that saved one of Ty Carter's friend from a sniper bullet. He visited their Facilities and saw how much work goes into making the gear that all soldiers use. Even if the profession that someone choses is not directly in the military, everything helps, from the video games that relax citizens and soldiers alike, to the development of the gear all soldiers wear. The message that I took from him is that whatever I chose to do, I should do it to my utmost ability. Sgt. Ty Carter is doing his own war on PTSD, sharing his experience with PTSD, his misconception, and fight against PTSD. His main message is to go and get professional and family help. Eventually everyone needs outside help, not only with PTSD, but also in the tough times. Ty Carter did the mathematically impossible by not falling in that firefight, not to mention 200 meters of being fired at by RPG's, and bullets to get comrades and ammunition, so in my eyes he is worthy of the Medal of Honor.

Another guest at our school was John Baca, who selflessly covered with his helmet, and jumped on a grenade to save eight men from the fragmentation grenade. Even though he was hard to understand, he was funny, throwing himself on the ground and joking around, and super nice. He also lifted his shirt to show us his scars from the grenade on his stomach. This man who had so selflessly jumped on a grenade is a normal person like the rest of us, laughing joking, and not some hard stone skin super soldier. Everyone is their own person, and all the fighting, hate, and violence toward others is just silly. We are all human, no matter what. In part of a documentary John talked about how a Vietnamese soldier was sitting down in the jungle, and he stopped himself from killing him with his back turned. Instead John Baca went to the soldier showing him his family photos that he had on him, and in turn the soldier showed John his family portraits. Later John went back to Vietnam to help build a clinic with both American and Vietnam soldiers, and the same soldier John talked to and spared was there at the construction. This just goes to show that everyone can get along, even in a time of war. All this hatred in the world is stupid, and John's story inspired me to start thinking of ways to help humans as a whole.





I obviously don't have any definitive answers now but I will not give up. What John Baca did was amazing, and deserving of the Medal of Honor.

These two men's stories have impacted the rest of my life. If they keep doing what they are doing, I know eventually enough people will get their lives going in the right way, and perhaps eventually; the world. War may have given these men the opportunity to receive the Medal of Honor, but war is a horrible cruel thing that destroys. If we can stop trying to kill each other, and just get along, then the millions, no, billions of lives lost in petty feuds would not be in vain. In my eyes the Medal of Honor recipients are heroes that should be heard out, for the sake of humans everywhere. Violence begets more violence, so if we all stop and enjoy cat videos together, then I'll rest happy, even if it's in my grave. I ramble, but the point is the opportunity to listen to these heroes is amazing, and will change the course of lives for the better. Putting world issues too big for me to tackle alone aside, this was only two stories out of the thousands of normal people doing amazing things that changed me. I reckon there is a story for everyone to become inspired in that stack of stories.

## Thomas O'Conner

### Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Edmond

#### The Fundamental Experience

John Keats, an English poet, eloquently states, "Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced." The Medal of Honor Convention is the epitome of John Keats' quote. Before volunteering at the Medal of Honor Convention, one does not truly understand the gravity of the experience. I, now a PWHS junior, thought it would be an enjoyable experience and never considered the magnitude of the event. While the magnitude does not stem from the actual event, it directly originates from the people and the honor of being beside them, and getting a glimpse of what they experienced. Despite not understanding the initial importance of the Medal of Honor Convention, I quickly learned that the memory of what I was attending would reside with me forever.

The first night of the Medal of Honor Convention gave me a true taste of how the following day would take place. I realized the significance of what these individuals had done to achieve these awards. Through viewing these men and realizing they are simply "normal" people, I had an epiphany. When I saw that these men were just like me, it amplified the significance of how the Medal of Honor recipients put the lives of others before their interests, their morals before their own lives, and their courage before their fear. They conquer the fears that most citizens and soldiers, alike, never conquer in their lifetimes. The strength they have at such young ages is very moving. This strength, selflessness, and the capability to be dauntless urges me to have such larger aspirations than I ever had before. The first day of the Medal of Honor Convention opened my eyes to the character of such heroes and prepared me for the following day.

The day of the Medal of Honor charity dinner was even more shocking than the previous. The activities throughout the day allowed one on one interaction and for my fellow cadets and I to hear their, sometimes unfiltered, stories firsthand. Although the previous day woke me up to the reality of these heroes, the day of the charity dinner allowed me to gain a closer understanding, and dive into what these heroes sacrifice for our freedom. What is most shocking of all, is that they have the same internal comedy, teasing, and camaraderie that the guys at Pueblo West High School have. Even though that might be obvious to some, it was different for me. Before this event I never associated the concept of being a hero with your average Joe. The convention gave these virtues, I had never really seen prior to the event, an embodiment. One key moment, right before escorting Sammy L. Davis into the dinner, was when we stood discussing some small events in his life and mine. Sammy L. Davis was very intrigued, as was I, and he then paused for a second. I was confused by the pause. At this moment, he pulled a Challenge Coin out of his pocket, grabbed my hand, and slid the coin right into my palm. I was stunned, partly because I never expected to receive one and partly because I had no clue how to respond. Throughout the next two minutes, during our last few remarks, I repeatedly said, "Thank you so much, Sir." Despite how unimportant this challenge coin might be to some, it sits on my nightstand, giving me a constant reminder of who I want to be, what I must do to get there, and why fighting for what is right is so critical in this world. Sammy L. Davis did not just give me a coin, but gave me the memory of a lifetime.

Since the Medal of Honor Convention, I have had a constant reminder of the values I must uphold. The

convention impacted me differently than I had expected. I have been motivated to learn public speaking, leadership skills, and how to stand up for what I believe in. This event started a chain reaction of initiative. As a result, I focused on the importance of making decisions based on your morals and values, versus your wants and desires. I am not saying I am a saint because of the convention, but that it created an awareness for my actions and what I do.

Because of the Medal of Honor Convention, I am not afraid of public speaking or leading, like I used to be. The event helped me push to debate my beliefs, instead of cowering down in fear of embarrassment. The convention had a positive domino effect on multiple elements of my life.

The Medal of Honor Convention slowly opened my eyes to a precedent and standard that must be followed throughout life, in order to be happy and successful. It showed me that the men who make up our heroes, are only people. But men with courage, fearlessness, strength, endurance, perseverance, and initiative. Sammy L. Davis gave me a reminder of how to be who I want to be. Although I did not initially understand the gravity of what the Medal of Honor Convention would give me, I quickly learned that the memory of what I was attending would reside with me forever. The event was a truly remarkable experience I will never forget. Julius Caesar even claims, "Experience is the teacher of all things."





# Chloe White

## Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Edmond

### Home of Heroes

Last year, when forty-one medal of honor recipients came to Pueblo, Colorado to attend the annual Congressional Medal of Honor convention, I was fortunate enough to have the humbling experience of getting to make the acquaintance of a few of the recipients. I was extremely honored to even be in the same room as those selfless individuals. The involvement I had in the CMOH convention truly changed my life for the best. It is truly amazing to me that the recipients sat down and had actual meaningful conversations with all the cadets that attended, that is something I will always remember.

Before the CMOH convention, I wasn't particularly the best kid. I got into trouble more times than I could count, I always had a nasty attitude with people, I got myself into way too many fights, and I wasn't fully appreciative for the life and freedom that I was given. I had the mindset that life would always be easy and I wouldn't have to kill myself doing my job. Little did I know that men and women did that on a daily basis just to keep people like me safe from harm's way. I didn't understand that my life was so precious and I was treating it like it was something you could buy at any store.

After the CMOH convention, it inspired me to become a better person. The experience I had completely changed my life. I had a totally different mindset compared to before the convention. I will never think the same way that I used to, I will from now on always be grateful for my health, my life, my family, my education, having a roof over my head and food on my plate, and that each night I go to sleep warm. I would have never imagined in a million years that by just shaking the hands of a few people could change my life forever. The impact they had on me is indescribable I will for always be thankful for the exceptional experience that I was able to have. From then on in my life I had a different outlook on life, I started opening up more to people, I started to be kinder, and I stayed away from trouble and the old crowds that I used to run around with. I will always think about the outcome of my actions before I act on them, I will from now on listen before I speak, and I will always be thankful for the men and women who serve and protect the great United States.

Last year, when forty-one Medal of Honor recipients came to Pueblo, Colorado to attend the annual Congressional Medal of Honor convention, my life was changed. I will always think of the selfless acts of bravery that they carried out. They put themselves in harm's way to save others and that is something that is truly inspiring and humbling. The most incredible thing is that they would do it again in a heartbeat. I will always be filled with gratitude knowing that I was able to meet some incredible human beings.



