

Brigid Heller
Cassell
March 20, 2018

★ 1st
Place

Patriotism Is...

Being proud to be an American, not just in words but through actions, shows what a true patriot is. Mark Twain once said, "Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it." The world's understanding of patriotism is blurred. Wearing red, white, and blue is not the only thing that patriotism entails.

Living in a nation full of texting and tweeting, patriotism may slip our minds. Realizing that we have this freedom because of those who have given up their lives to serve and protect helps us understand that freedom is not free. As American citizens, we are given the right to do so many things, yet not everyone takes full advantage of our rights. Taking action at home while the men and women serve overseas is crucial. Whether you are walking into the line of fire or shaking a soldier's hand, you are making a difference by supporting the United States of America.

With each tragedy, patriotism grows stronger. Patriotism means to stand up for the United States of America even when the rest of the world want to tear it down. "I pledge allegiance to the flag..." are the words memorized by many, but you are not pledging allegiance to a piece of red, white, and blue fabric. I am pledging to the flag that fought for my freedom. The flag to me is the embodiment of a brave soldier. Soldiers, and the flag alike, have endured the worst of humanity. They have provided a sense of comfort for some, fear for others, and pride for all.

Patriotism unites people in times of hope and in times in need. From America's Founding Fathers to today's courageous men and women of our military, there is patriotism in all of us. Living in the "Home of the Brave" has taught me that patriotism is all that America stands for.

Alexis Marinopoulos
George F. Cassell Elementary
March 20th, 2018

★ 2nd
Place

A True Story Of Patriotism

"A man is a patriot if his heart beats true to his country" A quote by Charles E. Jefferson. I was 7 years old and my grandma asked me to wake my grandfather. I walked up giving him a little nudge. When he awoke he shook looking almost terrified. Of course I was a scared little girl that screamed and ran. Later I found out that my grandpa was a Vietnam Veteran with a Purple Heart. This is his true story of pure patriotism.

My grandpa's name is David Anthony Macudzinski. He was drafted into the Army but decided to enlist in the Marine Corp instead. Grandpa enlisted into the Marines not only because he thought the uniforms were handsome and "fly", but because he grew up wanting to be a Marine and thought Marines were the toughest of the Armed Forces. He says he wasn't as scared as much as he was honored to give back to his country. He believed it was the right thing to do.

Grandpa arrived at boot camp, MCRD in San Diego, in March of 1966 and stayed there for about 14 weeks. He left from there and went to many other schools to train, including communication and Vietnamese language schools. After a lot of training, he was finally ready to join the rest of the Marines that were fighting in Vietnam.

A little later, grandpa was patrolling and met a French author named Bernard B. Fall, who wrote a book called "The Street Without Joy". He was there to research to write a second book. And at this time is when he named grandpa's 1st Battalion, 9th Marines "The Walking Dead". Bernard never got to finish his second book because he was later killed by a bomb explosion while doing his research.

One day when grandpa was on cleanup detail, he was not wearing his bulky flak vest, and a mortar attack struck. Grandpa tried to run for the bunker but a bomb was behind him. When it exploded, it threw him at the bunker leaving a piece of shrapnel in his back. This injury caused him to sit out of the next battle. He didn't go anywhere to get treated, he stayed at the base and got patched up and continued to treat the wound himself. This is how grandpa received his Purple Heart. In the battle that grandpa did not fight in, many of "The Walking Dead" Marines died.

After his 4 years of enlisted service in the Marines grandpa finally came home to Chicago and settled down in Calumet City, IL. Grandpa's patriotism continued when he decided to continue to serve his government by applying to be a police officer for his hometown. Eventually, he went into the investigations unit for 9 years and ended up becoming the head detective in the Calumet City Police Department. Grandpa finished his career as a sergeant before he retired several years later.

I would like to state that I am super proud of my grandpa and he is my hero and a true patriot. He has taught me to love my country and to give back in many different ways to the country that has given me my freedoms I enjoy everyday. Grandpa has taught me valuable lessons over these past 14 years. For example, he has taught me to be kind, fair, loving, and that you have to work for what you want. He has made me a smart, happy, and proud granddaughter, who now understands, and will never run screaming again.

Anthony Velez

George F. Cassell Elementary School

March 20th, 2018



3rd
Place

What Patriotism Means to Me

When the United States was only a thought in the minds of a group of people in the British colonies, patriotism was a driving force. When the British labeled us as Patriots, we wore it as a badge of honor. Patriotism helped us to break free from British rule. It was a motivating power throughout our history. But what is it?

Patriotism, as defined by Oxford Dictionary, is a "vigorous support for one's country." I would agree with this definition. Although, I think the term "patriotism" is an American term while "nationalism" is a term other countries use instead.


Patriotism affects a lot of things in our country. From decision making to international affairs, patriotism is in our lifeblood. But this does not mean what patriotism is stays the same. Over our history, especially today, patriotism has been a fluid entity. At one point in time, patriotism meant independence. At another, it meant getting involved in the global scale of things and acquiring foreign lands. Today, patriotism is heavily debated. But I think that patriotism means something a little different to each person. Just look at the different political parties, who constantly debate the meaning of it. My ancestors knew what patriotism meant to them, since they served the United States in every major conflict since the Revolution.

In short, patriotism is a slightly confusing thing, but ultimately it's an American thing. Moving forward, how we view patriotism will change but it will continue to be a driving force for us, no matter how you view it.

Declan Swistowicz

Cassell

3/20/18

 4th
Place

The Definition Of America

What do you think America runs on? No, not Dunkin, and no, not burgers and fries. America runs on patriotism! The definition of Patriotism is, "The vigorous support for one's country". America runs on this because most Americans protect our country by either fighting for our country, being a police officer, firefighter, or even just supporting our servicemen and women in their dangerous fight to protect us. Patriotism's definition might be the vigorous support for one's country, but to me it means to do anything for the people of your country and anything for anyone for any country. To me patriotism also means that nothing will keep our country from fighting for itself. And that we may go down, but we will stand right back up where we belong, At the top of the world! Patriotism, in my mind, affects our country by pushing my fellow Americans and I to do our best, and to keep fighting for our country and for what we think what is right. Patriotism also affects America in a way that makes Americans look tough because to most Americans, patriotism means to go crazy for our country. And when I think of going crazy for our country, it puts an image in my head of all the men and women in the Army, Navy, Police Force, Fire Department, or any task force, fighting for this great nation of ours. I think about the word Patriotism as well as what Americans think as the glue that binds this great nation of ours together.

Ethan Shoup

Cassell

3-20-18

★ 5th
Place

Patriotism

Many do believe that patriotism is dying off with every new generation. This could be true, but not with myself because I believe on some level it's getting stronger. This patriotism is proven by multiple videos of kids between the ages of 13-16 talking about how they want to join the armed forces when they are older, including myself.

There is a very good chance I'm going to be joining the U.S Marine Corps when I'm of age to serve my country. When I get out of the service I plan on to go to Medical school so when the time comes I can become a combat medic. One of my dream jobs is to be a military tank general. I always thought the feeling of leading from the front with a battalion of armour would be extraordinary. I would die on the front for my country. This may seem like it is not genuine. But it is. My father was once in the Marines and he served for 4-5 years or 2 tours I believe.

If the military branch doesn't work out for me, I'll work for my country by being a nurse and saving lives, or I'll be an American propaganda worker to inspire young men and women to server this fine country. Another way to contribute is proposing new laws that you believe would help the country in some ways. If the field is not your thing you could become a electronic vehicle driver of UAVs .

These are all the ways my generation, specifically myself, supports patriotism. Again I would lay down my life if people tried to steal my rights away from me or any country tries to attack. I'd sign up faster than any other man or woman in this world.