

Good morning, I am Aubry Wroge, an 8th grade student here at Central. I would like to thank the local VFW and Women's Auxiliary for the opportunity to reflect on the patriotic theme "How are you inspired by America?" by way of the Patriot's Pen essay contest.

On 9/11, there were citizens and firefighters helping others selflessly. They make huge sacrifices and only get celebrated once a year. Also, our brave soldiers selflessly fight and have fought for our country. America inspires me because of our bravery on 9/11 and selfless soldiers and veterans.

First, there was much bravery shown on 9/11. For example, Betty Ong, American Airline flight attendant, made a brave call to the airport. She calmed people down on the plane and tried to help them. She sadly passed away when the hijackers crashed the plane into the Twin Towers. On flight 93, hijackers were planning to hit a government building; the passengers overtook the cockpit sending it into a nosedive. Passengers fought for their lives, but no one survived; however, they saved the lives of the people in the government building. And of course, our firefighters jumped into action on 9/11, climbing hundreds of stairs trying to help people escape. Keep in mind, they were in a lot of gear and it was really hard to see. They inhaled toxic fumes; some were later diagnosed with cancer. The firefighters risked their lives to help others in need. Learning about this in history class was an eyeopener, helping me realize how inspired I am by the brave people of America

The fact is, brave soldiers and veterans risk(ed) their lives for me and others, too. For example, my grandpa fought in the Bay of Pigs, US support to an anti-Castro invasion of Cuba during the Cold War. This was traumatic for him, seeing many killed and injured - but willing to serve for us. Also, my cousin served in Kuwait as part of the National Guard and may be deployed to Poland due to the war in Ukraine, leaving behind his family and college studies. I am grateful that my family has been part of the military trying to protect my freedom and life. The fact that veterans only get one day a year is unconscionable.

Finally, the people and firefighters who helped on 9/11 and the amazing veterans and soldiers who serve(d) our country have proven to be inspirational. If you want to serve your country and inspire others, consider joining the military or becoming a firefighter. At the very least, consider being an American citizen who is willing to help others in their time of need.