

Essay Page

The United States truly is the land of the free and the home of the brave and that is why I love this country. From its very beginning, it has provided both a safe haven and a new life adventure for those who sought to make it their home. It was not settled by those with weak spirits or those lacking determination, but by brave leaders and bold individuals with vision - and I believe that spirit and character has remained alive here since the very first settlers landed nearly 400 years ago.

In everything that has been deemed "valuable" in our society, we can find some connection to either a strong spirit of adventure or an irrepressible sense of leadership and/or service. Whether it be soldiers, explorers, businessmen, inventors, statesmen or simple citizens, all possess these qualities. All early, landmark successes in history can be traced to the efforts of one person providing or creating a necessary or desired service. Hence, this great land is truly founded upon one person's service to another!

After 18 years, I have seen first-hand the community value and personal reward that service to others brings. I attribute this belief to my early involvement with Cub Scouts/Boy Scouts. From the beginning, the emphasis of my extracurricular life was service, self-improvement, self-reliance and leadership - all of which are characteristics that I believe our forefathers possessed as they built the foundation for this country - which we are now entrusted to nurture and protect. Earning my Eagle Scout at age 16, I was ingrained with a sense of service and a desire to be a leader, which translated into my involvement with academic societies and student government. I know these many opportunities were ultimately availed to me because of the deep-rooted traditions that have survived generations -- preserved in family values and time-honored institutions devoted to the values of American greatness.

One of these great institutions is our unique military that, after 300 years, still finds its strength in a volunteer force willing to sacrifice to defend our way of life. My father has chosen to dedicate his adult life to this cornerstone of our security and success. I have witnessed his pride as an Air Force officer and leader in the service he provides for our nation - and his family. He has taught me that rewards come in many forms, but the most valuable are those that come from selfless service and the success of a "job well-done."

His leadership, both fatherly and military, has greatly influenced my life as I developed qualities that proved essential in school, sports, Scouts - and life. All of the privileges, benefits and opportunities that I have mentioned are best categorized as "only in America." If not for those "adventurous, determined, pioneer pilgrims", that first founded this country, we would never know the freedom nor opportunity that we take for granted today. Why do I love this country? ...How could I not?!