

ESSAY

"How has JROTC prepared me to be a better citizen of the United States of America?"

Presented by Reginald Doucet, NS1, the CMM Chapter Junior JROTC Essay Contest winner.



"The most important title a student can have at my age is cadet. Being in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps gives me a status of honor, and work ethic. When someone older sees me in my uniform, I am looked upon as an authority figure. This higher sense of responsibility has made me a better citizen of the United States. I learn to respect authority figures, and memorize facts that can help me later in life. Now when I hear the pledge of allegiance, I say it aloud with my hand over-heart, when before I would just stand there, not knowing why I was pledging. Now I know that I say the pledge for all of the men who created our constitution after months of compromise. I say the pledge for the men who died in the American Revolution. I say the pledge, for men like Martin Luther King Jr. who helped this country become a better place when it did not see room for improvement. I used to wait out the moment of silence by counting the elapsed time in my head, which I have learned is highly disrespectful. Now whenever I take notice of a moment of silence, I stand up

and bow my head, for those that have served with their years and those that have served with their lives. Some people may have a distorted image of what it is like to be a soldier, in my time in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps I have only caught a mere glimpse of what it might be like out fighting on the lines. Just that itself is enough to make me know that those men and women deserve respect in any and all forms.

Being in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps does not exactly mean I am sent across sea and enlisted. Yet, I still get the sense that I am serving my country at 15. The class that I take everyday should be a required class for all United States citizens, it teaches what should be seen as common knowledge in this day and age. It matures impressionable teenagers into courageous adults, confused followers into instinctive leaders. Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (or JROTC) is the most influential class I have, and may ever take. History class cannot light a match to the in depth teachings of the US's history I have learned just as a NS1. If one can make it three of four years in Naval Science, they can make it through any course that ever comes their way.

The United States of America is the promise land for nearly every other country. We have the life, I have the life. My little sister has freedoms unimaginable by a child of the same age in a middle-eastern country. Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps has not only taught me how to be a citizen on the United States. It has taught me to appreciate what I have as a citizen, because tomorrow if my generation does not accept the responsibility to keep it free, it could all be gone."