

## **A Veteran Who Inspires Me**

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When reading the prompt of this essay, my first instinct was to write about someone from the staff of my school, GCJH. However, after thinking for just a few seconds longer, I chose someone who has altered my view on veterans, Mr. Nick Torres, who I've met through close mutual friends. I have learned the stereotypical veteran is scarred, rough around the edges, intemperate, and scary. This stereotype has never been my idea of a veteran because it's simply not fair, however, I admit, I tend to make a mental note and prepare myself for the possibility of them having some of these characteristics and I'm guilty of excusing some moments on the count of someone being a veteran. Meeting Mr. Nick Torres, I've gained the opportunity to observe a veteran personally. He is extremely welcoming, gentle, relatable, humorous, and has many other commendable qualities. Mr. Torres has separated church from state better than anyone I've met. I respect him for everything he has done.

Before sitting down to write, I interviewed Mr. Torres about his time served. Some background of Mr. Torres' career in the military; served for 20 years, worked in combat and aircraft, and received two Bronze Stars. While interviewing Mr. Torres, I received an inspiring anecdote that can be found on [Floridatoday.com](http://Floridatoday.com), titled "Patrick AFB Airman Awarded Two Bronze Stars for battlefield valor in Afghanistan". To put that morning in simple terms without making an understatement, Mr. Torres became three of his fellow heroes by doing something that most people couldn't even dream of being capable of doing. Despite him brushing this off as if it's a worldwide experience to have saved three lives in one morning, he admits "no one is built for combat". Mr. Torres is aware that the tasks, experiences, events, and sacrifices veterans and soldiers face every day are in fact "inhuman" but that morning, he did it anyway for the principles that very few could share with him.

So besides Mr. Torres' dedication to our country and his fellow veterans and soldiers, what has Mr. Torres done to make him the most inspirational veteran to me? His unique mindset. In my short interview, he educated me on what the experience is and means to a veteran. The most interesting answer I received from him was after I asked: "whether when he thought of his time serving, would he think of the worst or the best of times?" His answer; both. I wouldn't have ever considered that someone can see the best and worst of something and still see it as something they don't regret. To elaborate, we've all been told to look at the glass half full. However, Mr. Torres has a unique perspective that allows him to acknowledge the worst and allow the best to outweigh without disregarding it. Everyone could use a bit of that mindset the next time an opportunity presents itself.

I would like to add one more thing that truly makes Mr. Torres truly inspirational: his family morals. Almost every question I asked during the interview was tied to his family. "Why

did he join the military?" His family. "What's the best part about being home?" His family. "What was the best part about serving?" The family he found while

he was there. Mr. Torres possesses so much devotion for family, that he found it in a place that most people genuinely couldn't tolerate. Then, he came home and put more effort into loving his family the right way than most dads could say... Anyone who can claim to be the family of Mr. Torres should be extremely proud.

These are the reasons that make him the most inspirational veteran. I hope that this essay inspires readers to learn something about a veteran in their life. They all deserve more than a "thank you for your service" and to know what else to say, you must start with a question. And thanks to Mr. Torres, I can remind you and others not to allow that bar to be lowered because of what they've been through.