



**Perkins County students participated in the Voice of Democracy essay contest sponsored by the Ogallala VFW. Each submitted a three to five minute recording of their entry entitled, “Is there pride in serving our military?” Participants included (Front row, l-r): Brianna Stevens, Kendra Hoffert, Justin Goodwin, Miles Steinwart. Back row: Skyler Condon, Kaleb Gaar (who placed second), Alex Landon. Not pictured: Dayna Dudden (third place), Dakota Molder. Gaar’s second place entry can be read below. (Photo by Mabelle Lee)**

**“Is there pride in serving in our military?”**

**By Kaleb Gaar**

*Perkins County High School*

One day, an older man passed a military graveyard. There was a burial ceremony taking place a few yards from the path the man was walking along.

He stopped to look in at the scene. He saw some pictures of the soldier that had passed away. He appeared no older than twenty-five.

The boy reminded the man of himself at that age. He too had been in the military. He watched as the casket was slowly lowered into freshly dug grave. The man was over taken by sadness for this loss of life, but another feeling overtook him. He felt proud of the young man. He had given up his life for his country.

All Americans can relate to this feeling of pride whenever we have someone that is dear to us in the military, and it remains with us long after they are gone.

Today, I'm going to tell you about this pride and why there is pride in serving in the military. What is pride? Pride, in this manner, is a self-respect or joy that comes from an act or service. We are proud of our military, but our military is even more proud. They have achieved so much for our country.

The military's successes for this country have aided America to such an extent, that we can't help but respect those who honor our country through military service. They have provided us with a proud history and a place to live.

They have also given our country a legacy of never giving up, despite the many struggles and difficulties we have faced.

Service to the military doesn't only come from those who fight the wars but also from people who support the military and its fighters.

The Coast Guard and other inland branches of our military protect our country and its borders. Soldiers and their families are an invaluable resource to this country, as are those that support them.

Soldiers have sacrificed time, opportunities, and even their lives in protection of our country and every American's freedom. This service is a testament to our military as a whole, and it reflects the resolve of our country's protectors.

America was founded on sound values of freedom, equality, truth, and justice; all these values are displayed and fought for by the American military.

Our country's first war determined whether or not we would have freedom. The Civil War made known that our country is for everyone, not just for one group of people.

In wars of the 1900s, such as the World Wars and the Vietnam War, the military fought not for the lies of foreign policies and governments, but for the truth that this nation was founded on.

In the recent war on terrorism, our military has fought to bring justice to those who have wronged America and the world.

Most Americans can relate to and are proud of these values. All of us, therefore, can and should respect our military and be proud of them.

We should never look down on them, for we have no reason to. They represent the best values and ideas our country stands for.

So I ask you, is there pride in serving in the military? We as Americans have reason to have pride. Their service shows reason to have great respect. Our military also promotes everything that our country believes in.

As a last thought, I implore that you think about our military and allow the pride that comes from their service make our country a better place for all.