

## 2025 JR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL VETERANS DAY ESSAY WINNER



**Arinne McFate**  
**Grade 8**  
**Lakeridge Junior High School**

### BIO

Arinne is an 8th grade student at Lakeridge Jr. High in Orem, Utah where she runs cross country and track, is a peer tutor, enjoys playing cello and volunteers weekly at the Scera Community Theater. She has found a love for, and strength in, challenging herself to new experiences. Arinne has a big heart and her family loves watching her grow and develop new talents and skills. She comes from a family full of military heritage and is the second oldest in her family, surrounded by only brothers who thankfully aren't here to steal the show tonight.

### ESSAY

#### My Mom & Dad

I was given the chance to write this essay about lessons I've learned from being a military kid. Have you ever had that one person in your life that does something great once? Then all the sudden you see everything else they do in a new way. I have! Even the slightest thing can make or break someone's day or their attitude? I have seen this in my life! The things I am talking about are life lessons I've learned from what my mom has shown & taught me, and life lessons

I've learned from my dad's service. And lastly how these things have helped me to step outside of the comfort zone I have.

Some of the things that I've learned from my mom are to never give up especially when it's hard; to be as helpful as you can, whenever you can. This past year it's been hard for our family, whether we've had to repair things in our house, or my mom balancing her different jobs. She comes home and takes care of us no matter how tired she is from work. When she re-enlisted in the Air National Guard last year it was hard because my dad lost his job in February and she started working full-time in Salt Lake to make sure we were taken care of. She was working long hours and we barely saw her. No matter what, when we saw her she was always upbeat and happy. And this shows me how even under crazy pressure that you can choose to be happy. Another story of never giving up is when my dad died. She was a couple weeks from having me and he had just died and yet my mom still pushed through all the pain and suffering after all the things from the past few weeks. This can show me that through the highs and lows you will survive.

Some of the things that I've heard about my dad from my mom and grandparents are, to be brave and put others before yourself. My dad served two tours in Iraq, and was also an EMT. He never hesitated to stop and help someone no matter the time of day or how inconvenient. This has taught me that even if it's hard to make the choice to put yourself first because you are busy or have other priorities to always reach out and help.

Some ways that I've stepped out of my comfort zone this year are that I volunteer at a local theater, I am running cross country and my mom told me about this Military Youth Ambassador program where I can befriend a youth from Morocco, host the youth here and then go visit them the next summer. I thought it would be fun even if it sounded scary and that is what being a military child has taught me; to reach out, to work hard and to put others before myself.