

**A touching salute from loving son to father, fallen warrior  
(5<sup>th</sup>-grade essay, author: Christopher Dakotah Mora)  
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Hello, my name is Topher Mora, and I am a current fifth grader at Fort Meigs Elementary. In my family, we honor veterans all year long because we have so many family members that have served or are continuing to serve this country. My family believes that if you love your country, then you should fight for it and the people who live in the country too.



**My mother, Veronica, and father Art.**

The word patriotism means, "to have a love or devotion to one's country." There's no greater love for your country than to serve in the military. Serving in the military is the highest form of patriotism because it can be a dangerous job. Sometimes you can get hurt and sometimes you will sacrifice your life, like my dad. My dad, Army Sgt. Arthur Mora Jr., fought in Operation Iraqi Freedom. On October 19, 2005, he was killed in action while he was fighting for his country and our freedom. I was only eight days old when my dad died, and now I am 11 years old. I never met my dad, but I know that he's an American hero and that he showed great patriotism for his country by giving his life.

The American flag can mean a lot of things to a lot of people. It could mean freedom, bravery, justice, and pride. To me, it means sacrifice. When my dad sacrificed his life for this country, he was brought home in a flag-draped casket. Sometimes when I am having a bad day, I take out his flag and read his letters that he sent home. I sacrificed too because now that he's gone I do not have my dad here anymore. Now whenever I see the American flag, I think of my dad and all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and who fought for our nation and our freedom.

Veterans Day is the day the whole country honors everyone who has bravely served in the military. A simple thank you goes a long way when you meet a veteran. Every time I meet a veteran or see one in the grocery store I shake their hand and thank them for their service. Sometimes that thank you is the only one that they have ever received for serving their country which I think is sad. Those two little words can have a big effect on someone's day because it shows that you care about their service to this country.

My dad's death has been tough on my family and me because we love and miss him so much. We think about him every day and hope that we are making him proud. I think that if my dad were here today that he would be proud of me. He would be proud of me because I honor veterans not just on Veterans Day but every day. HOOAH!"

-Christopher Dakotah Mora

Surviving Son of Army Sgt. Arthur Mora Jr.  
3/16/1982-10/19/2005