

First Place Seventh Grade

Elicia Chau [Seventh grade, MS67]

"Heart and Soul"

About two months ago, I recall my history teacher teaching my class the very foundations of our government. How it began, who began it, and who participated in the signing of our government were prime examples still distinct in my mind. Following this, I recalled myself feeling immensely bored, wondering exactly why this tied to myself. I mean, it's history. The reason why we learn this stuff is so we don't make the same mistakes, right? I was wrong, as you can see. When I looked into it deeper, I found priceless information that would change the perspective I had of our government. I discovered the following: two hundred and forty-three years ago, our navy was formed to protect our nation. Two hundred and forty-two years ago, our army was formed to hold a similar responsibility as our navy. However, it is not the simple title itself that marvels me about this particular part of our democracy. Rather, it was the simple fact that thousands, even millions of people from around the world would put their lives at risk if it meant that they would save the common peoples', that a majority of these characters were those feeling oppressed for everything ranging from the wide variety of sexism to racism to phobias concerning themselves, that people would willingly make the ultimate sacrifice to protect their fellow Americans through the best they could. While war, of course, is not, the military is a beautiful thing if pictured in deeper. It consists of the blood and souls of

a great number of people who have come together to defend our liberty and freedom, it consists of worn down hands on empty guns and gory sights, and it consists of a million people who all recognize their goals are the same and are willing to make that choice to preserve their friends and family. I do not know of that exasperated feeling of a war's end. I do not suspect I will ever. However, this does not stop me from the great admiration that I have for our soldiers and the people within the units because this is simply a feeling in which you cannot describe more than just pure thanks and love for those who had just secured your freedom. To those who have watched their fellow soldiers pass in name of our country and continued to fight on and survive with the most utter determination, thank you. To those who have worried, day after day, year after year that their loved ones will return to them, thank you. To those such as the organizers of this competition, who promote self-love and self-respect for the sacrifices made by our nation, thank you. While I cannot relate to you, I pledge my allegiance to you daily. You may not be participants in the war yourself, or maybe you are, but it is through your careful guidance is the next generation able to grow and strive. You are truly this country's heart and soul.