

PATRIOT'S PEN CONTEST

FIRST PLACE 2010 NATIONAL WINNER Abigail Barnard Nevada

Abigail Barnard, recipient of the \$10,000 First Place North End Post 144, Paul A. Spera Past Commander-in-Chief Award, was an 8th grade student at Charles Hughes Middle School and she lives in Mesquite, Nevada. Abigail was sponsored by VFW Post 7385 in Mesquite, Nevada.

“When is the Right Time to Honor Our Military Heroes?” By Abigail Barnard

The last few days I've thought about the many freedoms I enjoy as an American citizen. I've considered the sacrifices our service men and women have made to preserve those freedoms. When is the time to honor them? Every time I exercise the freedoms they fight for, every time I feel the security so many have died for, that's the time!

When I see the symbolic colors of red, white, and blue on an American flag, that's the time! When I see the fifty white stars I think of our freedom. When I see the red and white stripes, I think of the thirteen original colonies, and the very beginnings of our wonderful country. Whenever I see our American flag, I appreciate and honor my military heroes.

Every time I exercise my freedom of speech, that's the time! I know that I can say what I believe. Even if you disagree, I'm defended in my right to say it. I'm so thankful that I can express myself through my words, and not worry if someone disagrees, because that is a freedom my military heroes fight for every day.

Every time I contemplate that I have a roof over my head, and a meal each night, that's the time! I'm thankful that my parents have the freedoms to get a good education and a job, so they can earn a living to support my family. I know that without my military heroes, my parents and I might never have had the opportunity to get a good education.

Every time I realize that my potential is only limited by the size of my dreams, that's the time! I know that in America, I can be anything I want to be! I know that if I work hard, study hard, and never give up, I will someday be that person. All thanks to my military heroes who defend my freedom each day.

Lastly, every time I get on my knees and pray to my Heavenly Father, that's the time. I thank him for our country, and their freedoms we share. I thank him for giving strength to our service men and women, and to the families of those soldiers. I ask him to help our President make wise decisions that will keep our country safe, strong, and secure.

That's the time, now's the time, there is always time to honor our military heroes!