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When faced with the question of what America means to me, my initial response was that I could not begin to put into words the feelings that are felt within me. America has given me a chance at success, beginning with the very foundation which no man can forget or deny: freedom. In a dying world where many suffer and fall short of happiness, this great country has offered me everything that I could ever need to accomplish every task set before me. I am grateful to America, yet not merely the land labeled "USA" on a map, for America is much more than that. It is the people within its borders that make up the country. It is the history that lies within the mere dust under our feet, won for us in bloody, hard fought battles by the most courageous and selfless people in the world who make up the greatest military of all time. It is the men and women who fought and died so many years ago and continue to fight today, simply to provide future generations with a chance to strive for greatness. America is the foundation on which I stand, and the pride that, when tested, continues to prove itself victorious. This stronghold, second to none except the Lord above, is one no one can ever take away from me. For even if cowards or enemies try to pull us down, we, a united nation, standing as one and headed by the greatest leaders in the world, will rise up waving the three most powerful colors in creation: red, white and blue.

On the afternoon of September 11, 2001, my first instinct was to remember the song "I'm Proud to Be an American." As this was done, the floodgates of pride and a sense of protection to my nation welled up so great within me that I knew not whether to be angry or concerned. Yet, a confidence in our country soon overtook the pangs of anger I felt towards our attackers. Soon our nation, bound together by a lone focus to retain every ounce of freedom granted to us by the bloodshed of our ancestors, rose up and overcame the cowardice acts that were thrown our way.

I could never begin to thank America and everyone in it, for all they have offered me. Without the hope with which I arise every morning, there would be no reason to get out of bed. However, I know that every single day I walk out of my house, I go as an equal; equal to my fellow man, and equally protected by those whom I cannot help but consider my brothers. For in this great nation that we call home, everyone is united in faith and hope in something greater, something we cannot control. It goes beyond the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that sets us apart from the rest of the world, and cannot rightly be explained. For as God shown down his grace on this great land, my heart wants so desperately to give back to America. If God has not called me to a life in the military, then I will do all that I have left to do. This may mean standing up for what has been deemed right by our leaders, and it may be simply honoring our nation every day with a salute to our flag. But one thing stands for sure: There will never come a day when I will put myself before my country and there will never come a day when I will stop bleeding the red, white and blue.