

"What Freedom Means to Me"

The existence of my intermixed heritage and being is what freedom means to me. As a child of my Native American, Navajo mother and my Afro-American father, I was born to the Sage Brush Hill people and born for the Afro-American people. My maternal grandparents are the Water Flows Together people and paternal grandparents are the Afro-American people. I present myself to this world as an Afro-American Navajo Women. Every aspect of my life is constructed upon the foundation of freedom. Freedom represents the culture of my heritage, the honor of my ancestral history and the patriotism of my fellow warriors.

Freedom is my heritage, continuously refreshed in my soul, within which are two courageous rivers of gushing force of defiance, merged together in one. Deep in the serenity of my intellectual, freedom is the peace that echoes among the balance of my physical, social, mental and spiritual well being. Freedom showers self-expression and identity over my Navajo language. It has established my unique cultural attire and appearance. It stabilizes and maintains the practices of my religious praise and authentic ceremonial conduct of two different tribes separated by miles of salty sea.

Freedom is the honor to my historical background. My ancestors sacrificed, struggled, died and survived to gain the spirit upon which I glide. From tired feet to scorn hands and worn defeats, they were forced through the Navajo Long Walk in the Southwest, and whipped in the across slave plantations of the 1800's in the East. With visions from our Founding Fathers, freedom evolved, developed, and nurtured with our Nation's constitution. History has taken freedom through tests, revisions and substantiations. Freedom instills the success of every achievement of equality accomplished by my people and every success of stability of a sovereign America.

Freedom is my impetus for wearing this uniform of a hero. The uniform of self identity, called upon in a gesture and speechless haste. Freedom has provided the patriotism of my ancestral warriors. The young men who fought among Iowa Jima as Navajo Code Talkers during World War II, those who defeated all doubt when they successfully flew like eagles as the Tuskegee Airman of 1940's, and those who yielded hearts of courage and steel in their footprints at the wars bearing stars and strips. Freedom has molded the American warrior's soul with a warm embrace of comfort, dignity and trust. With this very freedom, I feel the pride of a hero, I breathe the air of a champion and I respect the meaning of Old Glory.

Freedom is not of one particular aspect, shape, or color. It fulfills the tears of joy of and sadness, and it celebrates many beginnings and ends. Freedom is embedded in the past, brings unity to the present, and creates the future. As an American Solider, freedom is my heritage, my history and my pride, serenaded in harmony and grace.