

# 2019 CIAssoc National Scholarship Program

1st Place Award was presented to:

Mr. Joshua Forsythe

Grandson of CIAssoc Member Robert Towles

The 2019 Essay Prompt:

## **What basic principles were involved in our nation's founding? Do they still exist today?**

Our Nation's Founding Principals are Individual Liberty, Federalism, Limited Government, Representative Government, Private Property, All Men Are Created Equal, Separation of Powers/ Checks and Balances, and along with the ten articles of the Bill of Rights form the very foundation and central values upon which our country was founded. Our Nation's Founding Principles are still existing today, albeit in some cases in a warped form. Every day, so-called progressives seem to reject the existence of our self-evident truths inscribed within the Declaration of Independence. At the same time judges legislate from their benches to restrict our given constitutive freedoms. Almost every year Congress and the Supreme Court act to decide constitutional matters that threaten to reshape our nation into something that our Christian "Founding Fathers" would not have permitted, or much less fostered. I believe it is past time for us ("we the people") to determine if we still believe in self-governance. Then, if we do believe, are we willing to defend those governing principles? Stated in another way, is our country's government still of the people, by the people, and for the people, or is it to become a quasi dictatorship for our own good? The answer to this question will determine the kind of nation that we want to leave behind for the coming generations. I still believe in America, but remember Edmund Burke once showed us that: "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it." And, history too often has taught us that the world is full of despots who want to control us. Should we let them? I think not. May God Bless America!

*As a recipient of the Combat Infantrymen's Association Scholarship I wanted to thank the officers and membership of this great organization for helping make my college education a reality. Your generous donation will help me to accomplish my goals of obtaining a degree at Lake Erie College (LEC). These funds have given me the ability to focus on my coursework for this school year with less concern for finances. I knew that LEC would allow me to stay close to my family and receive a nationally recognized education. I am currently registered for the Bachelor of Arts in Sports Management from the School of Business with a minor in coaching. My future goal is to work in the field of college/professional athletics.*

*Once again I want to thank you for your generous scholarship. I understand that without organizations who are benevolent and caring, like yours, a college education would not be possible for a student like me. Knowing that someone else cares about my education motivates me to strive extra hard for excellence. I have been truly touched by your generosity and hope to one day give back just as you have. Again, I would like to thank you.*

*Sincerely, Joshua T. Forsythe*

# 2019 CIAssoc National Scholarship Program

2nd Place Award was presented to:

Miss Erin Coffey

Granddaughter of CIAssoc Member Larry Eckard

The 2019 Essay Prompt:

## **What basic principles were involved in our nation's founding? Do they still exist today?**

Our nation was founded by the principles of freedom, justice, and equality. However, culture is constantly transforming, and every single citizen of the United States is affected by it. Society as it was ten years ago is completely different than it is today, nevertheless 242 years ago. To say that these exist in the exact same demeanor today as they did on July 4th, 1776, would not be completely accurate.

The Declaration of Independence documents our nation's first demand for equality, one of our nation's founding principles. The bottom line of the Declaration of Independence is that all humans are created equal, we all have basic rights given to us by God, and the sole purpose of a government is to protect said rights. Although our call for equality was tarnished during the civil rights movement among other things, I would like to believe that our country grows closer to achieving utter equality every day.

Freedom, a trademark principle of the US, is defined in our constitution. Here, matters such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion are established. Our country is even known by most as "The land of the free". I am proud to say that freedom is one principle that has and will always remain completely untouched. No matter how much our culture transforms over time, our country will always be free.

Finally, a founding principal of grave importance is justice. The US has always had a great concern for peace and the genuine respect of its citizens; thus justice comes into play. In order to initiate justice in our country, we have a set of laws established by our government to control crime. Justice is one principle that I believe will remain untouched, just as freedom will.

*Hello!*

*This is Erin Coffey. I would like to thank the Combat Infantrymen's Association for selecting me as one of the scholarship winners! As you know, these days financial struggles and higher education tend to go hand in hand. So I am forever grateful to the association, the scholarship committees, and those who donated to this program for making this burden a little lighter. I can promise you every cent of this money will be put to good use as I begin my junior year at the University of North Carolina—Charlotte. It is truly an honor and I look forward to applying again next year.*

*Respectfully, Erin Coffey*

# 2019 CIAssoc National Scholarship Program

Third Place Awards (tie) were presented to:  
Miss Autumn Carolyn Drees  
Granddaughter of CIAssoc Member Kenneth William Bauer  
and  
Mr. John Hernandez  
Son of CIAssoc Member Paul Hernandez



(Left) Joshua Forsythe with his grandfather, CIAssoc member Robert Towles. (Right) Josh attended the Annual Horatio Alger Inaugural Reception and Induction Ceremony hosted by the US Supreme Court for the thirteen 2019 Horatio Alger Award recipients. He attended as an honored North American (United States and Canada) scholar, and was recognized and presented by Justice Thomas to the assembly. Afterwards, Josh was able to chat with Justice Thomas, and was given an autographed copy of Thomas' newest book (*My Grandfather's Son*). Josh commented that "The whole thing was awesome, and he really impressed me."



(Left) Erin Coffey with her grandfather, CIAssoc member Larry Eckard. In addition to serving as the long term editor of the Blue Badge, Larry is the adjutant of the American Legion Post 544. Erin was also selected as the winner of the Post 544 Scholarship program for the 2019-2020 school year.

# 2019 CIAssoc National Scholarship Program

In addition to submitting an essay, all applicants were required to answer the following questions. This required them to spend time with their father or grandfather, learning about the CIB and the circumstances of the event during which the CIB was earned.

Read below the questions and some of the excellent responses.

## **What are the requirements for earning a Combat Infantry Badge?:**

The soldier must be an infantryman who performed his duties satisfactorily while assigned to an infantry unit during the time his unit actively engaged in ground combat, and he must have taken an active part in that ground combat. *Joshua Forsythe*

In the words of my grandfather, "The Combat Infantry Badge can only be earned for engaging an armed enemy in ground combat." However, I believe the requirements to earn a Combat Infantry Badge goes far beyond that text-book definition. In order to earn a Combat Infantry Badge, you have to have a heart the size of a lion, an unspeakable amount of bravery, and immense loyalty for your country. I could go on for ages about all of the heroic requirements one must obtain in order to receive this badge- but I will just leave it at this; You have to be an extraordinary human being in order to earn the Combat Infantry Badge. *Erin Coffey*

While 'earning' the CIB and being 'awarded' a CIB could be characterized differently, the Army Regulation (25 June 2015) states: For award of the CIB a Soldier must meet the following three requirements: (1) Be an infantryman satisfactorily performing infantry duties. (2) Assigned to an infantry unit during such time as the unit is engaged in active ground combat. (3) Actively participate in such ground combat. Campaign or battle credit alone is not sufficient for award of the CIB. Specific eligibility criteria for the CIB require that: (1) A Soldier must be an Army infantry or SF officer (SSI 11 or 18) in the grade of COL/O-6 or below, or an Army enlisted Soldier or warrant officer with an infantry or SF MOS who, subsequent to 6 December 1941, has satisfactorily performed duty while assigned or attached as a member of an infantry, ranger, or SF unit of either a brigade, regimental, or smaller size during any period such unit was engaged in active ground combat. (2) A recipient must be personally present and under hostile fire while serving in an assigned infantry or SF primary duty, in a unit actively engaged in ground combat with the enemy. For purposes of this award 'action against the enemy' is interpreted as 'ground combat against enemy ground forces' with the specific requirement to be 'personally present and under fire'. *Sophia J Allen*

## **When and Where did your father/grandfather earn his Combat Infantry Badge?:**

Although there were many instances in which my Grandfather engaged an armed enemy in ground combat, there is one specific night that he described to me in detail. After hearing rumors for months that the Viet-Kong were going to attack their camp, the dreadful night finally arrived. My grandfather's unit was under heavy fire with rocket and mortar attacks. He was positioned as the grenade launcher of the rear guard, when all of a sudden he found himself to be completely, terrifyingly alone. Just moments ago he was accompanied by the rest of his troupe, only to now not to see a single living soul around him. This circumstance was even more frightening for my grandfather, due to the fact that he was an officer. To the Viet-Kong, capturing an officer was a great victory. My grandfather had two options- remain in his hiding spot and risk getting captured, or flee and risk being shot down. In this moment, my grandfather stated that all of a sudden the verse Psalm 23:4 came to his head; "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me". He said with this verse, he remembered that he had a wife and a son at home that he wanted to meet. This gave him the courage to retreat and find his unit once again. *Erin Coffey*

From July 1966-December 1966, my Grandfather served in South Vietnam as a Rifleman in a Rifle Platoon with the 1st Cavalry Division. He was later selected as a proficient combat Rifleman and soldier to represent the 1st Cavalry Division as a member of the Special Security Troops in Saigon supporting and guarding the USARV Generals. A requirement of this service was to have earned/and awarded a CIB. for for his combat experience. This is a highly valued honor to represent his Combat Division. *Autumn Drees*

My father earned his Combat Infantry Badge while engaged in ground combat against the enemy in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan in April 2008. My father served as a Combat Advisor to Afghan National Security Forces, assigned as an Infantry Officer to the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. *John Hernandez*

My 87-years of age, grandfather, served in the Korean Conflict from 1951-'53. He was first deployed in Incheon, Korea, then transferred to Pocheon. After that, he fought on the front lines in the battle of Heartbreak Ridge in Yanggu, South Korea. *Bry Walter Watkins*

My father was awarded two CIBs in his 20 years of service to this nation. His first CIB was awarded for Service in Operation Desert Storm (Iraq) in 1991. His second CIB was awarded for service in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom II in 2004. As the Task Force Commander in 2004, only five members received their CIB with star. Approximately 380 infantryman of his task force earned their 1st CIB during this rotation. *Sophia Allen*

### **Describe the circumstances of the event during which the CIB was earned:**

On the afternoon of April 28, 2008, dad experienced his first of many firefights. On his second day, "down range" from Camp Phoenix. He was assigned to Forward Operating Base Vulcan in Ghazni, Province. He responded as part of a quick reaction force to come to the aid of a squad size element that was ambushed by an IED, RPG and machine gun fire. The IED and RPG's rendered their MRAP vehicles inoperable. The squad was pinned down by a company minus size element of Taliban. Dad responded with 8 other American Soldiers in three HMMWVs and brought heavy machine guns and the MK-19 automatic grenade launcher to counter the enemy forces. Dad and his team were able to repel the enemy attack until additional forces arrived. It took until 3am to recover the exploded vehicles with a wrecker. Besides concussions from the IED blast, no American forces were severely wounded. *John Hernandez*

In the late evening hours of May 28, 1953 and the early morning hours of May 29, 1953, the outpost came under massive attack from Chinese infantrymen, who greatly outnumbered the 180 American troops defending the outpost. After several hours of fighting, the attacking Chinese troops were forced to withdraw, with an estimated 60 killed in action. The Americans suffered two wounded, but thankfully, no fatalities. *Matthew Mittelmark*

### **What makes the CIB special to you?:**

My grandfather explained to me that the CIB is the "Top" award that any soldier can be awarded because it means service and sacrifice while engaging the enemy. This is shown by being worn in the place of honor above all other decorations, even the Medal of Honor ribbon, on the left breast covering the soldier's heart.. That is what makes the CIB very special to me. *Joshua Forsythe*

The CIB is special to me because it reminds me that somewhere embedded in my genetic code, I have the blood of a true warrior running through my veins. I am beyond honored to say that my roots are descended from such bravery. As of late I have learned that you never know just how strong you are until being strong is your only option, and I would like to think that my new-found strength stems from having a grandfather who earned a CIB. Whenever I am in times of trouble, I stop and remember who I am, and where I came from, and that gives me strength to push forward. *Erin Coffey*

I was told by my Grandfather that being in the Infantry he became one of the Army's Ultimate Soldiers and he was very proud to be able to withstand the rigors of combat. He was also extremely proud to be part of the few soldiers awarded a Parachute Badge and a CIB. It is an honor to have a Grandfather that has served his country so well and has been able to pass his stories onto his family and grandchildren. His legacy will live on to future generations in our family. *Autumn Drees*

The CIB is special to me because it is unique to the Infantry Soldier whose job is to close with and destroy the enemy. He is not a support Soldier. He is the one who does the hard work to take ground and kill our nations adversaries. He is the one exposed to great personal danger in doing his job during war time. I am proud of my fathers service. *John Hernandez*

What makes the Combat Infantry Badge special to me is more so the fact that I still have my father with me. I know of the many things that could happen during enemy contact. He could have lost his life or worse. In any case it serves as a reminder that my father was a brave man. One who was proud to serve without hesitation and for the good of the country. *Jan Rosa*

This is a recognition of the sacrifice and strife that was encountered by my grandfather and all others that faced personal sacrifice. I very thankful the heroism, selflessness, and willingness to give it all for our nation is rewarded with this honor. It makes my grandfather grateful for the recognition of the severity of fighting that he went through. What he gave up and endured is an honorable sacrifice. He suffered sleepless nights and no one could suddenly wake him for many, many years. It was fifty years before he began sharing his experiences. Now he wears his badge and hat proudly and can get the esteem he deserves. *Bry Walter Watkins*

My grandfather is very proud and honored to have earned the CIB and to wear the badge with pride. He not only served his country in time of war, but earned the badge for fighting in combat to ensure that the freedoms that we enjoy today will always be available to us. *Kendra Bond*

When I see a soldier or veteran wearing the Blue Badge, I realize that I am looking at a man who has seen the face of the enemy, up close and personal. Obviously, such men are deserving of the highest respect and honor, for their service in helping to keep our country safe from all it's enemies. All students of my generation stand on the shoulders of those previous generations, who have fought and died to preserve our freedoms. *Matthew Mittelmark*

My grandfather stated: What makes the CIB so special is that you had your life up for grabs. I came out of it and lots of my friends didn't. Now, as a veteran, you are thought very highly of, and that is special to me. *Elise S Jensen*

## About the Combat Infantrymen's Association National Scholarship Program:

**Eligibility:** Program is open each year to current CIAssoc Members, and children and grandchildren of CIAssoc Members who will be full time college students during the upcoming fall and spring semesters. Applicant must include either the CIB recipient's CIAssoc membership number, or must enclose/attach the CIB recipient's proof of eligibility and the membership application required for membership in the Combat Infantrymen's Association. Acceptable proof of eligibility includes an official notation on the CIB recipient's DD-214, DD-215, Official Army Orders, or other official documents. Proof of eligibility will then be reviewed by the Association Membership Officer for validity. Applications submitted without proper proof of eligibility will not be considered for review. Applications will be accepted between **January 1 and May 15** of each year, and awarded June 1. Student must show proof of end of school year 3.0 or higher GPA by providing copy of most recent high school or college transcript.

**Criteria/Judging:** Scholarships are awarded based on essay responses and application completion. The purpose of the scholarship is to raise awareness among students about the CIB. Essay prompt will be provided on the application, and applicant must be able to share the story of the recipients CIB award as part of the application. Essays will be judged anonymously – meaning the judges will not know the names of the applicants. Essays will be judged by members of local, divisional and national scholarship committees who do NOT have students participating in the scholarship program.

**Awards:** The CIAssoc Scholarship program provides one First Place Award of \$2500; one Second Place Award of \$500 and one Third Place Award of \$250. Scholarships are also offered at the local and division level, pursuant to available funding. Winners of local and division level scholarships will be submitted to the National Scholarship Committee, and first, second and third place National Scholarship Awards will be selected. Scholarships are awarded to students furthering their education at either a community college, trade school or university as a full time student. Funds are paid directly to the student in August of award year. Proof of enrollment will be required. Each year requires a separate application.

**Application:** Applications must be completed on line, using the form on the CIAssoc web site (link below, with the essay attached at the end of the form as a .pdf. Each application will be assigned a number, and each essay will be saved with the same number, and provided to the judges by number, not by name.

**Funding:** The CIAssoc Scholarship Program is funded by donations from members of the Combat Infantrymen's Association and Association Supporters.