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A Profile in Courage

We perform lexical analysis on a newspaper essay by Maj. Gen. Marvin Esmond, the highest ranking officer at Nellis Air Force Base. We count the patriotic words and find courage, courage, courage -- as well as dedication, honor and sacrifice.

The essay below by [Major General Marvin Esmond](#)*, commander of the Air Warfare Center at [Nellis Air Force Base](#), was published on the front page of the *Las Vegas Sun*, Aug. 1, 1996.

Lexical analysis was performed by the Area 51 Research Center and is summarized below. To aid calculations, all patriotic words employed by Gen. Esmond are highlighted below in **bold print**. These are the emotional words commonly associated with military speeches.

Where I Stand

Our Military Shows Same Ideals as Olympic Athletes

MAJ. GEN. Marvin R. Esmond, commander of the Air Warfare Center at Nellis Air Force Base, uses today's guest column to compare the young heroes of the Olympics in Atlanta to the heroic young men and women who serve their country in the military.

As I write these comments, the Olympic Games are in full swing in Atlanta. The globe's finest athletes are striving to represent their **nations** to the best of their ability -- all with hopes of standing **proudly** on the podium as their **national** anthem is played. Few will reach that goal, but not from lack of trying. As they compete for **glory**, the competitors represent more than just their **nations**; they represent concepts like **dedication, courage, sacrifice** and **honor**.

These concepts are equally represented by the men and women of our **nation's** military services. While few service members think of themselves as Olympians, they are, in fact, superb representatives of our **nation**,

and their **dedication, courage, sacrifice** and **honor** should never be questioned or ignored.

As commander of the Air Warfare Center at Nellis, I am blessed to be able to work with some of the most **dedicated** men and women in the United States Air Force. Our mission, to prepare aircrews for combat, is sobering. If one member of the **team** fails to perform at his or her highest level, it could mean someone dies. That's serious business.

Our service members show their **dedication** to that mission every day, 365 days a year. Our aircraft maintenance crews routinely work 12-hour days, in extreme conditions, to ensure all aircraft are in top condition. I have yet to hear one airman complain; rather I hear pride in their voices as they say, "That's my airplane."

I see examples of **courage** on a daily basis -- not unlike that shown by the young gymnast who performed a second vault even though she was injured. While it appears she didn't need to perform that physically challenging vault for her **team** to win a gold medal, she didn't know that. She believed she needed to compete to help her **team**.

This kind of **moral** and physical **courage** is difficult to define and harder to find. Yet, our Air Force members exemplify these concepts. The world viewed the physical **courage** of Capt. Scott O'Grady after he was shot down in Bosnia. However, **moral courage** may be more elusive to discern.

But the airman who challenges her supervisor when she knows a decision is in error is demonstrating the highest level of **moral courage**. Our young people (and some not quite so young) don't hesitate to make sure what they're doing is right to ensure that the **team** doesn't fail.

Every man and woman choosing to join the military knows they may be required to make **sacrifices**. The ultimate **sacrifice**: dying in support of our **nation**. After 27 years in an Air Force uniform, I admit it's hard to send any military member in harm's way. Yet that's what we do for our **nation** and will continue to do as long as there are threats to our **national** security.

Our military forces also **sacrifice** in many other ways, the most obvious being separated from their families for extended periods. I'm not going to say they don't often question these separations. The bottom line is they go, as millions of **American** men and women before them have gone to distant lands to protect **democratic** ideals and offer peace in an unstable world. While many question our international military involvement, I hope none question the **dedication, courage** and **sacrifice** of the men and women defending **America**.

Honor involves all of these ideals. It also embodies **truth, patriotism** and **conviction**.

Our military forces today represent the best our **nation** has to offer. We have problems; we have our warts. But across the board, service members consistently strive to be good **Americans**, good airmen, soldiers, marines and sailors, and to represent our **nation** with **honor**. We are your sons and daughters, your husbands and wives, your neighbors and friends.

We **proudly** carry our **flag** to **nations** around the world in peace and in conflict. We prepare for the worst in hopes it will never occur. If I sound as if I'm covered in red, white and blue, I am. But if we lose our **national honor**, we have lost far more than military or economic strength. We have lost the distinction of being the country where more people on the planet want to live than anywhere else. An unrecoverable loss. A loss military members vow will never occur.

Lexical Summary

Number of occurrences of each patriotic word...

nation/national = 11
courage = 8
dedication/dedicated = 5
honor = 5
sacrifice = 4
team/teamwork = 4
America/Americans = 3
moral = 3
proudly = 2
flag = 1
truth = 1
glory = 1
conviction = 1
democratic = 1
freedom = 0
liberty = 0

Total Patriotic Word Count: 50

Total Words in Essay: 717

Final Patriotic Word Score: 7%

Beat that, Schwarzkopf!

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Created: 8/3/96

Last Revised: 8/7/96 gc, 8/8/96 gc