

*Cali's essay:*

I was born with a type of dwarfism called Oliers that affected the growth of my left leg. I was four years old when 9-11 happened, I remember how bad I felt that all of those people had died and gotten hurt. So from then on I decided to support our country and the men and women fighting to protect it. My first leg brace I got later that year I put an American flag on it.

I have so far had 14 surgeries; I have survived spinal meningitis, and also an M.R.S.A., because of the M.R.S.A I was amputated when I was 10 years old. When I woke up I remember how I thought how was I going to deal with this, how kids were going to accept me, if I could have a normal life and be accepted. Then I remembered something my mom always told me "there is always someone dealing with something worse." My first thought was the soldiers and how some of them were getting their arms and legs blown off by bombs and being shot at constantly.

The limb I have now is the second one I have had; both of them have been covered in military logos. The one I have now has camo in the background and the military logos on the front. With a red, white and blue eagle below. On one side it has bravery on the top because the military has to be very brave to do what they do, then a butterfly for all of the troops we have lost. Below that is love, I love the soldiers and they have to love their country to give their life for it and to protect it. On the other side there is a support ribbon, below that is a guardian angel, because the troops are our guardian angels for protecting us and keeping our country free but they also need guardian angels to protect them. Below that is protect, the troops protect us. Last the back is dedicated to my brother Virgil Scott Bonner he is a Marine and is currently stationed in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

My limb shows my constant support and gratitude for our military. I talk to the wounded soldiers and share my experiences with them in hope that they will have inspiration to get better, and to know that there is life after any injury. All of my limbs in the future will always bear the military and I will always support them. God Bless our Troops! I love them more than they will ever know!

Sincerely, Cali Overcast, age 13