



# Angela's English Paper

**The following was written by Angela Hornbeck for an English assignment. She is the daughter of SFC Bill Hornbeck, who deployed to Afghanistan in 2008-2009 with the 178th Infantry Regiment, Illinois Army National Guard**

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You wake up in a comfortable bed. You get into a hot shower, brush your teeth with clean water, and put on a clean pair of clothes. You get to eat a good breakfast, and then start the rest of your day. You get to go sit in at a desk at school and educate yourself without having to worry about being in danger. After school, you go to basketball practice, do homework, or hang out with your friends. After a long day, you get to spend time with your family. By that time, it's just about time for bed. This sounds like a typical day of an American teenager, not a worry in the world...

Across the world, it's 0600 hours, March 15, 2009 in Nangarhar, Afghanistan. It was a hot and sunny day outside. Members of the PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) Nangarhar and their SECFOR (Security Forces), and two trucks from Hot Rod 5 are preparing to visit and assess schools in Kot, Afghanistan. Meanwhile, other PRT members and elements of Hot Rod 5 are preparing to convoy to a nearby base to pick up mail and supplies. While they were at the base picking up mail, soldiers took turns guarding vehicles

and weapons while others visited the PX (Post Exchange) and picked up items they don't have access to every day such as snacks, toothpaste, shampoo and other things. Others went to retrieve the mail. Hot Rod 2 was one of the men that were guarding the trucks when another soldier mentioned, "Someone must be in trouble, the MEDEVAC (Medical evacuation) crews are in a hurry." Moments later, two Blackhawk helicopters lifted off to go help the soldiers that were in trouble. After that, they pulled the truck up to the post office and began loading mail. That's when the Team Leader, Hot Rod 2 Bravo ran up and told Hot Rod 2 that the MEDEVAC had just left and was heading to help Hot Rod 5. Their lead truck had just run over an IED (Improvised Explosive Device). They stopped loading mail and rallied the rest of the soldiers to head back to base and wait for news about their friends. Once they returned, Hot Rod 2 was instructed to gather all of the soldiers and collect all cell phones while outside internet access was turned off. This is known as a media blackout. This usually means that someone

is dead or wounded and they don't want anyone back home to find out before Military officials have notified the next of kin. As the soldiers were gathered, everyone was quiet and fearing what news might come. One of the officers came in and tried to find the strength to deliver the news that two of their friends were killed and others were seriously injured. The casualties were flown to a nearby hospital. Over the next few hours, word came that the two wounded soldiers died from their wounds. It was the darkest day of Hot Rod 2's career. Few words were spoken as members of the PRT Nangarhar mourned the loss of their brothers.

I woke up that morning at 6:30 A.M. to get ready for school. I took a nice hot shower, brushed my teeth, and put on a clean pair of clothes. After that, I got a ride to school from my neighbor Angel. I went through my normal day of school and everything was the same as always. During my 6th hour art class, Mrs. Banks paged me down to the office. The first thought in my head was that something bad had happened, so I got very nervous. I asked what was wrong and she told me that my dad was okay, but we had lost four

soldiers. I would tell you how the rest of my day went, but it was all a blur. All I remember was crying for days. It amazed me how people that I personally knew had made the ultimate sacrifice so that everyone else and I could live in freedom. The difference between most teenagers and I is that I don't take my warm bed, my education, or even spending time with my family for granted. I know that I have these luxuries all because these people that put their life on the line for us each and every day.

These four men, along with millions of other U.S. soldiers and their allies have made the ultimate sacrifice for over three hundred years so we can sit in school and get an education. They fight for us to live in freedom every single day. They fight to defend their country in hopes of preventing another terrorist attack. They fight so we don't have to. These brave men and women do the unthinkable every single day of their lives, so we at least owe them some respect. I believe that we can never thank them enough for all that they have and continue to do for us. By the way, Hot Rod 2 is my father, SFC Hornbeck.