

## Moral Courage Essay Exemplar C

Score: 3

Moral courage might be defined as standing up for one's convictions, especially in the face of danger. This danger might be physical and involve risking one's life, or it might be emotional and pose threats to one's overall wellbeing. A person who willingly faces these kinds of danger is a morally courageous person. Virginia Hall was one of these people. As a spy, she risked her life to help save French civilians and Allied soldiers. Even when others tried to convince her to give up her work, she refused and found new ways to help. Another woman who is morally courageous is Leigh Ann Hester. Who was a National Guard sergeant who risked her life to protect supply convoys in Iraq. She saved many lives as she helped to clear supply routes of IED's and insurgents. Both Virginia Hall and Leigh Ann Hester were women who put the lives of civilians and soldiers before their own.

Virginia Hall was a member of a wealthy Baltimore family. According to NPR Hall "called herself "capricious and cantankerous." She liked to hunt. She once went to school wearing a bracelet made of live snakes" ("A Woman of No Importance' Finally Gets Her Due"). Growing up privileged, she went to school in some of the country's best institutions and had opportunities to travel abroad. Through her studies and trips, she was able to master several languages, including French and German. She wanted to be a U. S. ambassador, but she was rejected. So, she applied for and received a clerking position in the U. S. Consulate in Turkey. While in Turkey, she suffered a hunting accident which resulted in her left leg being amputated below the knee. She was ultimately fitted with a wooden leg. When WWII broke out, she volunteered to drive ambulances in France. A chance meeting in England put her in contact with Vera Atkins, a British spymaster. Atkins recruited Hall as a spy, and she returned to France to spy for the Allied Forces. According to NPR, she was "among the first British spies sent into Nazi-occupied France in 1941. She posed as a reporter for the *New York Post*" ("A Woman of No Importance' Finally Gets Her Due").

**Commented [SV1]:** The writer opens with a clear definition of moral courage.

**Commented [SV2]:** The writer clearly identifies two individuals and states that they were alike because they risked their lives for others. This is a good example of a 3 thesis statement.

**Commented [SV3]:** This is not a strong example of an expository topic sentence, for it doesn't identify the main idea of the paragraph. Instead, the writer just begins chronologically with Hall's life.

**Commented [SV4]:** Although the writer uses in-text citations, they aren't accurate. If there is an author, the name is used in the in-text citation. Only when there is no author is an article title used. This isn't a serious error, but it is an error. If the writer had identified the author—instead of NPR—no in-text citation would have been necessary.

**Commented [SV5]:** Although the writer quotes accurately here, this is information that could easily be paraphrased.

## Moral Courage Essay Exemplar C

Score: 3

Virginia Hall demonstrated moral courage as she continued her spy work in France. She helped establish safe houses for the French Resistance and provided them with valuable information. Later, her intelligence helped the Allies as they were preparing to invade France. The German Gestapo came to call her the “limping lady” and targeted her as one of the most wanted spies. The Gestapo posted “wanted” posters of Hall that featured a drawing of her above the words “The Enemy’s Most Dangerous Spy — We Must Find And Destroy Her!” (“A Woman of No Importance’ Finally Gets Her Due”). Finally, she had to flee France and crossed over the Pyrenees Mountains on foot. Hall wasn’t done, though. When the British refused to send her back into France, she approached the American Office of Strategic Services, and they hired her as a spy. Because of her work for the OSS, she was ultimately awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. (“A Woman of No Importance’ Finally Gets Her Due”). Virginia Hall was the only civilian to receive this award during WWII. Her moral courage saved the lives of many civilians and soldiers.

Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester served in the U. S. National Guard and was deployed to Iraq. As a member of the military police, she helped protect supply convoys. According to NPR, “Basically, we would go out in our Humvees and we would clear the route for [improvised explosive devices] or insurgents before the convoys would start coming through” (“Silver Star Recipient a Reluctant Hero”). Her unit would usually protect supply convoys at least once a week. On Sunday, March 20, 2005, she and her team were taking a supply convoy on a road east of Baghdad when they were ambushed. The insurgents took out the lead vehicle. Which prevented the rest of the convoy from moving. NPR reports that:

Three members of Hester’s team were shot and wounded. Dozens of insurgents were firing on them. Hester’s squad leader, Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein, grabbed her and told her to follow him. They ran toward the insurgents’ trench line, took up position and started firing (“Silver Star Recipient a Reluctant Hero”).

After 45 minutes, the fight was over, and every member of her unit had survived.

**Commented [SV6]:** This is a stronger topic sentence, for it identifies the paragraph’s main idea.

**Commented [SV7]:** The writer quotes accurately but again uses an inaccurate in-text citation.

**Commented [SV8]:** The writer returns to the idea of moral courage at the end of this section but offers only brief and obvious explanation of how Virginia Hall demonstrated moral courage.

**Commented [SV9]:** This topic sentence is much like the first topic sentence about Virginia Hall.

**Commented [SV10]:** Readers must infer here that the actual speaker of this quote is Hester, not NPR. Again, the writer uses the article title instead of the author in the in-text citation.

**Commented [SV11]:** This is not a serious error, but a long quotation that should be indented like this contains 4 or more lines. This is a 3-line quote, which should be formatted within the text with quotation marks.

## Moral Courage Essay Exemplar C

Score: 3

Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester's moral courage was evident that day in Iraq. Although military women are not permitted to serve in direct combat roles, Hester actually did this in her role to protect supply convoys. NPR reports that "By any definition, it was a major firefight — direct ground combat — exactly what women are NOT supposed to engage in, according to the Pentagon's combat exclusion policy" ("Silver Star Recipient a Reluctant Hero"). As a result of her actions, she was awarded the Silver Star. **Becoming the only woman at that time to have earned this award because of courage in combat.** Hester said, "You know, it's just something that happened one day, and I was trained to do what I did, and I did it. We all lived through that battle." ("Silver Star Recipient a Reluctant Hero"). Even though women were not supposed to be in direct combat, Hester didn't hesitate to take up this role to protect her team and the supply convoy. Her moral courage was demonstrated in her willingness to put the lives of others before her own.

Moral courage is clearly a valuable asset. Both Virginia Hall and Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester are genuine examples of the kind of moral courage that impacts the lives of many. **Because these were women who stepped into traditionally male roles. They faced challenges that even their male counterparts would never have to face.** If risking their lives was not enough, they also had to fight public opinion. Several books have been written and a feature film about Virginia Hall is in the works. An action figure was created to commemorate Leigh Ann Hester. As examples of moral courage, both women deserve to be recognized and remembered.

**Commented [SV12]:** The writer does use a stronger topic sentence here, making direct reference to Hester's moral courage.

**Commented [SV13]:** This is a good example of a well-chosen quote. Although the writer could have paraphrased this, it's more effective to hear this directly from Hester's mouth.

**Commented [SV14]:** Again, the writer returns to the idea of moral courage but gives only a brief and obvious explanation of it.

**Commented [SV15]:** The writer concludes by making a strong comparison between these two women and by encouraging readers to recognize and remember them. As such, the writer doesn't really give a specific response to "why does this matter/what next?" Readers must infer the answers to these questions.

### Writing convention errors are highlighted throughout the essay. These errors include:

- **Sentence fragments** ("Another woman who is morally courageous is Leigh Ann Hester. Who was a National Guard sergeant who risked her life to protect supply convoys in Iraq." instead of "Another woman who is morally courageous is Leigh Ann Hester, who was a . . .")
- **Plural nouns** ("IED's" instead of "IEDs")
- **Introductory clause** ("According to NPR Hall" instead of "According to NPR, Hall")
- **Homonym** ("flea" instead of "flee")
- 

*The writer makes some convention errors, but they don't make reading difficult or confusing. This writer earns a 3 for writing conventions.*

## Moral Courage Essay Exemplar C

Score: 3

### Works Cited

Martin, Rachel. "Silver Star Recipient a Reluctant Hero." National Public Radio, Morning Edition, 22 Feb.

2011. <https://www.npr.org/2011/02/22/133847765/silver-star-recipient-a-reluctant-hero>

Myre, Greg. "'A Woman of No Importance' Finally Gets Her Due." National Public Radio, Morning

Edition, 18 April 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/18/711356336/a-woman-of-no-importance-finally-gets-her-due>

**Commented [SV16]:** The Works Cited page is accurate. Entries are alphabetized and formatted using hanging indentation. The writer relies upon just one source for each of the women.

**Commented [SV17]:** The Works Cited entries themselves are also accurate.