

Moral Courage Essay Exemplar A

Score: 2

When we claim that a person demonstrates “courage,” we may mean a variety of things. For example, individuals may possess physical courage, emotional or moral courage. They may demonstrate their courage publicly or privately, and their courage may effect many or just a few. During WWII, the most dangerous Allied spy was Virginia Hall. Sometimes referred to as the “Limping Lady” because of her wooden leg. As a result of her sabotage and rescues operations across Vichy France, this opened the way for an Allied invasion into Europe. Despised by the Nazis, Hall demonstrated the kind of moral courage that helped to save many civilian and military lives. Another example of this kind of moral courage is Leigh Ann Hester, she was the first woman in the U.S. Army to with a Silver Star for valor in combat. Hall and Hester exemplify many of the same qualities; and their legacies testify to this.

Virginia Hall grew up in Baltimore, Maryland in a wealthy family. She had opportunities for excellent education and travel. She completed her studies in Paris and Vienna, becoming fluent in French, German, Italian, and little Russian. Upon graduation, she wanted to serve her country and see the world, so she applied to the U. S. Foreign Service which rejected her because she was a woman. Refusing to give up, she got a job at the U. S. Embassy in Warsaw. Then at the U.S. Consulate in Smyrna, Turkey. It was in Turkey that she had her left leg amputated below the knee after a freak hunting accident in 1933. As a result, she was given a wooden leg that she named “Cuthbert.” After returning home to Maryland, she once again applied to the U. S. Foreign Service. But was rejected this time because she was an amputee. So, she moved to Paris as a civilian right before the German invasion. In France, she drove ambulances and

Commented [SV1]: The writer initially talks about general courage. Here, the writer specifically identifies moral courage but fails to define it. As a result, readers are left to infer what exactly moral courage is.

Commented [SV2]: This is a classic example of a “2” thesis statement that identifies two people and simply states that they are alike. The writer does not identify HOW these two women are alike OR why it matters to us.

Commented [SV3]: This paragraph contains a chronological account of Hall’s life. Here, the writer simply begins the chronology with a sentence that identifies where Hall grew up rather than opening with a true topic sentence that identifies the major idea to be developed in this paragraph. This reveals that the writer doesn’t have a strong sense of the type of paragraphing used in expository essays.

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eventually had to flee to England when the french surrendered to the Nazis. In England, she met Vera Atkins. A female spy who recruited agents for Winston Churchill's new organization, the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Ms. Atkins was particularly impressed with Hall's language skills and knowledge of the French country side. When she returned to France, she became the SOE's first female agent. She had a new name and posed as an American reporter for the *New York Post*. It didn't take long before she was routinely providing information about Nazi troop movements and military posts. The gestapo called her "the most dangerous of all Allied spies" and began posting notices about the "limping lady". The only way for Hall to escape France was to walk over the Pyrenees Mountains, a fifty-mile walk into Spain. There was heavy snow, the weather was brutally cold. But she successfully made the journey on a wooden leg. Still, she wasn't done fighting the Nazis. She signed up with the U. S. Office of Strategic Service (OSS). Months before D-Day, she disguised herself as a 60-year-old peasant she made her way across the French country side sabotaging the Nazi army. Her team derailed freight trains, blew up bridges, was responsible for killing 150 Nazis and capturing another 500. After the war, she received the Distinguished Service Cross. The only woman to receive this prestigious award during WWII. Until her retirement at 60, she worked a desk job for the CIA. (www.history.com/news/female-allied-spy-world-war-2-wooden-leg).

Leigh Ann Hester grew up in Nashville Tennessee until she enlisted in the national guard in 2001. In 2004, she was sent to Iraq and assigned to a military police unit. Her job was to protect the valuable supply routes for U. S. troops. Approximately once a week, her team would have to escort supply convoys, clearing the route of improvised explosive devices and insurgents for

Commented [SV4]: In this long paragraph, the writer tells Virginia Hall's story, which includes evidence of her heroism. The writer never directly states and/or explains Hall's heroism, though, leaving the reader to infer how Hall demonstrates moral courage.

Commented [SV5]: The writer provides an in-text citation but has formatted it wrong. URLs are never included in in-text citations.

Commented [SV6]: The writer begins the second long paragraph in the same fashion as the first: a chronology of Leigh Ann Hester's story. Again, this reveals that the writer doesn't have a clear sense of the type of paragraphing used in expository essays.

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there safe passage. Although women can't be assigned to military units where **there** major mission is direct combat. Hester did serve in a dangerous role because routine patrols can instantly become combat situations. **In 2005 as her team was escorting a supply convoy east of Baghdad, they were ambushed. The lead Humvee was blown up and caught fire, this trapped the rest of the convoy in the killing zone. Hester directed her team to take up a flanking position, they sent MK19 fire into a ditch where there were more than a dozen heavily armed insurgents.** She herself got out of her vehicle and started lobbing rounds from her M203 grenade launcher and storming the area on foot. With her squad leader, Hester cut **threw** two more trenches. After 45 minutes, the ditches were cleared. Twenty-seven insurgents lay dead, six were wounded, and one captured. All of Hester's unit survived the ambush. Later, "Hester was awarded the Silver Star, this made her the first woman in the Army to earn this honor since WWII and the first woman ever to earn it for valor in **combat.**" After returning to the U. S., she served as a police officer but later rejoined the **national guard.** She deployed to Afghanistan in 2014. She spent 18 months there and was promoted to sergeant first class. She also provided international humanitarian aid to the Virgin Islands in 2017 after the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria. Leigh Ann Hester is a lot like Virginia Hall. Both were women who achieved great honors usually given to **men,** in spite of the fact that both faced incredible odds as females in their fields (www.npr.org/2011/02/22/133847765/silver-star-recipient-a-reluctant-hero).

Both of these extraordinary women demonstrated moral **courage.** Clearly, both put **there** lives on the line for their country. In addition, both were brave enough to take on challenges

Commented [SV7]: This quotation appears to be accurate, but readers have no real sense of its source because the writer has used no signal phrase to introduce the source OR no in-text citation.

Commented [SV8]: The writer makes a direct comparison of Hall to Hester but fails to make any reference or connection to moral courage.

Commented [SV9]: Again, the writer uses an inaccurate in-text citation.

Commented [SV10]: This topic sentence reveals more of an understanding of expository paragraphing, for it identifies the key idea of the paragraph: both women's moral courage. In addition, the writer concludes with the final of three essay sections here.

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and situations that were traditionally reserved for men. The fact that both women were

awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star is evidence of their moral courage.

Neither woman felt comfortable talking about her service publicly, both preferred to humbly

serve their country. It is clear that both women are genuine models of the kind of moral

courage that makes the world a better place.

Commented [SV11]: The writer never truly attempts to justify how either woman exhibited moral courage. Obviously, both put their lives on the line and were physically courageous, but readers will have to infer how they were morally courageous.

Commented [SV12]: The writer does state that moral courage makes the "world a better place," but this is the only attempt to answer the question: why does this moral courage matter and how can we apply this to present and future situations? Once again, readers will have to infer an answer to this question, for the writer has given them little here.

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

- **misuse of homonyms** (e.g. "effect" instead of "affect"; "there" instead of "their")
- **failure to capitalize proper nouns** (e.g. "national guard" instead of "National Guard")
- **comma splices or run-on sentences** (e.g. "Another example of this kind of moral courage is Leigh Ann Hester, she was the first woman in the U.S. Army to with a Silver Star for valor in combat." instead of "Another example of this kind of moral courage is Leigh Ann Hester. She was the first woman. . .")
- **sentence fragments** (e.g. "After the war, she received the Distinguished Service Cross. The only woman to receive this prestigious award during WWII." instead of "After the war, she received the Distinguished Service Cross which made her the only woman to receive. . .")

The writer's convention errors do occasionally prevent readers from easily reading and/or understanding the text. As such, the writer earns a "2".

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Works Cited

1. www.history.com/news/female-allied-spy-world-war-2-wooden-leg
2. www.npr.org/2011/02/22/133847765/silver-star-recipient-a-reluctant-hero

Commented [SV13]: These works cited entries are not accurate. A URL by itself may never serve as a complete works cited entry. In addition, numbers are never used on MLA works cited page; entries are alphabetized.