

Moral Courage Essay Exemplar B

Score: 4

As a child, I associated courage only with physical strength and the willingness to risk your life. If you would've asked me to provide examples of courage, I'm certain that I would've identified Superman or any one of the Marvel heroes. Today, however, I've grown to realize the many forms that courage may take. One of these forms is moral courage, the willingness to take a stand and to defend one's principles and convictions, even in the face of danger.

Recently, I discovered two strong examples of moral courage: Virginia Hall, a WWII spy, and Leigh Ann Hester, an Iraq war veteran. Both individuals believed that their status as females shouldn't prevent them from serving their country in roles traditionally held by men. They risked societys and the militarys disapproval by pursuing these convictions. In addition, they risked their lives to fight for principles which would improve the lives of others living in oppression and physical danger. Undoubtedly, we will continue to face challenging social and political issues, therefore, emulating the moral courage of Virginia Hall and Leigh Ann Hester will help us protect more oppressed and endangered people.

In spite of a handicap that would have prevented most people from serving their country during war time, Virginia Hall's moral courage led her to become America's greatest WWII spy. Hall came from a wealthy family in Baltimore, Maryland. Her privileged background included the finest educational and travel opportunities, including schooling in both Paris in Vienna. As a result of her time in Europe, she became fluent in French, Italian, German, and some Russian. Because of her desire to serve her country, she applied to the U. S. Foreign Service after she graduated from university. Unfortunately, she was quickly rejected on the basis of her gender. According to Judith Pearson, author of *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy*, Hall's rejection letter communicated, "No women, not going to happen"

Commented [SV1]: The writer transitions into a clear definition of moral courage and identifies two individuals who exemplify this.

Commented [SV2]: The writer briefly explains how these women demonstrate moral AND physical courage.

Commented [SV3]: Having identified two individuals and briefly explained their moral courage, the writer uses the thesis to specifically address the question: Why does this matter/what next? This is a good example of a 4 thesis statement.

Commented [SV4]: This is a strong topic sentence that clearly states the main idea of the paragraph.

Moral Courage Essay Exemplar B

Score: 4

(qtd. in Roos). Refusing to give up, Hall landed a clerking job at the U. S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland and later at the U. S. Consulate in Smyrna, Turkey. It was during her time in Turkey that she suffered a freak hunting accident that resulted in the amputation of her left leg below the knee. She returned home to recuperate and once again applied to the U. S. Foreign Service. This time she was rejected on the basis of her handicap. Still, in the face of two rejections, she was undeterred in her desire to serve her country and to fight the reign of Nazi terror. So, she returned to Paris where she drove ambulances for the French army (Roos).

Although Hall had already demonstrated her moral courage by fighting the challenges that continued to thwart her, she had only just begun. In England, she met Vera Atkins, a British spy who was recruiting agents for Winston Churchill's Special Operations Executive (SOE). Hall's fluency in several languages and knowledge of the French countryside impressed Atkins enough that she recommended Hall who became the SOEs first female resident agent in France. Her moral courage and perseverance landed her an espionage position through which she organized French resistance fighters and provided the Allies with valuable intelligence (Roos). Dubbed the "limping lady" by the "Butcher of Lyon," Klaus Barbie, she was constantly hunted by the Gestapo. When her position in France became too dangerous, she walked 50 miles over the snow-covered Pyrenees Mountains into safety in Spain. Still, however, she wasn't done. After the British refused to send her back into France as an agent, she became an agent for the U. S. Office of Strategic Service (OSS) and resumed her work as a spy in France. This time, she disguised herself as an old woman, moving through the French countryside and organizing sabotage missions against the Nazis, which included blowing up bridges, as well as killing and capturing more than 600 Nazis. Ultimately, Hall was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross,

Commented [SV5]: The writer uses quoted evidence well by including a signal phrase that identifies the writer of the quote and by citing the original source for this quote.

Commented [SV6]: The writer provides sufficient, relevant evidence to make a strong case for the claim that Virginia Hall demonstrated moral courage.

Commented [SV7]: The writer transitions effectively from the first paragraph about Hall to the second, using a topic sentence that again identifies the paragraph's main idea.

Commented [SV8]: The writer continues to remind readers that Hall demonstrates moral courage. The writer also provides in-text citations to credit the sources used.

Moral Courage Essay Exemplar B

Score: 4

the only woman to receive it during WWII. After the war, she continued to serve her country through her work at the CIA (Myre). Sonia Purnell, author of *A Woman of No Importance*, writes, "Through a lot of her life, the early life, she was constantly rejected and belittled." Time after time, she was regarded as "someone not very important or of no importance" (qtd. in Myre). Virginia Hall's story is a testament to the moral courage of one individual who overcame personal challenges to help save others, an individual who was clearly important.

Like Hall, Leigh Ann Hester is a powerful example of moral courage. Growing up in Nashville, Tennessee, she had been selling shoes at a local shoe store when she decided to enlist in the National Guard. She left for basic training right after 9/11 and was deployed with a military police unit to Iraq in 2004. Her teams' job was to protect the supply routes by clearing the roads of improvised explosive devices and insurgents before the supply convoys came through. Although women can't be assigned to units where the primary mission is direct ground combat, Hester's work clearly involved danger, for a routine convoy patrol could turn into ground combat at any moment (Martin). As a member of a patrol team, then, she frequently had to assume a combat role traditionally reserved for men. Like Hall, her willingness to take on such a role is evidence of both her moral and physical courage. Hester said, "I guess it was one of the more exciting jobs in the military for women when I enlisted, and it still is now" (qtd. in Simkins). On March 20, 2005, Hester's team was assisting a supply convoy east of Baghdad when they were ambushed by AK-47, RPK machine gun fire, and rocket-propelled grenades. After the lead vehicle was blown up, blocking the supply route, Hester led her team out of the direct fire into a flanking position where there were several irrigation ditches the enemy was using to stage this attack. Hester jumped out of her Humvee and started shooting her grenade

Commented [SV9]: The writer uses a valuable, relevant quote to justify Hall's moral courage in the face of constant rejection.

Commented [SV10]: The writer transitions from the first example of moral courage to the second, using a topic sentence that identifies the second woman and claim that she, too, exemplified moral courage.

Commented [SV11]: The writer continues to provide in-text citations for source information.

Commented [SV12]: The writer explains how Hester demonstrated both moral and physical courage by using both paraphrased and quoted source information.

Moral Courage Essay Exemplar B

Score: 4

launcher into the trench line before she actually entered the area on foot. She was then joined by her squad leader, and the two of them cleared the irrigation ditches, killing and wounding 33 enemy soldiers. Not one of Hester's team died that day. Her actions earned her the Silver Star, making her the first Army woman to receive this honor since WWII. Even more impressive is the fact that she was the first woman ever to win the award for valor in combat (Simkins). Leigh Ann Hester possessed the moral courage to fight for the Iraqi people oppressed by Saddam Hussein's regime, as well as the moral courage to take on a combat role that many believed women shouldn't hold.

Although it's true that women have gained many rights and assumed positions previously denied them, many people would agree that they still face gender challenges—and even discrimination—in the military and the world at large. Both Hall and Hester were brave women. They risked their lives to fight for others. They fought against oppression and for safety and freedom. And they willingly stood up to those who insisted that women couldn't—and shouldn't—serve in espionage and combat roles. Women will undoubtedly continue to face challenges such as these. The moral courage of these two women serves as a powerful reminder that progress is not only possible but probable. In the future, women may assume roles previously defined for men only, and as a result, may help make the world a better place for other women and for people at large.

Commented [SV13]: The writer concludes the paragraph by reminding readers that Hester exemplifies moral courage and why she does.

Commented [SV14]: The writer clearly begins to address the question: Why does this matter/what next?

Commented [SV15]: In the end, the writer justifies that the moral courage of these two women matters because we need such role models if we are to make the world a better place not only for women but for everyone.

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

- **Possessive noun errors** (“societys” instead of “society’s”; “teams” instead of “team’s”)
- **Capitalization error** (“French army” instead of “French Army”)
- **Comma splice error** (“Undoubtedly, we will continue to face challenging social and political issues, therefore, emulating the moral courage of Virginia Hall and Leigh Ann Hester will help us protect more oppressed and endangered people” instead of “Undoubtedly, we will continue to face challenging social and political issues; therefore, . . .”)

The writer makes very few convention errors and they don't make reading difficult or confusing. This writer earns a 4 for writing conventions.

Moral Courage Essay Exemplar B

Score: 4

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](https://www.npr.org/2019/04/18/711356336/a-woman-of-no-importance-finally-gets-her-due)

Roos, Dave. "World War II's 'Most Dangerous' Allied Spy Was a Woman With a Wooden Leg."

History.com, 27 Feb. 2009. <https://www.history.com/news/female-allied-spy-world-war-2-wooden->

[leg](https://www.history.com/news/female-allied-spy-world-war-2-wooden-leg)

Simkins, J. D. "This sergeant became the first woman in the US Army to earn a Silver Star for combat

valor." Militarytimes.com, 14 June 2019. <https://www.militarytimes.com/off-duty/military->

[culture/2019/06/14/this-sergeant-became-the-first-woman-in-the-us-army-to-earn-a-silver-star-for-](https://www.militarytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2019/06/14/this-sergeant-became-the-first-woman-in-the-us-army-to-earn-a-silver-star-for-)

[combat-valor/](https://www.militarytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2019/06/14/this-sergeant-became-the-first-woman-in-the-us-army-to-earn-a-silver-star-for-combat-valor/)

Commented [SV16]: This Works Cited page is formatted accurately. The writer alphabetizes these 4 entries and uses hanging indentation for entries longer than one type line.

Commented [SV17]: Each works cited entry is accurate according to the 8th ed. of MLA

Commented [SV18]: The writer has not depended solely on two sources—one for Hall and one for Hester—but rather uses additional sources to demonstrate further research.