

## **Profiles: 2008 Scholarship Grant Recipients**

The Society of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Scholarship Foundation, Inc. awarded 2008 scholarship grants in the amount of \$1000 each to Kristin Costa, Bogota NJ; Christine M. Nussio, Dumphries VA; Ashleigh Roberts, Bells TX; Erin K. Willis, Fort Stewart, Georgia, and Kurt A. Yaeger, Swampscott MA. Our 2008 judges, Tomas R. Maines, Jerome A. Manley, Marco Montoya, Whitney P. Mullen, and Lynn D. Ball, commend these five recipients chosen from a field of excellent candidates. The profiles following summarize our grant recipients' unique excellence, and we thank the sponsors who nominated each candidate. We also extend our special thanks to our donors who made these grants possible.

**Kristin Costa**, sponsored by her paternal grandfather, Alfred Costa, is the recipient of the "Thomas W. Mason Old China Hand" award, endowed by Mr. Mason. Miss Costa is a sophomore at The University of Delaware where she is majoring in pre-veterinary medicine. She entered the university with a high grade point average while taking honors classes and has maintained her scholastic standing throughout her freshman year. Miss Costa's community service includes volunteer work at St. Joseph's High School, Bergen County Animal Shelter, and participation in the programs of the "Community Service Committee." She holds several "Academic Achievement" awards and is listed as an English and History Honors Student. Extracurricular activities include serving as Captain in retreat organization, and participation in high school Student Council and swim team. Additionally, Miss Costa holds varsity letters for two years participation in basketball. Throughout high school, Miss Costa held part-time jobs, and she earned a Knights of Columbus Scholarship. Her essay, entitled "The Distinction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division," provides a brief and extremely accurate history of the Division and concludes with her grandfather's pride in serving with the Division and her family's pride when her grandfather, Alfred Costa, spoke at the Paterson, New Jersey, premier of "To Hell and Back" starring Audie Murphy.

**Christine M. Nussio**, sponsored by her father, LTC Ricky J. Nussio, is the recipient of the "Thomas W. Mason Old China Hand" award, endowed by Mr. Mason. Miss Nussio is a freshman at Christendom College, Front Royal, Virginia, where she majors in courses supportive of her goals as an historian. Miss Nussio scored in the top 1% of all graduating seniors in 2008 through the National Merit Scholars program. Through Kolbe Academy, she won honors in theology, history, literature, and English, and she earned a "Presidential Active Lifestyle Award" and multiple awards from "Fort Knox Catholic Community." Further, she is a member of the National Society of High School Scholars. Miss Nussio lists 21 extracurricular activities and community service credits, most of which involve tutoring (Latin and math), music, sports, and religious activities. Additionally, she is the co-founder of the Teen's Needle Club, and she volunteers at the Officers', Spouses', and Civilians' Club. Miss Nussio's essay entitled "Standing Firm throughout the Years" begins, "Down south in the swamplands of Georgia is an Army post called Fort Stewart. It is the official home of the toughest breed of soldiers, better known as the Dog Face Soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division." This excellent four-page historical summary, spanning the years from 1918 to the present, uses active adjectives to

capture not only the historical facts but also the pride and commitment to duty of the soldiers of the Division. It ends with “Americans of all ages can be encouraged and thankful knowing the Rock of the Marne will always stand to defend their freedom, as long as there are ordinary American citizens ready to serve their country as heroes in the uniform of the Dog Face soldier.”

**Ashleigh Roberts**, sponsored by her maternal grandfather, Chester L. Ball, USA Ret., is a sophomore at Texas A&M University where she majors in Engineering. Miss Roberts completed her high school education with a very high grade point average and has maintained her scholastic standing throughout her freshman year in college. In sports, she held the title of Co-Captain in varsity cross-country, basketball, and volleyball. She served as treasurer of Marching Band, and holds leadership roles in Youth Group at her church. There she also participates in organizations such as Choir, Angel Food Ministries, and Church Christmas Play. She is a member of Beta Club, Superintendent’s Honor Roll, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and is listed as an “Elite All-American Cheerleader.” Her essay, entitled “The Importance of Setting Goals in Life. . . ,” begins “In today’s society the world is based upon setting and achieving goals.” It moves from the goals our parents instill in us as small children, through the indecision of the teen years, to the realization that as adults we are responsible for setting our own goals and ensuring that they are both measurable and achievable.” The essay ends with one’s feeling of accomplishment when goals, large and small, are met. This, Miss Roberts believes, sets an example for others to follow.

**Erin K. Willis**, sponsored by her mother, SFC Sonya K. Willis, is the recipient of the “Thomas W. Mason Old China Hand” award, endowed by Mr. Mason. Miss Willis is a sophomore at Kennesaw State University where she is majoring in early childhood education. She entered the university with a 4.0 grade point average and has maintained her scholastic standing. A few of Miss Willis’ many accomplishments include Community Service through church and sports leadership activities, math tutoring, and assistance with Senior Olympics (in the U.S. and Japan) and church-sponsored local blood drives. Extracurricular activities include soccer referee and coach, church choir member, and high school student aid. Miss Willis holds memberships in Phi Eta Sigma (the American freshmen honor society), soccer team, swim team, art club, and more. Her essay, entitled “American Patriotism,” begins “On September 11, 2001, outside forces determined to destroy us attacked the United States.” Miss Willis’s essay dramatically summarizes the event and marvels at the demonstration of American patriotism she witnessed in the days, weeks, and months following. She provides an extended definition of “being an America,” in which she expresses her opinion that American patriotism has less to do with where one was born than it has to do with freedom from prejudice and support of America, her people, and her direction. As one frame of reference, Miss Willis recounts what she observed about the meaning of freedom while reading *Woman at Point Zero*. As Miss Willis’s essay closes, she reminds us: “America is, if not the only country, a country where freedoms are granted so that people can achieve their ultimate potential in life.”

**Kurt A. Yaeger**, sponsored by his maternal grandfather, Charles M. Lamlein, is the recipient of the “Whitney P. Mullen Award,” presented in honor of the soldiers of the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, past and present. Mr. Yaeger is a sophomore at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania, where he is majoring in medicine. He entered college as an honor student and has maintained his high GPA. He lists an astounding number of credits in academic achievement, leadership, extracurricular activities, community service, athletics, and part-time employment. He is listed as an Advanced Placement Scholar and has received the Stimson Marine Corps Scholarship for Outstanding Public Service and the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship. Mr. Yaeger was selected as the representative of his high school at a symposium in Boston on “Current Genocides in the World.” Further, he attended a meeting in Washington D. C., where he participated in discussion with national leaders concerning genocide in Darfur. Mr. Yaeger serves as a member of the music committee for a weekly program aired on WJRH Lafayette College Radio, and he has organized service projects to benefit Tsunami (2005) and Hurricane Katrina (2006) victims. He served on the high school newspaper as staff and Arts Section writer. Additionally, Mr. Yeager has participated in many medical volunteer capacities including operating room assistance. In sports, Yaeger served as Captain of his Varsity Cross Country Team and as midfield attack in Varsity Lacrosse. His essay, simply entitled “Essay,” discusses what he has learned from reading such authors as Steven Ambrose and David McCollough—that there is a “common thread” among brave soldiers showing that “they all strive to uphold their honor and patriotism even in the face of grave danger.” Yaeger has tried to model his life “around the core values that military personnel exhibit during times of war.” He relates fond memories of conversations he with his grandfather, Charles “Pops” Lamlein, and attributes his love of the uniform to his early experiences of feeling like a hero when he “wore” his grandfather’s 1950s vintage Army uniform. This, he says, was a large motivator in his joining the Boy Scouts of America and later becoming an Eagle Scout. “Those in uniform” he believes “are the country’s true heroes.” Taking a step further, Yeager’s deep patriotism has led him to what he hopes will be a life of service to the human race as a physician. He ends his essay with “I am confident that my ideals, inspired by our country’s veterans, will carry me through.”