

Personal Statement:

I have always felt comfortable in the water. Ever since we moved to California from Georgia when I turned seven years old, I can remember loving to go to the beach and play in the surf. Many things in my life have changed, except my passion for the ocean and the pool. ~~Friends have come and gone through difficult times, times when~~ I was hospitalized ~~and in a wheelchair,~~ with a virus that could not be diagnosed. ~~It was through those times that~~ my longing to be back out in the ocean, catching a wave with my body-board, helped me endure the unknown. The virus struck near the end of my sixth grade year ~~in middle school,~~ paralyzing me, rendering my legs useless. I was in a wheelchair for three months, a time when I lost all of my friends and had to readapt to everything. I slowly recovered and spent quite a bit of time in the ocean during my rehabilitation. Life briefly returned to normal, until the end of seventh grade, when I relapsed, and returned to the wheelchair for a time. Again, the water welcomed me as I began the slow process of gaining strength in my legs.

This entire experience of having a debilitating virus has shaped who I am, enabling me to have an appreciation for those with disabilities as well as instilling within me the belief that anything can be overcome with an iron will to succeed. Upon my entrance to high school, I chose both an academic as well as an athletic path; determined to succeed in both. Since I love the water, and knew it was a place where I could strengthen my legs, I chose to play water polo. Little did I know how this decision would define who I am; giving me focus, discipline, pride, and an appreciation for teamwork.

My choice to join the water polo team has made me a stronger person with more self confidence and focus, further solidifying my belief that there is more to success than outward appearances. I began my freshman year spending quite a bit of time sitting on the bench; however, I never gave up, deciding that by my senior year I would enter my varsity season as a starter. Hard work, spending extra hours swimming and learning strategy, and not dwelling on my lack of playing time, enabled me to realize my dream. Through being part of the water polo team, I have made new

friends as well as **reestablished** a friendship lost during my illness. The hours spent practicing in the pool, traveling to games and tournaments, and helping upcoming players learn the game have forced me to develop personal discipline in order to also succeed academically. My belief that anything can be accomplished with mental discipline has allowed me to become more of a leader and an instrumental part in running the team as a unit. Not only have I been able to gain focus, discipline, strength, and a peer group from the team, but pride for my school as well.

As high school comes to an end, I have a new focus, the defense of our liberties. I now understand the sacrifices that our nation has endured and will endure again in support of our rare and valuable liberties. Our resolve as a free nation was greatly tested over the past year and the risk of stepping forward to defend our way of life is increasingly evident, and increasingly vital. I understand what is at stake and want to defend **my** country and preserve what was given me. I plan to **become** an Army officer and continue a family tradition.

End with something about water too in order to round out your essay. good job.

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