

## **B. Toomey**

### **Why America? It's their problem not ours**

At the end of the Wizard of Oz, Dorothy realized that happiness was in her own backyard. When looking for the most inspiring person of my life, I drew up a long list of those who have influenced me. Yet, I keep coming back to the one person who is my biggest fan, has sacrificed more, and has been an inspiration of service to her family, her community, and her country: my mother, Regina M. Toomey.

Family: My mother's dedication to her family really knows no bounds. Married to my father, a retired Colonel, she traveled world wide and kept our family going through his deployments in the Caribbean, the Balkans, Iraq (where he commanded a brigade) and Afghanistan (where he was Director of Engineering). Forgoing her career to ensure that her children were taken care of, it was not uncommon for her to arrive in a strange place and immediately have my father deploy. For example, in Germany we were still living in the Heidelberg guest house when my father left for 10 months in Bosnia. Throughout these events, she ensured we remained tied to both my dad and our extended family based in New England. We were present — or at least connected — at all major family events. Because of this, we have an exceptional relationship with our grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins. We have a great sense of family.

Community: Where ever we lived, my mother inspired me to work for the betterment of the community and directed me to such organizations as the Girl Scouts (through her support I eventually earned my Gold Award) where she became a leader. Never one to look for the flashy, up front jobs, I learned from my mother the strength and importance of the simpler, basic forms of service. I recall the Thanksgiving we worked in a soup kitchen in Tacoma feeding the homeless. Work such as this has inspired me to community service as a profession in life.

Nation: My mother is a dedicated to Soldier family readiness and has led the family readiness program at Fort Lewis for the past 4 years. She is tireless in her commitment to helping Soldiers and their families resolving even the smallest issues. Her efforts opened to me thoughts of sociology, a field I plan to study in school.

My mother has inspired me to be "all that i can be." I have a learning disability (auditory processing disorder) and my mother's ceaseless efforts as my teacher (she even home schooled me for a year) and as advocate for my welfare is incomparable. She worked many hours so we could afford to send me to a private school that was adjusted to my needs. Her self-discipline (she has a masters degree and has completed marathons) has inspired me to find my own strengths and set my own high goals. Clearly, she is the singularly inspirational person inmy life.