

# AMERICA IA

## Iowa America 250 Student Contest

Mary Elouise Bowman, Age 10,  
Waukee Community School District, 4th grade  
Essay/Poem  
Prompt 4: America's Founding Principles

### People Behind the Flag

America is turning 250 years old,  
That's a really, really long time.  
My mom says it all started with courage,  
And that courage runs through my family line.

A long time ago, in the Revolutionary War,  
Someone in my family stood up brave.  
They fought so we could be free today,  
So kids like me could laugh and wave.

Then my Great-Grandpas went to World War Two,  
So far away from everyone.  
They missed their homes and wished for hugs,  
Until the hard days all were done.

They helped the world when it was scared,  
They helped make things right again.  
Because of them, the flag still flies,  
For children now and children then.

My Grandpa served in Vietnam,  
A place so far I cannot see.  
He carried courage in his heart,  
And brought it back to my family.

My Dad went to Iraq to serve,  
Before I was even here.  
He helped protect tomorrow,  
So my today would have no fear.

Now my big brother wears the uniform,  
And stands up tall and strong.  
Sometimes I worry, sometimes I pray,  
And I count the days he's gone.

America is 250 years old,  
I'm only 10, but this I know:  
Freedom doesn't just happen—it's protected  
By families who love it so.

When I see the flag wave in the sky,  
I don't just see red, white, and blue.  
I see Great-Grandpas, Grandpa, Dad, and brother,  
And a promise I will always honor too.