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Mrs. Mitchell

Washington Trip

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### Tomb of the Unknowns

The average 13 year old has few opportunities to show respect to the military. I can take my hat off and stand during the pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, but other than that, I do not find many opportunities to show my respect to the soldiers who have fought for my freedom. Learning about the elements of this ceremony and its history is important not only to build our respect for the military but also our faith.

The number 21 plays a meaningful part in the ceremony, from how many steps the soldiers take to how long they stand in one area. The number 21 symbolizes the 21 gunshot salute which is the highest honor anyone can get in the military (“The Tomb of The Unknown Soldier”). When performing the ceremony the soldiers must go down 21 steps, turn to the east for 21 seconds, go down 21 steps, and turn around while putting their guns over their shoulders to represent standing between the grave and anyone who might pose a threat to it (“The Tomb of The Unknown Soldier”).

While these rules are strict, the Tomb Guards also have to follow rules all day, even when they are not performing the ceremony. The Tomb Guards spend their time in the area beneath the Memorial Display Room. Here, they will clean weapons, study cemetery history, and help prepare the next relief (a group of people replacing others who have been on duty). Along with

these rules have to follow, they also have to go through training, intense examination, and must be 5'10 for males and 5'8 for females("The Tomb of The Unknown Soldier").

All of this ceremony points to the core values at PVCA, these being: Honor, Gratitude, Respect, Integrity, and Perseverance. While at the tombs we can honor those who died for us and show gratitude for what they did. We can respect the families of the people who died and Integrity by not fooling around at this solemn ceremony. This opportunity will be meaningful especially for someone my age who doesn't get many opportunities to show thankfulness to those who serve our country.

Work Cited

“The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.” Arlington National Cemetery,

[www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Tomb-of-the-Unknown-Soldier](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Tomb-of-the-Unknown-Soldier).