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Gunshots ring out through the open field. Bullets whiz past heads as everywhere common people fighting for freedom fall to the ground wounded or dead. This scene was common in the American Revolutionary War. Farmers left their farms, merchants their shops, and doctors their practices to fight for independence. We fought this war because we desired to become a free country, but wanting independence was not what gave us our freedom. The soldiers' perseverance purchased the liberty that we treasure. Therefore, perseverance is the most essential civic value to Americans because it is what purchases and preserves freedom, equality, justice, life, and prosperity.

Perseverance purchased and continues to protect Americans' freedoms. In George Washington's farewell orders to the Continental Army, he said, "The unparalleled perseverance of the Armies of the United States, through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing miracle." Perseverance is what pushed soldiers through the long, strenuous war until they reached victory, earning independence for themselves and all Americans. From Valley Forge, to the trenches of World War I, to the streets of Baghdad, soldiers have fought for the liberties that Americans hold so dear. Freedoms procured with the blood of the Continental Army are still preserved by persistent soldiers today.

Peter Buxtun fought a similar battle in a different sphere. The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment was an unjust, racist study where 399 African Americans who had syphilis were purposely not given proper treatment so that the natural progression of the disease could be researched. Many of them died. Peter Buxtun was an employee of the United States Public Health Service at that time. When he heard about the experiment from his co-workers, he wanted to put an end to such injustice, so he filed an official protest. This was rejected, so he filed another protest. Again it was rejected. Finally, Buxtun leaked information to Jean Heller who published it in the Washington Star, and the experiment was immediately stopped. Peter Buxtun had the courage and integrity to file the report, but his sedulity was what effectively ended the racist experiment. Equality, justice, and life were restored to the African Americans because Buxtun exercised the perseverance necessary to accomplish what he knew was right.

Peter Buxtun and our soldiers are not the only Americans to persevere; common people show determination every day. Relationships survive because people work through their differences. To become successful, students must fulfill their responsibilities at work and school. People do not give up their businesses because of trying circumstances. Without indefatigability, the United States would be a poor, third world country because inventions would not take place, and businesses would collapse.

Indefatigability benefits us, but a loftier goal is to persevere to help others. As a tenth grader, I spend a considerable amount of time on my homework when I could be doing more enjoyable activities. I constantly remind myself that if I am diligent in my homework, I will earn college scholarships; then, upon graduating with a nursing degree, I will be able to care for people and make a difference in their lives. Not only can I persist in homework, but I can persevere in helping my country. It is very easy to let adults make all of the decisions about our country, but America is my country too. I can make a difference even as a teenager by writing letters to officials, calling talk shows, fighting racism, and keeping myself informed on the important events that happen in our nation. Perseverance is supporting the soldiers by sending them letters without expecting reciprocation, and praying for them even though it may seem futile. I can volunteer before elections and try to convince citizens to vote for the best candidate. By persevering, I can influence those around me and change my society into a better place.

Throughout history, our soldiers, Peter Buxtun, and common Americans have shaped the United States by their determination. The Continental Army at Valley Forge, Stonewall Jackson at the Battle of Bull Run, Thomas Edison and the light bulb, the Wright brothers and the airplane, Rosa Parks on the bus, the firefighters at the twin towers, students with homework, and every person in relationships: we Americans have persevered and may this essay inspire you, as it has inspired me, to continue persevering to keep the United States the country it is today: prosperous, equal, just, independent, and free.