

The DEI Newsletter

Special Edition: Veteran's Day

This month's edition honors FA veterans and their families:

- **Jared Gervais, Air Force**
- **Joanne Edwards, ARMY**
- **Ernest Edwards, Jr, ARMY**
- **Vilka Moonsammy, Air Force**
- **Paul J. Stellato, ARMY**

“Ordinary people who do extraordinary things simply because that is what they feel called to do is an incredible level of service and commitment.”

– Jackie Mazur

Upper School History Teacher



Nailah Moonsammy

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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Jared Gervais

Upper School History Teacher, 10th Grade Dean



“I began my service in the Air Force just out of high school after graduating in 2003. I would go on to serve active duty as a firefighter enlisting in 2004 and separating in 2008 as well as 4 years in the Air Force Reserves from 2009-2013. During this time I was stationed in Germany for 2 years, and from Germany I deployed to Qatar for a mission focused on air support for ground operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. After this time, I was stationed in Tampa, FL. While my time in the service no doubt had a tremendous impact on the shaping of me as an adult and person, there were countless lessons to be gleaned. Be it the importance of attention to detail in the precise folding of military issue underwear to be inspected by a drill instructor that was impossible to meet expectations, or the importance of sacrifice of the individual for the betterment of the team and mission in an effort to accomplish a goal, without a doubt the most impactful lesson that the military has afforded and instilled upon me is the appreciation for the curation of respect. More specifically, that respect has to be earned and cultivated through authentic concern for each other, through leading by example, humility of one's own faults, and is reciprocal regardless of rank or status. I could describe many others, from the importance of sacrifice and selflessness, but the most transmissible and tangible lesson from my time serving in the Air Force is without a doubt respect.”

Joanne and Ernest Edwards

Parents of Camille S. Edwards



“As soldiers, you have the opportunity to be the backbone for the Commander-in-Chief and to protect the ideals of alliances. You also have the opportunity to serve something greater than yourself. The most impactful lessons we have taken away from our years of service include cultivating communities everywhere we lived and served, as well as building true camaraderie across diverse groups of people. Civilians would be an even greater support to the veteran community by educating themselves on the issues veterans face when returning to their communities; re-integrating themselves into society, etc. Veterans are needing and deserving of empathy, compassion, and grace. Every veteran has a unique story; a unique experience. Every veteran comes from a family, had/has friends and loved ones, and deserves to be seen as human.”

Vilka Moonsammy

Mother of Nailah Moonsammy



“I served seven years in the Air Force as an Evacuation Nurse. One lesson that has served me well throughout my life is my ability to function under pressure and in high-stress situations. I learned the importance of always being prepared, informed, and ready to act. In every situation, success depends on camaraderie, teamwork, and the ability to trust one another. In the Air Force, we focused on our similarities rather than our differences and it made all the difference.”

Paul J. Stellato speaking about his family

Head of School

“There are just two photographs on the shelf above the desk in my home office. The first - taken around 1918 - is of my maternal grandfather, posing with members of his company at an army training camp in New Jersey. Dressed in his brown woolen uniform, this young cadet - and newly minted United States citizen - was preparing to return to Europe to join Pershing's army. Such was his devotion to our country that he was ready to forsake all he had gained to protect all he and his family might lose. In the second photo, taken some 25 years later, my father - so young and handsome in his brown woolen dress uniform - stands next to his new bride (whose father stands proudly in that first photo). Having left college to serve his country, my dad would march and fight from North Africa to Belgium in Patton's army. Just months after the photo was taken, a grenade burst would shatter his eardrum; six months later, a bullet would send him home. Undaunted as always, he would return to college and attend medical school on the GI Bill. My father would often repeat this line to my brothers and me: Your grandfather labored in a factory so that your father could attend college so that you could be a poet. In truth, they both risked everything they had so that I and my brothers could enjoy all we could imagine (which included my becoming a poet, if for only a few years). Theirs is the stuff of selfless service to country and family.”