

[Veterans Day: I am Proud to be an American](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on November 12th, 2012

My daughter Jill Sandoval teaches special education at [Justin Elementary School](#), in [Justin, Texas](#). Jill asked me to come visit the school Friday morning for their Veterans Day Assembly and to spend time with her children. You can read about Jill on her [All About Mrs. Sandoval Page](#).

Each time I visit Jill's students I understand why she cares so much for them. I received many hugs. I watched one young girl draw an 8 using a a template on an erasable board that Jill had created for her. The template had numbers for each step with Spiderman characters at each number. It was not easy for her and she was so proud when she completed her 8 with the rounded top and bottom.

For me, [Justin](#) is a really neat place. You are not likely living in a place like it. Many believe it was named for the Justin Boot Company, but it was not. Even though it is growing, in the 2010 census there were only 3246 people living there. Most people who live there have some land, and many have horses. I have not been able to find a Starbucks there, but that is ok. The people who live there are friendly and know each other so it has a warm small town, [Mayberry R.F.D.](#), feel to it.

Jill asked me to find a photo in my USAF uniform. I am sure we have, or at least had, one. I couldn't find it. The best I could do was send her this one taken in my Virginia Tech dress uniform. I think this was my senior class photo.

The Veterans Day Assembly was filled with music and students reading letters they had written thanking veterans. After the assembly the letters will be mailed to our soldiers overseas. It began with the boy scouts and cub scouts posting the colors. Then a third grade girl sang the Star Spangled Banner. She was awesome. Later each veteran was introduced with his or her connection to a student or teacher. At the end, everyone sang: "I'm Proud to be an



American.” I got goosebumps.

I am not sure why I still get emotional over Veterans Day. It could be thinking generally about the ultimate sacrifice made by so many for our country. I could be thinking about my dad’s service as a B-17 pilot in WW II. It could be thinking about my own high school and college friends who were killed in Viet Nam.

I had gone to Virginia Tech to become an aerospace engineer and an Air Force pilot. There were only two slight problems with the plan. First, I was not smart enough to make it through the aerospace engineering program. Second, I discovered I am color blind.

So, I never flew a mission during the war. I spent my career in the Air Force as a Judge Advocate. My first assignment was at Norton, Air Force Base in San Bernardino, CA. After two years I was fortunate to be assigned as a government contract trial lawyer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, OH. Nancy and I made wonderful friends during my five years in the USAF and I could not have had a better experience as a lawyer.

Yes, I am proud to be an American. I am proud to have served in the Air Force and I guess I will always get emotional during any recognition of veterans.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm’s attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.