

SERVICE MEMBER Q&A:

Joining the Military



Joining the Military is a big decision for any young adult. Here you'll discover personal stories of how and why some current service members made their decisions, and also some of the anxieties they had along the way.

Why did you decide to join the Military?



"During my high school years, I became interested in medicine and working in healthcare. I started as an intern in a civilian hospital and eventually worked my way up to being a surgical/anesthesia technician. However, I felt compelled to a higher calling where I could serve the country, and enlisted as a flight medic, where I could both work in a medical role and meet the desire to fly."

Technical Sgt. Michael Samuel Sheldon Padley
Flight Medic
U.S. Air Force Reserve



"I was never the type to love school and knew that if I went to college I would be wasting my parents' money. When I graduated high school, I wanted to be able to support myself and not depend on my parents. I knew that joining the Military was a means of doing this; it would also allow me to travel and explore the world."

Petty Officer Melissa Mercado
Information Technologist
U.S. Coast Guard



"The chance to travel was one of the reasons I decided to give the Military a shot. Even before going on deployment, my ship went to San Diego a bunch of times and I had never been there before. I was able to visit Australia, Japan, the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii — all places I thought about as a kid. Those were pretty cool experiences that I will never forget and am very grateful for."

E-5 Sydney Wilson
Damage Controlman
U.S. Navy



"While in high school, I participated in a local police department explorer's program. I learned a lot about providing service to my country; I became very disciplined and I felt a sense of belonging. I saw most my family members going to college, earning multiple degrees, yet still struggling to get the job they wanted or ended up with costly debt. I wanted to further my education on a debt-free route, along with the experience and knowledge I gained from the program; I wanted to provide service to my country, and I believed joining the Army would allow me the opportunity to pursue and achieve my goals."

Sergeant Olivia Outar
Culinary NCO
U.S. Army



What were your biggest concerns or questions about joining the Military?

“In high school, I thought that once you joined the Military, it was your job 24/7. While we are Marines 24/7, this does not mean [that] I only wear my uniform and only do Marine Corps related things. I have working hours similar to those of a regular office job.”

Sgt. Logan Block

Combat Correspondent/Broadcast Specialist
U.S. Marine Corps



“My biggest fear was being picked up for a job that I didn’t want to do. The best advice I give is: before joining, take the time to do the research to see what branch fits your goals.”

Technical Sgt. Michael Samuel Sheldon Padley

Flight Medic
U.S. Air Force Reserve

“Boot camp for sure. I knew I was strong both mentally and physically but I joined expecting the worst. I was surprised with how much fun I had once I was able to realize what all the drills and exercises were for.”

Petty Officer 1st Class Christiane “Chrissy” LaRosa

Maritime Enforcement Specialist (Squad Leader)
U.S. Coast Guard Reserve



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