

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 began to seek out opportunities to work in healthcare. I started as an intern at [a civilian] hospital system and eventually worked my way up to a surgical technician/anesthesia technician. During my college years, I studied health and different aspects of the human body. However, I felt compelled to a higher calling where I could serve the country. Therefore, I 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



"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 ... I was never the type to love school and knew that if I went to college I would be wasting my parents' money."

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] prior to those trips. ... I've been exposed to so many different cultures that I would've never imagined. Traveling to Australia, Japan, the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii... places I've thought about as a kid."

Petty Officer 2nd Class 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 [ending] 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 Noncommissioned Officer
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 biggest advice I give is before joining, take the time to do the research to see what branch would work best for you or fit 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 and 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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