

FUTURES



STEP IN, STAND OUT

Be yourself and so much more



IN THIS ISSUE: MYTH VS. REALITY • EDUCATION THAT EMPOWERS • A DAY IN THE LIFE

Big Decision. Unlimited Potential.

This is an important moment. You and your classmates are moving forward. You're setting goals, making plans and imagining the future you want. Whether you're thinking about college, a career or something uniquely your own, *FUTURES* magazine shows how military service can help you reach your goals faster.

Inside, you'll meet driven individuals who are gaining real-world experience, education and skills they can take anywhere. Now it's your turn to build momentum toward the future you want.

See what the Military can unlock for you.

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FACES OF SERVICE



SENIOR AIRMAN
LAURA-KATE AHAESY
AIR NATIONAL GUARD



SENIOR AIRMAN
JAY GUTCHES
AIR FORCE RESERVE



SERGEANT
MICHELL RUIZ
MARINE CORPS



STAFF SERGEANT
BRANDON CIZEK
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



SPECIALIST 4
SYRIAH HARRIS
SPACE FORCE



PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS
REECE WILLIAMS
COAST GUARD



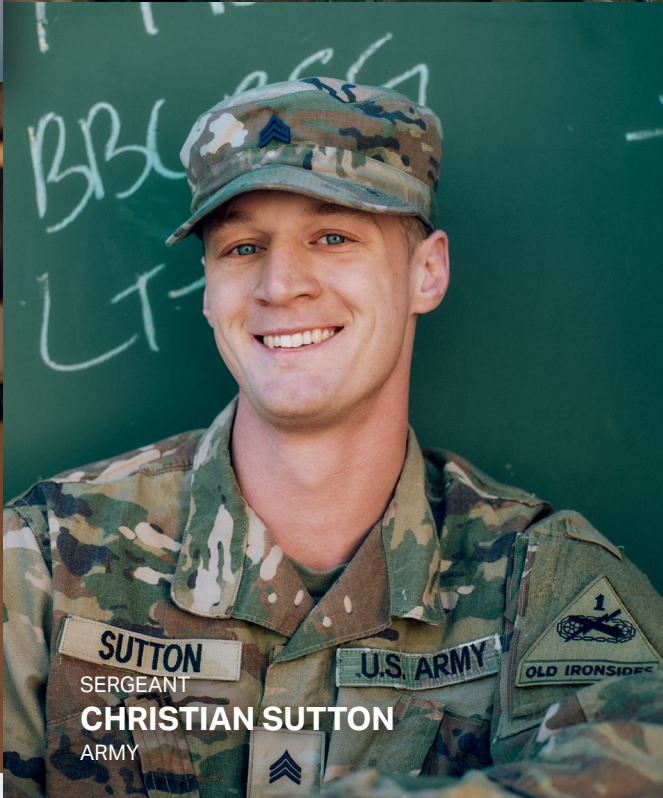
LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE
MAY OBERLIN
NAVY



SENIOR AIRMAN
ELIJAH HILL
AIR FORCE



STAFF SERGEANT
ILONA LETRAN
ARMY RESERVE



SERGEANT
CHRISTIAN SUTTON
ARMY



Military101

With more than 250 different occupations and a variety of ways to serve — including full time (Active Duty) and part time (Reserve and Guard) — see how the Military can help you reach your personal and professional goals.

ARMY — Active Duty, Reserve, Guard

MARINE CORPS — Active Duty, Reserve

NAVY — Active Duty, Reserve

AIR FORCE — Active Duty, Reserve, Guard

SPACE FORCE — Active Duty

COAST GUARD — Active Duty, Reserve

Want more info on military basics? Scan the QR code.



“In ROTC, I was able to grow as a leader and enhanced my communication skills, teamwork and compassion. I also made lifelong friends.”

LT. J.G. / MAY OBERLIN / NAVY

OFFICER

positions typically require a four-year degree or an equivalent. Officers are the managers of the Military, acting in roles that require planning, directing operations and making critical decisions. Officer positions also include jobs that require advanced degrees, such as law and medicine.

Good to know: Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs — offered at 1,700-plus colleges and universities nationwide — provide officer training to students during college, typically in exchange for a paid college education. In return, students commit to serving either on active duty or part time in the Reserve or Guard for a set period after graduation, usually five years.

ENLISTED

jobs require a high school diploma or GED certificate. There are a variety of enlisted roles, and most involve hands-on training and skill development for mechanical, transportation, human service or office fields that transfer well to the civilian sector.

Good to know: BASIC TRAINING, often known as boot camp, prepares new recruits for various aspects of service: physical, mental and emotional. It also provides the necessary tools, like teamwork and confidence, to prepare them for success.

“Before the Military, I was someone who had a vision for how to get things done, and I always figured the best way to do it was to do it myself. But I learned at Basic Training that you have to use other people's skill sets to make everyone's lives easier.”

STAFF SGT. / BRANDON CIZEK / ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



Ways to Serve

Choose your own adventure! You can serve full time while knocking out college classes, part time while pursuing a career or any combination that suits you.

1 ACTIVE DUTY Full-Time Military Service

Active Duty is a full-time job with set work hours (on duty) and time off (off duty). Being on duty is like a civilian workday in which you work an occupational specialty. Off duty is when active-duty service members pursue their personal interests, like hobbies, education or spending time with friends and family.

“I decided to pursue full-time service because it felt like a good next step after graduating from high school. The opportunities the Military offered, like a job and travel, ultimately led me to join.”

SENIOR AIRMAN / ELIJAH HILL / AIR FORCE

2 RESERVE Part-Time Military Service* Full-Time Civilian

Most Services also have a Reserve force made up of service members who typically balance full-time school or civilian careers while serving in the Military. The Reserve components combine an individual's civilian experience with military skills. Reserve members can be called to active duty to support mission needs.

“I'm able to have boundaries between serving, school and my civilian employer. With part-time service, you can definitely have work-life balance and not let one overpower the other.”

STAFF SGT. / ILONA LETRAN / ARMY RESERVE

**Minimum One-Weekend-a-Month Military Drill and Two-Weeks-a-Year Military Training*

3 NATIONAL GUARD Part-Time Military Service* Full-Time Civilian

The Army National Guard and Air National Guard are community based and report to the governors of their respective states unless called to protect U.S. domestic interests during times of conflict, natural disasters or civil emergencies. Every U.S. state and territory, as well as the District of Columbia, fields its own individual Guard unit. Members of the Guard may also be deployed internationally alongside active-duty service members when necessary. They hold civilian jobs and can attend school while conducting their military training part time.

“I chose part-time service because the flexibility fits perfectly with my civilian job and goals of teaching and continuing my education while still giving me a chance to contribute to something larger than myself.”

SENIOR AIRMAN / LAURA-KATE AHAESY / AIR NATIONAL GUARD

**Minimum One-Weekend-a-Month Military Drill and Two-Weeks-a-Year Military Training*



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Full-Time Service With Navy Lt. j.g. May Oberlin

Active Duty refers to service members employed full time in the Military, which typically equates to a 40- to 50-hour workweek and benefits like health care and paid time off. May serves full time in the Navy and is currently stationed at Fort Meade in Maryland.

9AM ▶

May begins her workday by commuting from her apartment in nearby Arlington, Virginia, to base, where she works as a cyber warfare engineer. In her role, she applies the principles of computer science to building tools and programs that detect, block and respond to potential cyberthreats. May's day typically involves a mix of independent work and collaboration with other Service branches to share threat intelligence and strengthen joint cybersecurity. Any attempt to steal information or disrupt military capabilities will be met with swift defense from cyberwarriors like them.

12PM ▶

May and her colleagues use their break room throughout the day to enjoy lunch, grab snacks and step away from their computers for a moment to catch up. These breaks provide a chance to connect with one another, whether they're talking about work or discussing weekend plans.

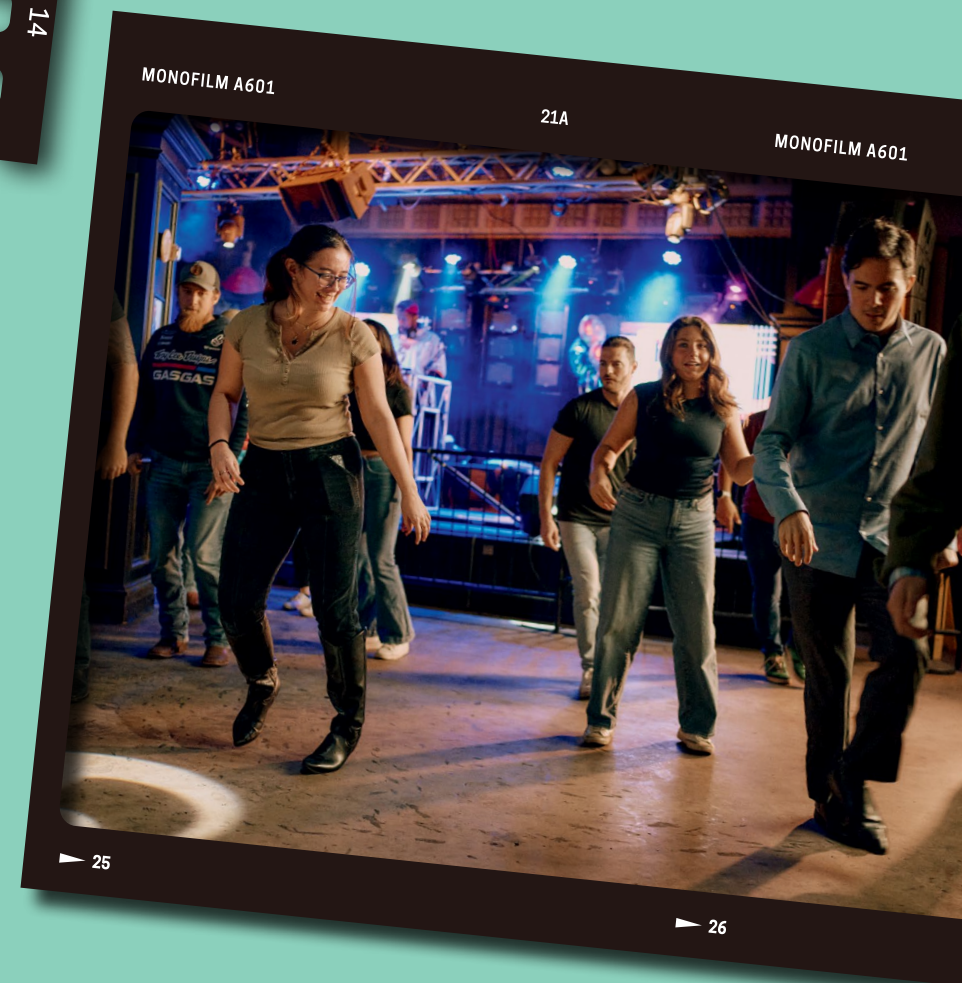


◀ 3PM

Since joining, May has expanded her professional network by working with both civilians and service members from other branches. Once she and her team create the tools that help safeguard our national security, they train civilian contractors and defense partners on how to use and maintain them. They all learn from one another by cross-training to develop new skills, like threat analysis and secure coding.

6PM ▶

May is very social and enjoys bringing friends and co-workers together for casual hangouts, video games and trivia nights. Sometimes, for a change of pace, they head into nearby Washington, D.C., to attend a show or concert or stay closer to home to go line dancing in downtown Arlington.



Becoming a cyber warfare engineer introduced me to peers who share my passion for cyber. The team dynamic we've built through training and collaboration is unmatched, and our diverse skills offer crucial perspectives for solving complex challenges.



DAYS IN THE LIFE

Part-Time Service With Air Force Reserve Senior Airman Jay Gutches

Members of the Reserve and Guard serve part time and typically maintain civilian careers or attend school while serving close to home. They participate in military drills a minimum of one weekend a month and annual training two weeks a year. In addition to serving part time at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, Jay is pursuing his education and working a full-time civilian job where he lives in Richmond, Virginia.

◀ FRIDAY 9AM

In his civilian role, Jay works a typical nine-to-five job in the financial services industry. His role involves managing financial assets for clients and keeping retirement plans well organized. He notes that the problem-solving skills he's gained from his military experience have positively benefited him, enabling him and his colleagues to resolve financial challenges efficiently — and prevent them from occurring in the first place.

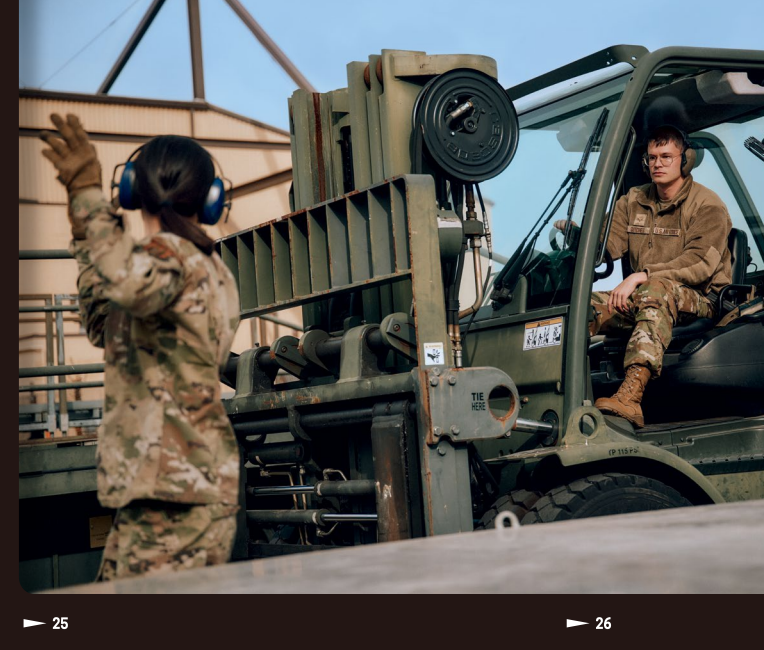
1PM ▶

Because Jay lives just a short walk from his office, he goes home during the day to take his dog, Lenny, for a walk around the neighborhood.



◀ 5PM

Jay is working toward his bachelor's degree in marketing, often dedicating time after work to completing assignments and attending classes online. He credits the Military with providing him the ability to pursue his educational goals without financial stress. After dinner, Jay drives two hours from Richmond to a hotel near base.



I have the freedom to go to school and continue my civilian career while serving part time. The opportunity to explore these paths is what initially intrigued me most about joining.



◀ SATURDAY 8AM

After a short commute from the hotel, paid for in full on drill weekends by the Military, Jay arrives on base and receives his schedule for the days ahead. As an air transportation specialist, he's responsible for coordinating and loading cargo for air transport. Jay and his team work together, moving everything from food and medical supplies to helicopters and even tanks. Their ability to quickly and safely transport essential equipment and personnel keeps operations running smoothly at every level.



▶ 1PM

Following lunch with his team at the dining facility on base, Jay attends technical trainings specific to his role and briefings focused on individual readiness. These sessions equip Jay and his team with the information and skills necessary to plan and coordinate air transport for various missions while adhering to aircraft safety regulations and maintaining accurate cargo and passenger movement records.

◀ 5PM

Jay enjoys the versatility of his role; some days he's on the flight line, others he's focused on load planning. He's responsible for ensuring the proper weight distribution of cargo, both manually and using computers, a crucial step for flight clearance and a skill he continues to sharpen through his love of math. After his day wraps up, Jay and his team head to the golf course on base for a quick round of golf and some dinner.



MONOFILM A601 21A MONOFILM A601



MONOFILM A601 22A MONOFILM A601



Educational Benefits

Student Loan Repayment Programs

may be offered to newly enlisted members to pay off college loans accrued prior to joining the Military. While requirements and opportunities vary by Service, all programs are designed to help recent students manage educational debt.¹

\$60K

The Military has several medical-specific financial assistance programs that pay 100% of tuition and an average of \$60K a year to attend classes and study, as well as provide a housing stipend.²

The Post-9/11 GI Bill

pays all public school in-state tuition and fees and provides a living stipend for housing based on location and a \$1,000 allowance for books and supplies.¹

These benefits are available to Active Duty, Reserve and Guard members. Benefits are based on length of service (a minimum of 90 days) and can be shared with family members.¹

College Fund Programs

are offered to eligible service members when they join the Military. These programs provide additional funds that can be added to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.¹

Incentives and amounts received will vary by Service, and while each branch determines who qualifies for the programs, two basic requirements are that you:

- ✓ Have a high school diploma
- ✓ Be enrolled in the Post-9/11 GI Bill

Tuition Assistance covers up to 100%

of tuition or expenses for courses taken at accredited colleges, universities, junior colleges or vocational schools.¹

\$150B

The federal government provides \$150 billion per year in grants, work-study programs and federal loans to college students in Active Duty, Reserve or Guard service.³

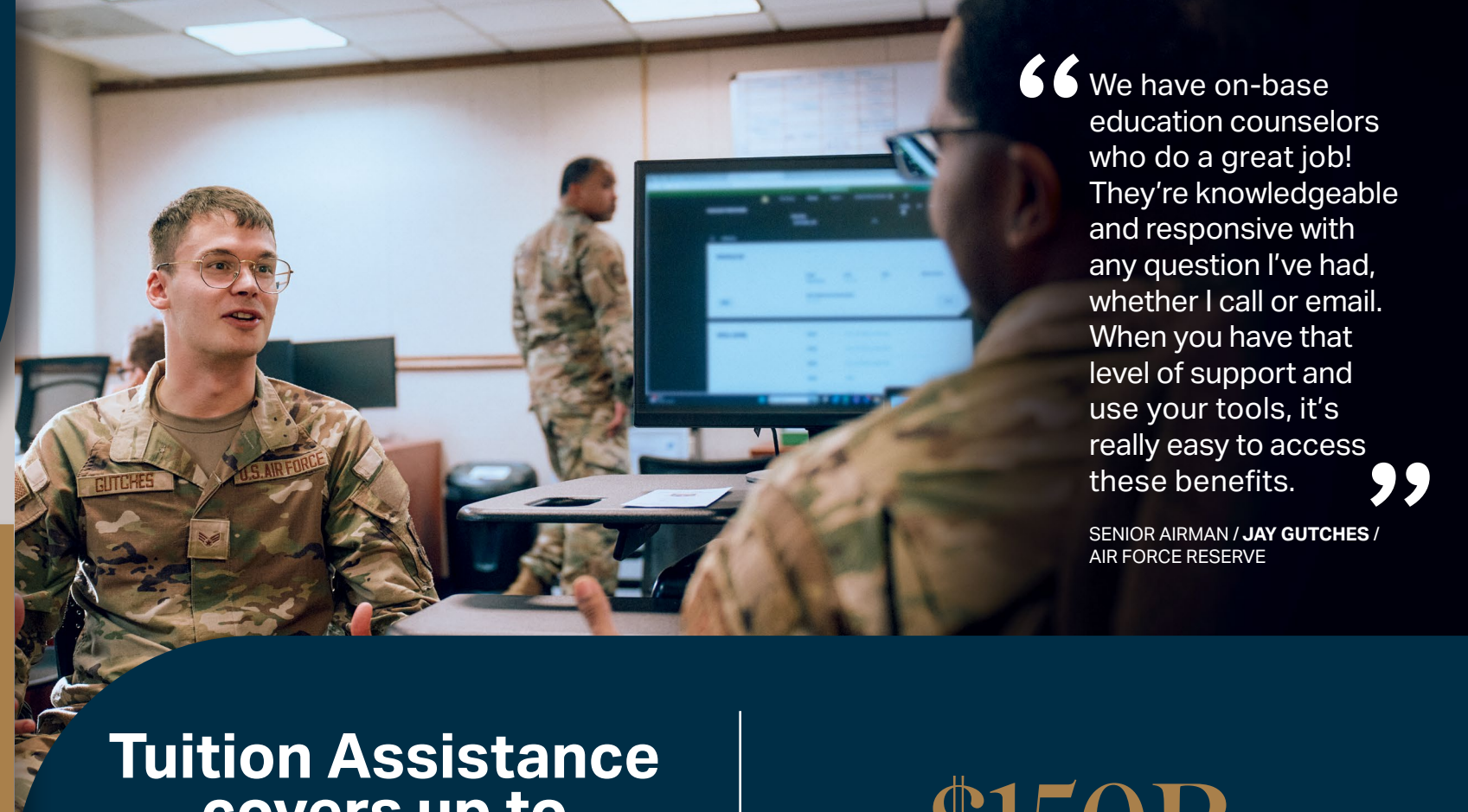
Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Programs

provide officer training to students during college, typically in exchange for a paid college education. In return, students commit to serving either on active duty or part time in the Reserve or Guard for a set period after graduation, usually five years.⁴

FAST FACT: In addition to financial benefits to help service members achieve their education goals, the Military has many programs that work with colleges and universities to accept recommended college credits based on military training and experience.

“We have on-base education counselors who do a great job! They’re knowledgeable and responsive with any question I’ve had, whether I call or email. When you have that level of support and use your tools, it’s really easy to access these benefits.”

SENIOR AIRMAN / JAY GUTCHES / AIR FORCE RESERVE



[Sources]
1: todaysmilitary.com/education-training/paying-college
2: medicineandthemilitary.com/applying-and-what-to-expect/medical-school-programs
3: militaryonesource.mil/-/how-to-use-the-military-tuition-assistance-program
4: todaysmilitary.com/education-training/rotc-programs



Education That Empowers

Leverage financial assistance programs, scholarships and hands-on training to level up your personal and professional goals

Syriah is pursuing a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in mathematics and space science at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. She's able to apply what she's learning directly to her role as an electromagnetic warfare operator. Through military-provided financial assistance programs, she's continuing her education without financial stress while advancing toward her long-term goals.

"I did a year of college before I joined and have been able to use programs like the Student Loan Repayment Program, so the loan I do have will be paid off by the Military, which is really nice," Syriah says. "Classes are usually \$700 to \$1,000, so I can take two or three each semester and still have money left over from my Tuition Assistance at the end of the school year."

"I think military benefits are better than people realize, especially education benefits. There are a lot more opportunities available for those wanting a higher education than I realized before joining."

SPC. 4 / SYRIAH HARRIS / SPACE FORCE

”

Brandon used his benefits to cover all four years of his college expenses, including textbooks and lab fees.

"I used tuition reimbursement, which allowed me to pay for college. I currently have no debt, and I still have things like the GI Bill that I'm able to save and pass on to my kids or family later on down the line."

STAFF SGT. / BRANDON CIZEK /
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

”

While serving part time, Laura-Kate is using a combination of educational benefits to pursue her teaching degree and advance her civilian career in education.

"I've used Tuition Assistance to complete my bachelor's degree in childhood studies, and I'm currently working toward a master's in early childhood education to earn my initial licensure. Furthering my education is important to me, and having access to this support has been a huge advantage in achieving my academic and professional goals."

SENIOR AIRMAN / LAURA-KATE AHAESY /
AIR NATIONAL GUARD

”

Elijah can earn academic credits through his military training, allowing him to advance his education while he serves.

"I plan to utilize the college credits I've gathered from Basic Training, Technical Training and my on-the-job training to apply toward my degree in transportation management."

SENIOR AIRMAN / ELIJAH HILL / AIR FORCE

”

Skills For Life

Success starts with building a solid foundation



LEADERSHIP

Prior to joining the Military, Sgt. Ruiz relied on the direction of those around her. Through her military experiences, she learned the skills necessary to develop her own leadership style.

“In the Marine Corps, you learn how to follow and how to lead. I learned that being a leader is less about power or status. Instead, it’s about guidance, setting an example and having a clear shared purpose.”

SGT. / MICHELL RUIZ / MARINE CORPS



PUBLIC SPEAKING

Christian’s unique mission to expand the bone marrow donor registry across the entire Army helped him become more self-assured. He frequently speaks with and addresses entire units, sometimes registering as many as 400 service members per week.

“I’ve developed a lot more confidence and the ability to express myself, which has made me a better communicator. Outside of work, I like to volunteer in my community, and these skills have helped me when I visit local homeless shelters and nursing homes.”

SGT. / CHRISTIAN SUTTON / ARMY



INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

In addition to the technical skills Syriah has cultivated in her role as an electromagnetic warfare operator, she recognizes the importance of the interpersonal skills she’s developed along the way.

“Having strong people skills is essential in the Military, where you naturally interact with individuals from various backgrounds, ages and experiences. Understanding how others approach different situations is key to effective teamwork.”

SPC. 4 / SYRIAH HARRIS / SPACE FORCE



PROBLEM SOLVING

Brandon makes swift and effective decisions in his role as a recon team leader for his infantry unit, like planning route selections and communication strategies. This important skill also helps in his full-time civilian job as a project assistant at an architecture firm.

“Being in the Guard has given me great attributes, such as active listening and problem solving, to lead teams and accomplish tasks on the fly. As part of our training, we practice scenarios where we’re faced with an issue that requires us to think fast and use our judgment for quick solutions.”

STAFF SGT. / BRANDON CIZEK / ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

As a personnel specialist, Laura-Kate plays a vital role in managing administrative tasks that support her unit’s efficiency and readiness. Her responsibilities, such as maintaining records and ensuring accurate pay for her fellow Airmen, have sharpened her attention to detail.

“The precision I’ve developed while serving part time enhances my civilian job as a paraprofessional, where I work closely with children who have unique needs that require careful attention.”

SENIOR AIRMAN / LAURA-KATE AHAESY / AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Training That Translates

Technical programs, certifications and hands-on experience you can take anywhere

As a ground transportation support operator, Elijah drives a variety of government vehicles, including buses, trucks, cars and forklifts. He also provides transportation for top U.S. officials and has traveled nationwide with the Air Force Band and Honor Guard, fueling his passion for travel and being on the road.

“Through the Military, I earned a Class A commercial driver’s license and gained experience with a broad range of vehicles. This license allows me to operate large vehicles that most people don’t have access to and can open the door to high-paying job opportunities in logistics, transportation and fleet management in the civilian sector.”

SENIOR AIRMAN / ELIJAH HILL / AIR FORCE



Reece completed extensive training and earned certifications to prepare for his role as an aviation survival technician (AST). Now, he’s equipped with valuable medical expertise and practical skills that seamlessly transfer to civilian roles in health care and public safety.

“I did six months of schooling to become an AST and had many opportunities to get advanced medical training. Every rescue swimmer in the Coast Guard becomes a certified EMT through school and has the option to become a paramedic.”

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS / REECE WILLIAMS / COAST GUARD

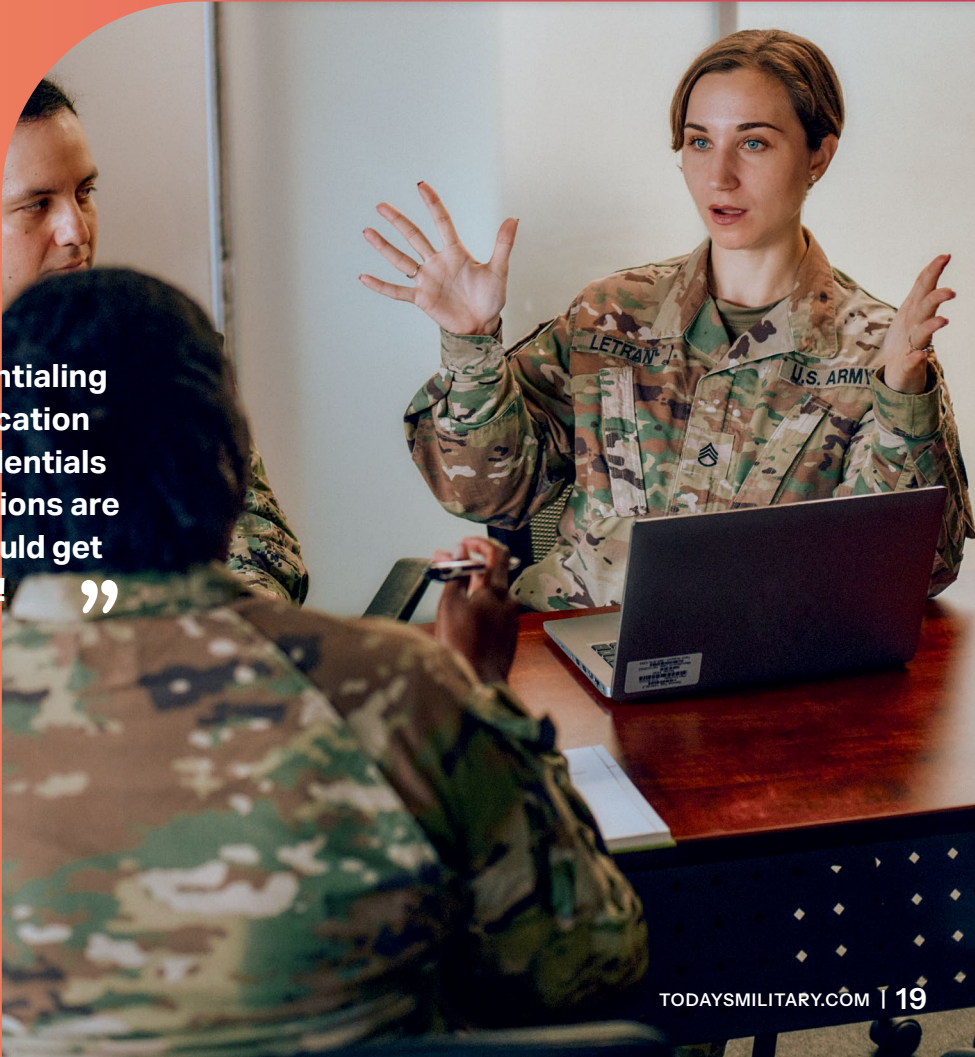


Through military-provided resources, Ilona is earning professional certifications online, gaining expertise that supports her career growth in both the Army Reserve and her civilian role.

“I make sure to take advantage of Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL), a certification website that offers a wide range of credentials to earn. In today’s job market, certifications are worth their weight in gold. Everyone should get theirs — one, two, even three — it’s free!”

Available within each branch of the Military, COOL is a program that connects service members with certification and licensing information relevant to their career fields, as well as funding for courses and exams.

STAFF SGT. / ILONA LETRAN / ARMY RESERVE



Advanced training is essential for accelerating May’s growth as a cyber warfare engineer. It helps her refine her technical skills and deepen her understanding of complex systems, ultimately allowing her to advance within her role.

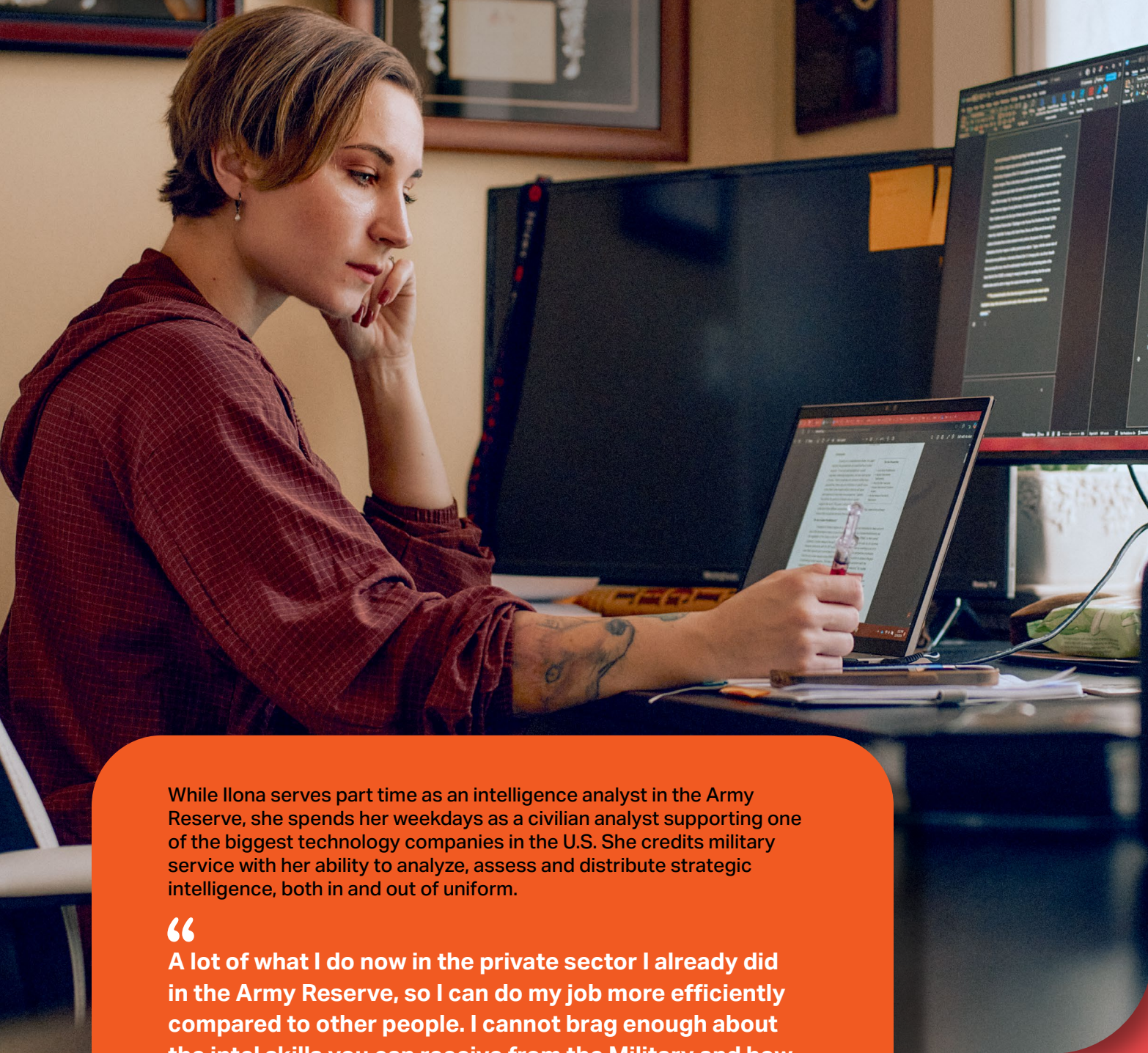
“My command is incredibly supportive of professional development. They covered the \$10,000 cost of a one-week training where I gained hands-on experience with embedded systems and hardware hacking.”

LT. J.G. / MAY OBERLIN / NAVY



Success From Service

See how these young professionals are fast-tracking their futures through the Military



While Ilona serves part time as an intelligence analyst in the Army Reserve, she spends her weekdays as a civilian analyst supporting one of the biggest technology companies in the U.S. She credits military service with her ability to analyze, assess and distribute strategic intelligence, both in and out of uniform.

“A lot of what I do now in the private sector I already did in the Army Reserve, so I can do my job more efficiently compared to other people. I cannot brag enough about the intel skills you can receive from the Military and how transferable they are to the civilian world. The Military is the reason I have a great civilian career.”

STAFF SGT. / **ILONA LETRAN** / ARMY RESERVE



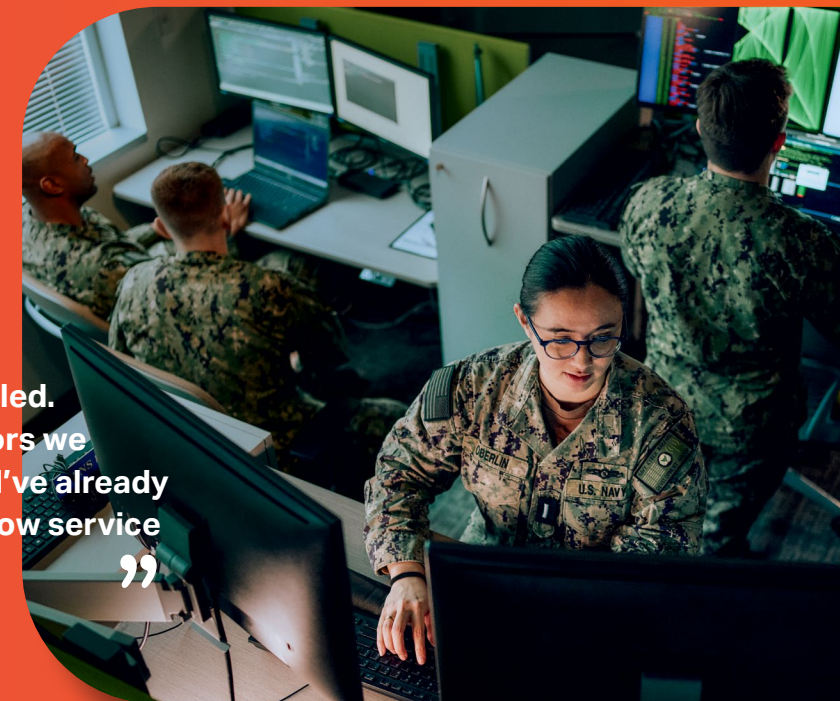
“When I eventually transition out of the Marine Corps, I plan to continue in a similar field because of all the knowledge I’ve built. I feel well prepared based on the experience that I’ve gained and the people I’ve worked around.”

SGT. / **MICHELL RUIZ** / MARINE CORPS

May attributes much of her growth to the Military and the impressive team of professionals she works with as a cyber warfare engineer. She says they’re constantly putting their heads together to solve seemingly impossible problems, making each other better in the process.

“The passion and knowledge my team has is unrivaled. Between my teammates and the civilian contractors we work with, I’ve built a huge professional network. I’ve already checked a major box because many employers know service members have the core values they’re looking for.”

LT. J.G. / **MAY OBERLIN** / NAVY



Jay’s military experience helped him secure a job at one of the biggest financial advising firms in the world. His interviewer knew he’d work well on a team after seeing other service members and veterans thrive in the same role.

“When employers see ‘Military’ on your resume, they see a stand-up person who’s resourceful, dedicated and willing to get the job done. It was great to be able to discuss my roles and experiences in the Military during my interview.”

SENIOR AIRMAN / **JAY GUTCHES** / AIR FORCE RESERVE



Check out more success stories, and find a path that fits you.



MAKING AN IMPACT

Leave a lasting mark on your teammates,
your community and the world



With the support of his leadership, Christian created a bone marrow donor registry program at his base that was adopted Army-wide to make it easier for thousands of people in need to find donor matches. In fact, Christian was identified as a match for a fellow Soldier and recently completed the donation process.

■ The reason I'm able to make such an impact is because of the structure the Army already has. We've gotten to where the Army will have the largest bone marrow donor registry program in the world, and patients won't have to wonder if they're going to find their donor. They're going to find it right here in the Military. ■

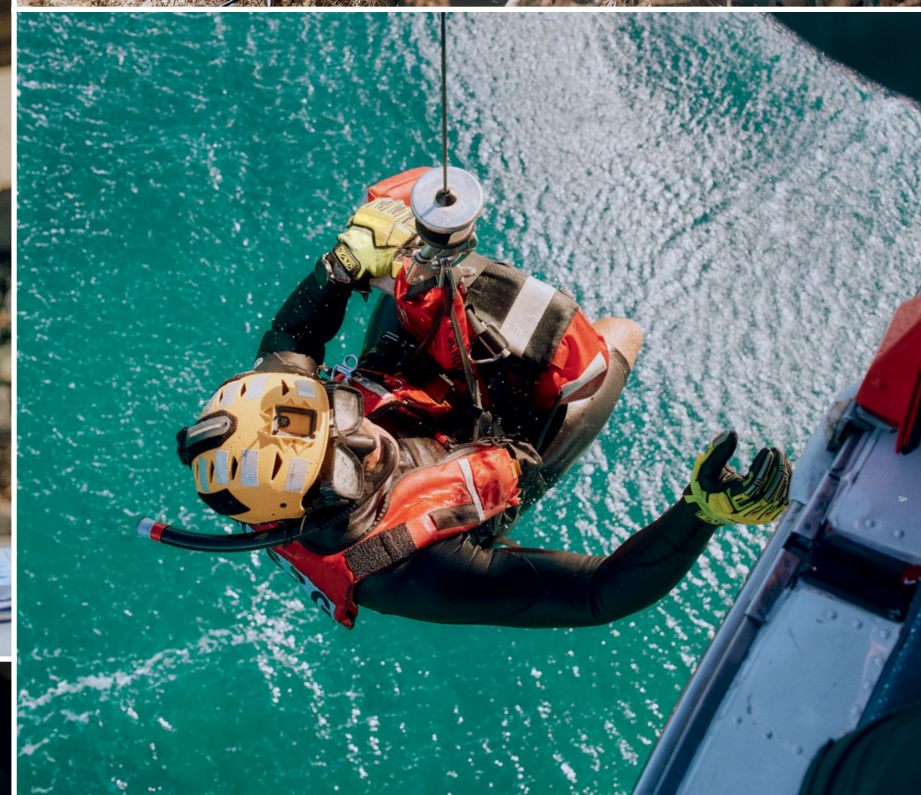
SGT. / CHRISTIAN SUTTON / ARMY



Sgt. Ruiz and her team are on the front lines of innovation, testing newly developed communications technology. Her role is essential to certify that Marines can effectively communicate insights and commands to their units, whether they're on base, in the field or deployed.

■ Without communications, the mission will not get done. We pass on every little bit of information and logistics — every moving part that's on the battlefield — to ensure the safety of Marines. ■

SGT. / MICHELL RUIZ / MARINE CORPS



Reece understands the impact his role as a rescue swimmer has on his community, which fuels his desire to help people.

■ Our unit saves over 100 people a year, if not more. It could be a medevac off a cruise ship or helping someone whose boat is taking on water — any chance we have to help someone get back to their family and carry on their own life is a win for us. ■

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS /
REECE WILLIAMS / COAST GUARD

More than 250 career paths are available in the Military to help you fulfill your professional goals and make a difference in your own unique way!



Intelligence



Combat
Operations



Engineering



Health
Care



Communications



Human
Resources

Work Perks

Discover benefits that go far beyond a paycheck

"In addition to my salary, I get Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS), which means my rent is covered and I have money for food. Being in the Military means that I have a definite paycheck, so I never have to worry about it. It really helps make sure that I'm financially stable."

SPC. 4 / SYRIAH HARRIS / SPACE FORCE



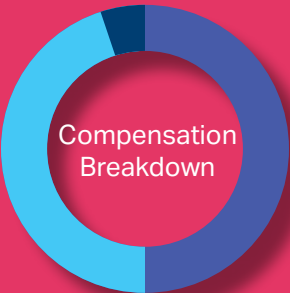
"Taking time off isn't a problem. We get 30 vacation days a year, giving me the flexibility to relax and recharge when I need it. If I wanted to, I could put in three weeks of leave and enjoy a nice vacation out of the country."

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS / REECE WILLIAMS / COAST GUARD



"I plan to eventually buy a house. The VA home loan will be really helpful because it offers benefits like no down-payment requirement, making buying property easier. The Military offers a lot of resources and support to help with budgeting."

SENIOR AIRMAN / LAURA-KATE AHAESY / AIR NATIONAL GUARD



Service members' compensation includes basic pay plus allowances for housing and subsistence.

- Base Pay: 48.80%
- Housing Allowance: 44.54%
- Basic Allowance for Subsistence: 6.66%

Compensation varies per individual based on location and rank.

Learn more about military compensation.



Take A Break

Brighten up your workday with a balanced schedule and surprising on-base perks

Elijah and his co-workers step away from their work and kick back in the Airman's Lounge, a room with gaming tables and couches.

Whenever we get a break from our work, we like to go into the Airman's Lounge and play some pingpong, chill and chat. It's good to have time to build morale.

SENIOR AIRMAN / ELIJAH HILL / AIR FORCE

Christian and his co-workers reach new heights together by visiting the on-base rock-climbing wall during their lunch breaks.

There's a ton of amenities on base. It's fantastic to know that there's so much close by to keep us happy and fed. There's a sweet mall, pools, a giant gym. I use the rock-climbing walls a ton because my friends and I love it.

SGT. / CHRISTIAN SUTTON / ARMY

The Hub at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado is a community center where service members dine, socialize and host events. Syriah and her co-workers like to pop in during lunch to grab a bite and shoot some pool.

Everyone goes to the Hub for lunch because there's an awesome sports grill with pizza, burgers — they even do Wing Wednesday. On Fridays, we do a Hub night, where everyone in the unit meets there for dinner after work, which is really fun.

SPC. 4 / SYRIAH HARRIS / SPACE FORCE

Though not all service members live on base, they can all take advantage of amenities, like:



Movie Theaters



Grocery Stores



Restaurants



Bowling Alleys



Libraries



Veterinary Services

In addition to on-base recreation, such as intramural sports, community pools, parks and performance venues, service members have access to resources that promote well-being and mindfulness.

Learn more about things to do on base.



Live It Up

From coast to coast and around the world, the Military offers endless opportunities to broaden your horizons

Reece takes full advantage of being based in sunny Miami, including enjoying water sports with family and friends whenever he can.

“It’s nice being in a new spot for four years at a time. We really try to get the most out of the area. What I most enjoy about Miami is the weather and being able to go to the beach at all times of the year.”

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS / REECE WILLIAMS / COAST GUARD

Sgt. Ruiz enjoys being stationed on the West Coast and loves to explore the surrounding beaches.

“Before I joined the Military, I had never been to California. I was super excited about having a job that allowed me to travel a lot. I probably would not have had the opportunity to do so without the Military.”

SGT. / MICHELL RUIZ / MARINE CORPS



During his first two-week training, Jay had the chance to experience a dream tropical destination.

“Getting the chance to go to Hawaii for work — let alone being paid for it — was an unforgettable moment. Once the plane landed, they opened up the tail halfway, and we could see all the mountains; it was surreal. We went hiking and had plenty of free time to explore. I couldn’t be more appreciative of that experience.”

SENIOR AIRMAN / JAY GUTCHES / AIR FORCE RESERVE

May’s service took her to the D.C. metro area, where she’s built lasting friendships and found a strong sense of belonging.

“I love the area I’m in. Living in a city was always a dream of mine as a kid, and I never thought I’d be able to do that in the Military. Now, I’m living out those big-city dreams while doing what I love in my job. I’ve really gotten to accomplish so many of the goals I set as a kid — all in my 20s.”

LT. J.G. / MAY OBERLIN / NAVY



DID YOU KNOW?

Full-time service members have access to rent-free on-base housing or housing allowances to live off base.

Explore bases around the U.S. and the world.



Military Myth vs. Reality

"What do you think is the biggest misconception about military service?"

MYTH

Everyone is the same.



REALITY

"Through the Military, I've been able to meet a variety of different individuals with distinct life experiences. The best teams I've worked on have been with people of varying opinions."

LT. J.G. / MAY OBERLIN / NAVY

MYTH

Mental health isn't a priority.



REALITY

"My command definitely makes sure we're taking care of our minds and hearts instead of only focusing on work. I intentionally take my weekends to relax and decompress so I'm ready for the week to come. Sometimes that's going out with friends, other times it means staying home and doing a hobby I like."

SPC. 4 / SYRIAH HARRIS / SPACE FORCE

MYTH

It's college OR the Military.



REALITY

"People think going into the Military right out of high school means you will not get a college education. Prior to the Coast Guard, I didn't know the Military covered college tuition. And even if I get out, I can use the GI Bill to help pay for college."

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS / REECE WILLIAMS / COAST GUARD

MYTH

The physical requirements are too difficult.



REALITY

"I think the physical aspect is entirely manageable. We do a bunch of different types of workouts as a team for PT (physical training); we'll work out in the gym together, we'll do yoga, we'll go swimming or take a spin class. It's not just pushups and situps 4,000 times a day."

SGT. / CHRISTIAN SUTTON / ARMY

MYTH

You're always on duty.



REALITY

"I was surprised at the work hours when I joined the Military. I thought it would be constant on duty. But I get more free time than I expected. I work from around 6 o'clock in the morning to about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. And I get weekends off, so I have a pretty good schedule."

SENIOR AIRMAN / ELIJAH HILL / AIR FORCE

MYTH

Military jobs don't translate to the civilian world.



REALITY

"Most jobs in the Military have a civilian counterpart. In my job as a radio operator, there are contractors on base that basically do the same exact thing as me, just as civilians. While you are in service, the skills and knowledge that you gain from your time can definitely translate."

SGT. / MICHELL RUIZ / MARINE CORPS

STRONGER TOGETHER

Drive success with teammates who have your back

Jay and his unit rely on each other to keep things moving smoothly. Whether it's coordinating logistics or handling heavy equipment, teamwork is essential. Every task, big or small, takes collaboration, focus and trust in one another to get the job done right. When moving loads of gear in high-pressure environments, safety, speed and precision are critical.

// We couldn't do any of this alone, and my team is the best there is. Even something as simple as moving a pallet from the plane to the cargo area takes a combined effort from three to four people. //

SENIOR AIRMAN / **JAY GUTCHES** / AIR FORCE RESERVE



Scan the QR code to see Jay and his unit in action.



May and her fellow cyber warfare engineers work on the coding systems and software that protect the nation's digital networks. With their combined knowledge, they tackle complex issues, from identifying system vulnerabilities to stopping intrusions, while building secure solutions to prevent future cyberattacks.

// What I like most about my job is the people I work with. We all genuinely enjoy what we do, we believe in the mission, and we all want to work toward a common goal. The passion and expertise across my team is unrivaled. //

LT. J.G. / **MAY OBERLIN** / NAVY

Being part of a search and rescue team is deeply rewarding for Reece. The strong bonds he's built turn every experience — like performing emergency medical support — into an opportunity for growth and connection, reinforcing a powerful sense of trust and teamwork.

// I can honestly say I love my job. We're a tight-knit group, and we've created a great environment for ourselves. Even on the busy days, we're able to manage it and complete our work in a timely manner — and have fun while we're doing it. //

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS / **REECE WILLIAMS** / COAST GUARD



Because they receive their drill weekend schedules ahead of time and typically work like a well-oiled machine, Laura-Kate and her team can hit the ground running, making the most of their time together.

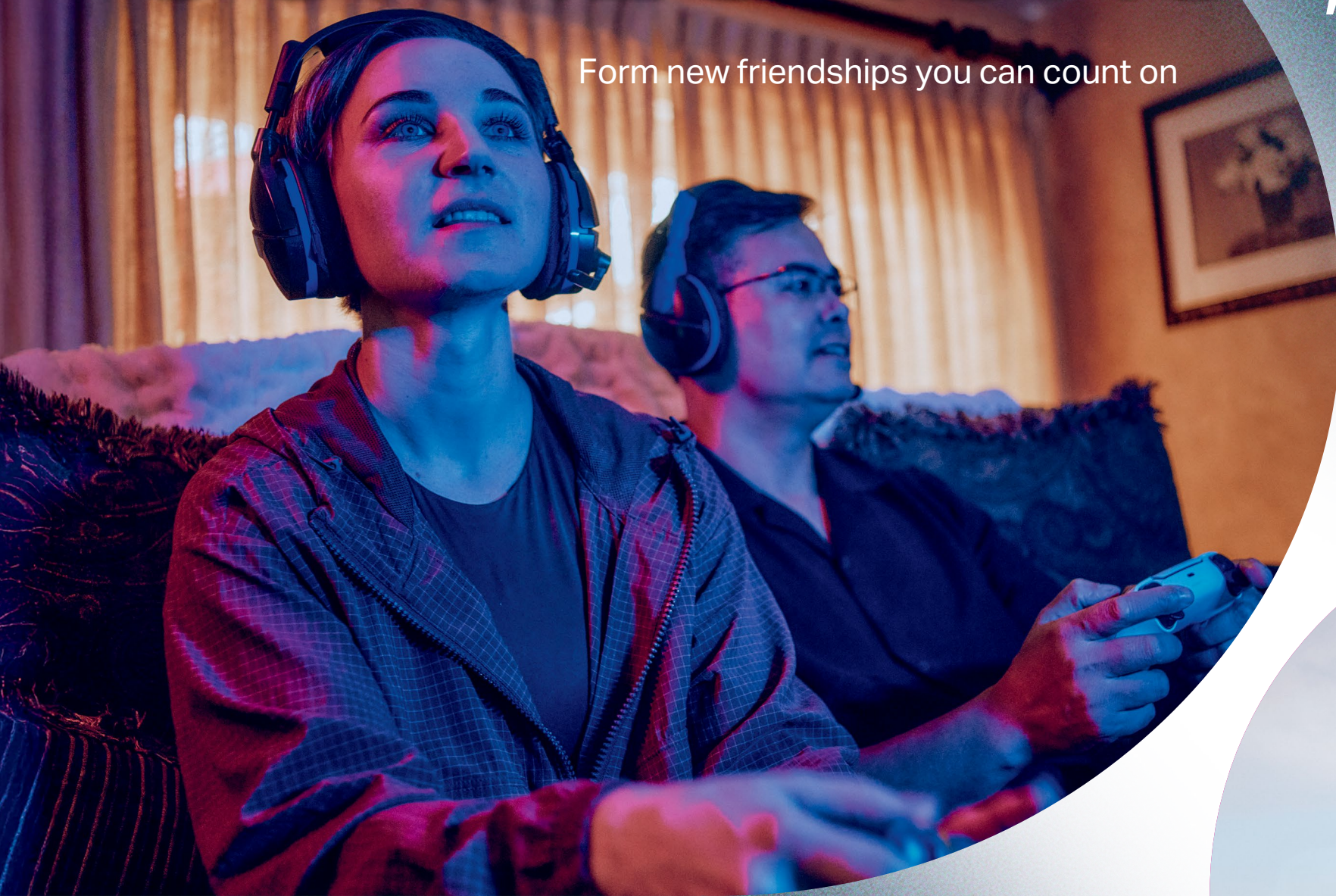
// We only see each other once a month, but when we do, it feels like no time has passed. I've built really solid relationships with both my peers and my leadership, and there's a unique level of trust and understanding that makes everyone truly happy to be there. //

SENIOR AIRMAN / **LAURA-KATE AHAESY** / AIR NATIONAL GUARD



CORE CONNECTIONS

Form new friendships you can count on



Ilona is building strong relationships everywhere the Military takes her, creating a supportive community alongside her professional network.

// The most rewarding thing about making friends in the Military is they often become lifelong connections. When you truly click with someone, it doesn't matter where life takes you — across the country or across the world — because if you reach out, they'll be there. //

STAFF SGT. / **ILONA LETRAN** / ARMY RESERVE

Sgt. Ruiz and her friends enjoy spending time together, whether they're running errands, walking their dogs or just hanging out.

// We all joined the Military for different reasons, but at the end of the day, our personalities fit in with one another. Even during our off hours, we spend time together sightseeing or trying new restaurants, or we just do daily things like going to the grocery store. //

SGT. / **MICHELL RUIZ** / MARINE CORPS



Syriah values the unique perspectives each of her teammates brings to the table.

// We come from all walks of life, so the backgrounds are definitely different. Since I'm in a smaller unit, everyone is really close with one another, and you get familiar with each other quickly, which helps round out our team dynamic. //

SPC. 4 / **SYRIAH HARRIS** / SPACE FORCE



AFTER HOURS

Off the clock on your terms

From wood shop to engineering class, Brandon realized during high school that he loves to work with his hands. Now he gets to do it not only through the Military but also by working on his car, which he takes to car shows and the racetrack on weekends.

// Whether it's swapping out old parts to upgrade them or something as straightforward as an oil change, I try to do everything myself that doesn't require specialty tools. I've always loved tinkering with new things. //

STAFF SGT. / **BRANDON CIZEK** / ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Scan the QR code to see Brandon's craftsmanship, on the job and off.



May always gravitated toward gaming, from playing racing games at age 7 to streaming her gameplay during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep in touch with friends. This further sparked her interest in STEM, which she's now pursuing through the Military.

// I knew I wanted to do something tech related for my job because I really liked video games. I was interested in how you could actually code something to get a game up and running. The people on my team all have that same core interest in tech, so it's really fun to talk about our hobbies. //

LT. J.G. / **MAY OBERLIN** / NAVY



One of Christian's favorite ways to stay active is doing Brazilian jiu-jitsu, a martial art sport based on grappling and ground fighting.

// A couple black belts started practicing together, others joined, and eventually it became a full club. Now we have new people coming who want to try the sport for the first time, so I've been teaching them the basics. //

SGT. / **CHRISTIAN SUTTON** / ARMY

Fashion is one of Ilona's favorite forms of creativity. As a self-proclaimed "fashionable nerd," she spends some of her free time finding clothes that help her express herself.

// I love learning about fashion and its history. Once a month, I look for cool pieces in local vintage shops. The process of the treasure hunt is so fun. I even find designer pieces. //

STAFF SGT. / **ILONA LETRAN** / ARMY RESERVE

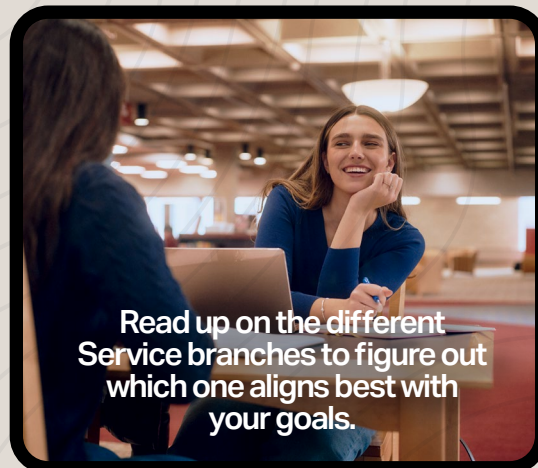


YOUR JOURNEY

From your first step to your first assignment, here's a high-level timeline* of enlisting in the Military

*This timeline is an example and may vary based on individual circumstances.

Start here



Read up on the different Service branches to figure out which one aligns best with your goals.

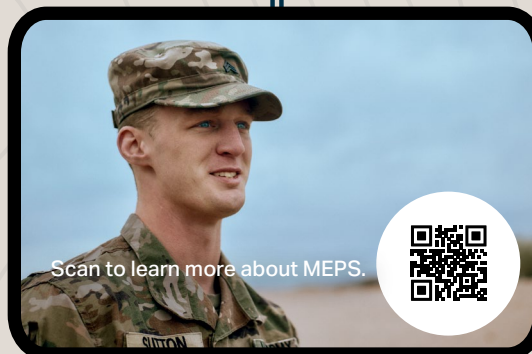


Meet with a military recruiter to learn about job options, benefits, pay and more, and talk to your family about the decision you're considering.

Take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), a test that measures skills to help match your strengths with roles in both military and civilian careers.

Visit a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) to get health, background and security checks.

Average time spent at a MEPS: **2 days**



Scan to learn more about MEPS.

Meet with a Service liaison after getting your ASVAB results to formally select your branch and military job, officially sign your contract and take the oath of enlistment.

Receive the date you leave for Basic Training. Once training begins, you'll start earning educational benefits that can be used during or after your service.

Average time between MEPS and Basic Training: **2-6 months**

Attend Basic Training, a learning and growth experience where you'll tackle physical training, strengthen personal accountability and learn to work as part of a team.

Average time at Basic Training: **7.5-13 weeks, depending on the Service**



DID YOU KNOW: You'll start earning a paycheck with full benefits on day one of Basic Training!

Pursue advanced training, which provides you with the skills necessary to succeed through hands-on experience, classroom sessions and field instruction.

Average time in advanced training: **4-52 weeks based on the military role**



FUN FACT: Before heading to your duty station, you'll get one to two weeks off to relax and prepare for your next chapter!

Report to your first duty station and begin your role-specific responsibilities by applying your newly acquired skills. You'll be able to gain real-world experience, explore professional development opportunities and forge lifelong friendships.

See what's next ...

“The more time you spend in the Military, the more opportunities arise. By volunteering and putting yourself out there, you gain valuable experience in your field. Over time, that translates to self-confidence that continues to build upon itself.”

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