FUTURES

MAGAZINE

Be Amazing AT WHAT YOU Love

INSIDE

DISCOVER YOUR CULINARY CREATIVITY

GREAT WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

GET PAID TO CLIMB MOUNTAINS

TURN THE PAGE AND RUN WITH IT

Achieve YOUR Goals

See how these service members are shaping their futures with fulfilling careers in today's Military

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MEET YOUR FUTURE

1. **Nicole Solana**
   Captain
   Army

2. **Kyle Farr**
   Sergeant
   Army

3. **Amayah Littlewolf**
   Specialist
   Army National Guard

4. **Tri Phu**
   Sergeant
   Army National Guard

5. **Paris Bledsoe**
   Sergeant
   Army Reserve

6. **Brian Abrams**
   Sergeant & ROTC Cadet
   Army Reserve

7. **Kelly Done**
   Petty Officer Third Class
   Navy

8. **Kris Scotten**
   Petty Officer First Class
   Navy

9. **Britni Garcia Green**
   Staff Sergeant
   Marine Corps

10. **Derek Pflugradt**
    Gunnery Sergeant
    Marine Corps

IN TODAY'S MILITARY

11. **Kyle Yaffe**
First Lieutenant
Air Force

12. **Nicole Moore**
Airman First Class
Air Force

13. **Josh Lewis**
Technical Sergeant
Air National Guard

14. **Morgan Eckert**
Senior Airman & ROTC Cadet
Air National Guard

15. **Matthew Gaddy**
Staff Sergeant
Air Force Reserve

16. **Michael Rosenberger**
Airman First Class
Air Force Reserve

17. **Lauren Foley**
Petty Officer First Class
Coast Guard

18. **Sonny Gomez**
Lieutenant
Coast Guard

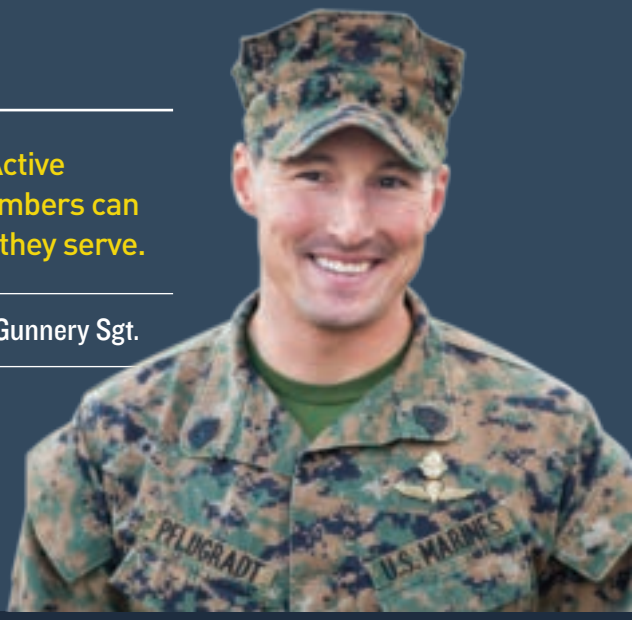
SERVICE: FIND A PERFECT FIT

Military service means completely different things to different people. It can be full time while balancing school, part time while balancing a career or any combination in between. See how these service members have found their perfect fit.

ACTIVE DUTY

Each Service has members who serve full time. They're referred to as Active Duty. In addition to working in an occupational specialty, active-duty members can pursue a college or advanced degree as well as off-duty activities while they serve.

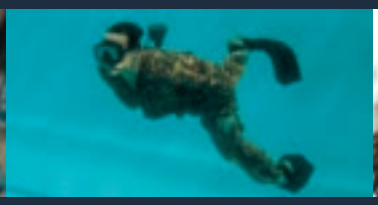
FULL-TIME MILITARY SERVICE | Derek Pflugradt | Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt.



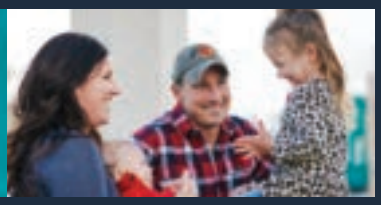
"Having the opportunity to do what a lot of people don't is one of the most rewarding parts of being in the Military."
— Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Derek Pflugradt

HERE'S WHAT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THIS ACTIVE-DUTY MARINE LOOKS LIKE:

Arrives at work, meets with his Marines and provides locations and instructions for the day's operations.



Leads advanced underwater reconnaissance training for his team of Marines.



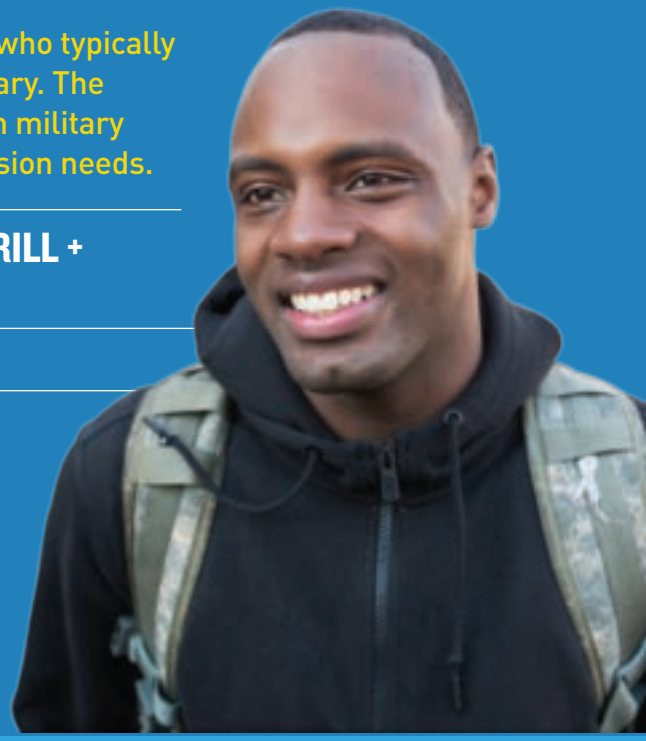
Heads home at the end of the workday to spend time with family.

RESERVE

Each Service also has a Reserve force made up of service members who typically balance school or full-time 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.

FULL-TIME CIVILIAN + ONE-WEEKEND-A-MONTH MILITARY DRILL + TWO-WEEKS-A-YEAR ACTIVE DUTY*

Brian Abrams | Army Reserve Sgt. & ROTC Cadet



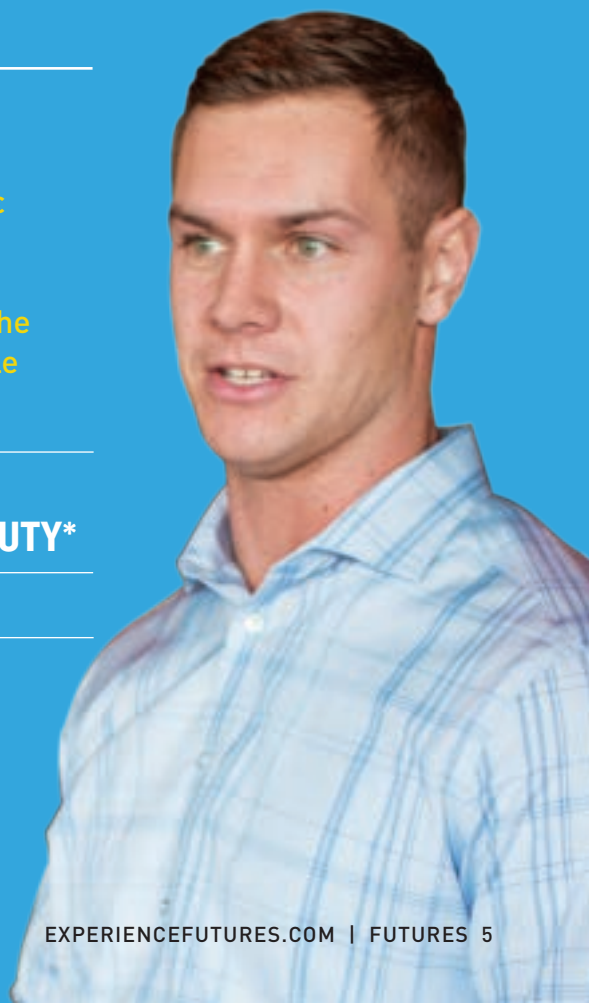
"I ultimately chose the Army Reserve because I wanted to finish school, and they have the benefits to help you finish."
— Army Reserve Sgt. Brian Abrams

NATIONAL GUARD

The Army National Guard and Air National Guard are community-based and report to the Governor of their respective state unless called to protect U.S. domestic interests in times of conflict or natural disaster. They may also be deployed internationally alongside full-time service members when necessary. Members of the National Guard hold civilian jobs or attend school while conducting their military training part time.

FULL-TIME CIVILIAN + ONE-WEEKEND-A-MONTH MILITARY DRILL + TWO-WEEKS-A-YEAR ACTIVE DUTY*

Josh Lewis | Air National Guard Technical Sgt.



"I love that serving part time is such a change of pace for me. My day-to-day job mostly consists of being at the office, so it's nice that once a month I can get hands-on and do some really cool stuff."
— Air National Guard Technical Sgt. Josh Lewis

*minimum

KNOWL IS POW

Morgan studies with a friend in the library.

TIME TO BE AMAZING

When you think about a typical college student's day, classes probably come to mind, maybe a few hours working at an on-campus job, and it probably includes hanging out with friends. For Morgan Eckert, a junior at Indiana State University, her days also include the Military. By serving part time in the Indiana Air National Guard, Morgan is able to have an exceptional college experience with all the added benefits of military service.

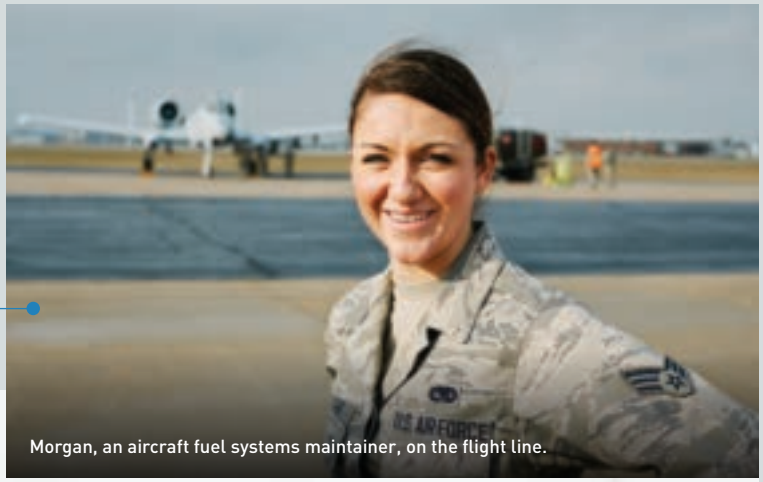
Morgan says the Military has kept her disciplined and organized so she can handle her busy schedule. "There are so many different things that I've been working on. If you know how to manage your time then it's really easy to be able to do everything," she says.

Morgan *is* busy, but she wouldn't have it any other way. She's training a rescue cat to be certified

EDGE VER

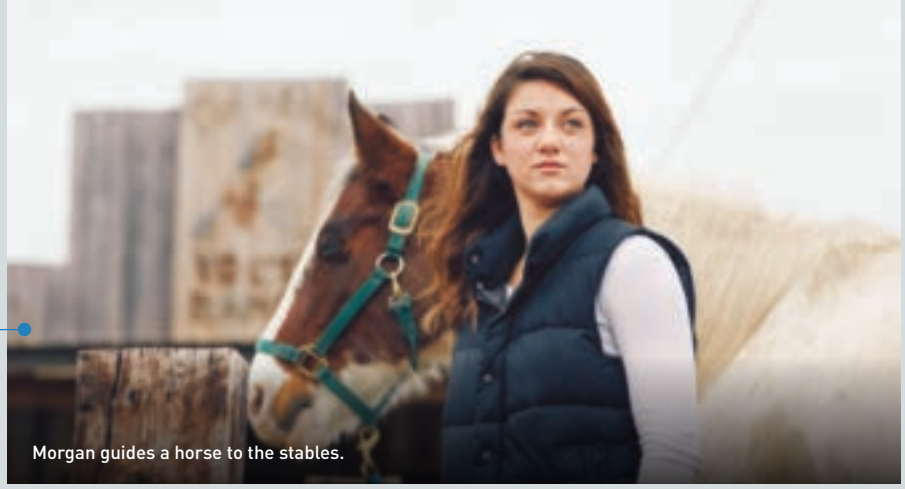
Whether you serve full or part time, you can advance your education with a career in the Military

as a therapy cat, flying three times a week to get her private pilot's license and playing the bugle in both Bugles Across America and the on-base honor guard. She wants to become an Air Force fighter pilot, then eventually go to medical school to become a flight surgeon or flight nurse. "The Military has definitely helped fuel my ambition," she says.


Morgan, an aircraft fuel systems maintainer, on the flight line.

> "The Military has definitely helped fuel my ambition."
> *– Air National Guard Senior Airman Morgan Eckert*

Not only does Morgan balance schoolwork, a job and part-time service, but she's also in charge of freshman and sophomore Air Force ROTC cadets as the standardization/evaluation officer. Despite her jam-packed schedule, Morgan still finds downtime just for herself and to horseback ride. "I love to ride horses — that's my big thing," she says. "When you're riding, it allows you to literally not think about anything else — not what's going on at home, or at school, or even within the Military. It keeps you focused on the horse and nothing else around you. It's a time you can just de-stress and understand the things that you appreciate."


Morgan guides a horse to the stables.

IN THE ZONE

A Day in the Life of Brian Abrams, Army Reserve

As part of ROTC, Brian has physical training, or PT, three mornings a week with fellow cadets at his school. He organizes and oversees PT, creating the calendar for what they'll be doing each day. Brian loves playing basketball, so he incorporates it into his sessions.

Following college courses in his major of community health, Brian is able to spend time with his family, which is very important to him. He lives with his grandparents, who are incredibly proud of his military service. "They hold a very special place in my heart," he says. "I just try to spend a lot of time with them. They definitely molded me, and that keeps me grounded."

"I think joining the Military was one of the best, most important decisions I've made in my life. I just want to be the best I can be and inspire anyone who sees me wearing the uniform."

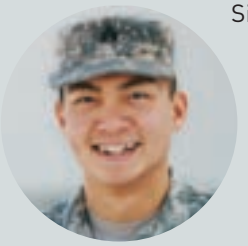
– Army Reserve Sgt. Brian Abrams

After PT, Brian attends ROTC class, where he learns various leadership styles, attributes and competencies, and Troop Leading Procedures.

Some days in between classes, Brian finds time to play basketball with two friends who are fellow ROTC cadets and drill with him on base once a month. He recently played in a charity 3-on-3 basketball tournament against other college students.

Tri (left) works on a UAS drone.

LEARNING BY DOING



Since he was a kid, Tri Phu has been fascinated by technology and how things work, so it was no surprise he decided to pursue engineering. Now, as a senior in college, he's finding that his passion — along with advanced skills he's gained in the Military — are giving him a leg up.

"One of the best parts about being a UAS repairer in the Military is having the opportunity to apply the technological concepts I'm already learning about in school."

– Army National Guard Sgt. Tri Phu

An electrical engineering major at the University of Minnesota, Tri credits his success in the classroom to his military training as an unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) — commonly known as drones — repairer.

"As technology continues to evolve, there becomes a greater need for engineers in the Military and in the civilian world," he says. "One of the best parts about being a UAS repairer in the Military is having the opportunity to apply the technological concepts I'm already learning about in school."

Mastering both the practical and the theoretical has been the key to Tri's success. "Knowing the physics and fundamentals behind technology helps us understand how to manipulate it in a way that will help improve the next generation," he says.

POST-9/11 GI BILL

THE MOST ROBUST SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AND THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PACKAGE SINCE THE ORIGINAL GI BILL BECAME LAW IN 1944.

VETERANS, INCLUDING RESERVE AND GUARD MEMBERS, WITH AT LEAST

90 DAYS

OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE ARE ELIGIBLE. WHILE THE BENEFIT AMOUNT IS BASED ON YOUR LENGTH OF SERVICE, THE GI BILL CAN BE USED TO COVER ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL IN-STATE TUITION AND FEES.

"Since the Military is paying for my education, it relieves the stress and financial burden of having to find a job while in school. Now I can focus everything I have on my studies.

— Army National Guard Sgt. Tri Phu"

HOW THE MILITARY PURSUE YOUR

THE COLLEGE FUND PROGRAM

CAN BE ADDED TO BENEFITS RECEIVED THROUGH THE GI BILL FOR MEMBERS OF THE

ARMY | MARINE CORPS | NAVY

WHILE EACH SERVICE DETERMINES WHO QUALIFIES FOR THIS PROGRAM,

THE TWO BASIC REQUIREMENTS

ARE THAT YOU HAVE A

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

AND ARE

ENROLLED IN THE GI BILL.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

COVERS UP TO

100

PERCENT

OF TUITION OR EXPENSES FOR COURSES TAKEN AT ACCREDITED

COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, JUNIOR COLLEGES OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS,

AND CAN BE USED TO COMPLETE ANYTHING FROM A

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM TO A GRADUATE DEGREE.

THE AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE GRANTED IS BASED ON CRITERIA SUCH AS TIME REMAINING ON YOUR SERVICE CONTRACT.

"The biggest benefit to being in the Military would be the education. They paid for my undergraduate degree, my master's degree and medical school...It's amazing!"

— Army Capt. Nicole Solana

%

CAN HELP YOU EDUCATION

More than one million veterans and their families are taking advantage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill to attend college with little or no cost.

Here are just a few ways the Military can help you finance your schooling:

Source: www.ncsl.org/research/education/veterans-and-college.aspx
For more information: todaysmilitary.com/living/paying-for-college

LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE OFFER

LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAMS

THAT HELP ENLISTED SERVICE MEMBERS PAY OFF COLLEGE LOANS ACCRUED PRIOR TO JOINING THE MILITARY.

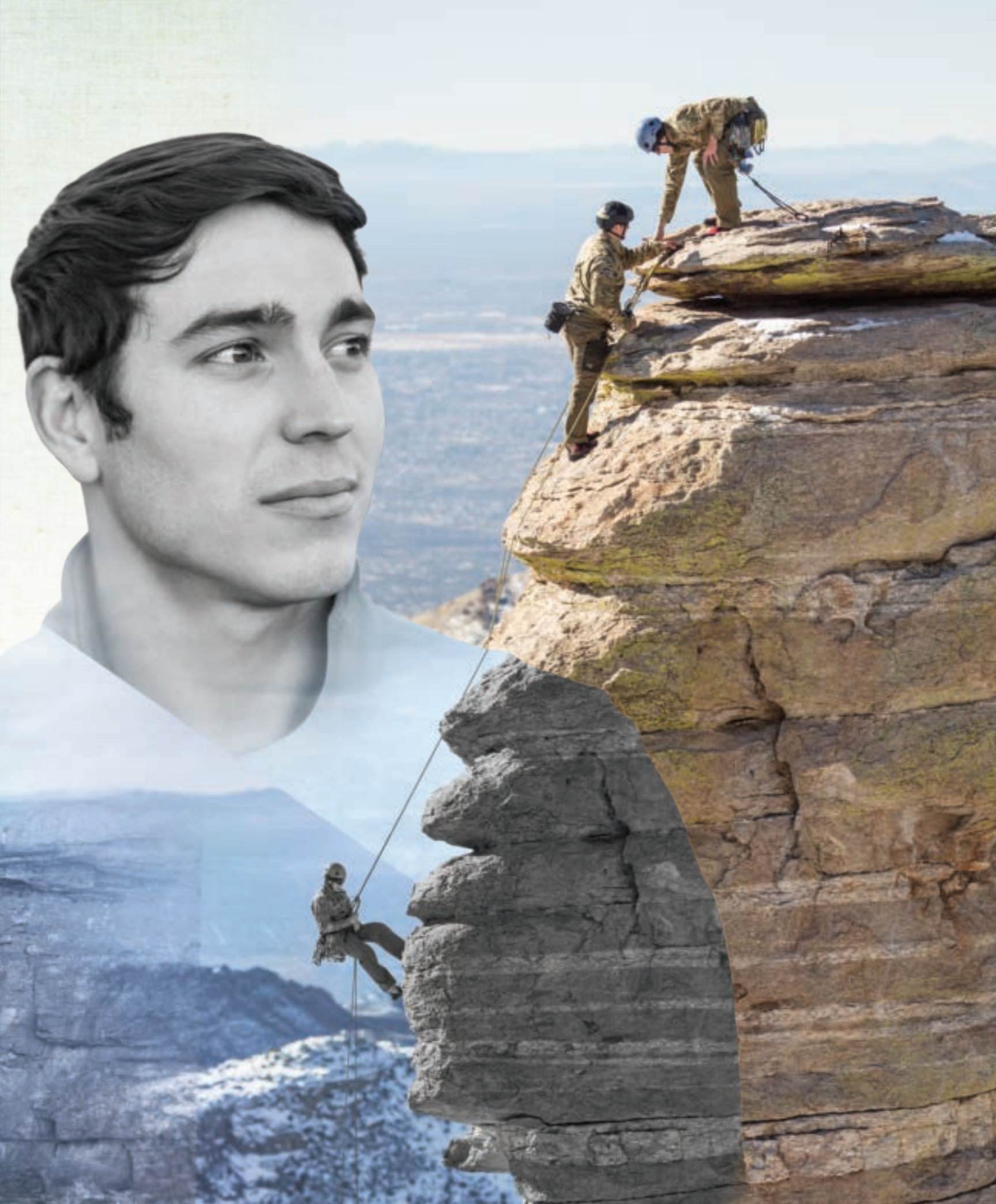
WHILE REQUIREMENTS DIFFER BY SERVICE BRANCH, ALL OF THE PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES MANAGE EDUCATIONAL DEBT.

"A lot of college kids tend to be broke while in school, but I was able to remain financially secure while focusing on my classes."

— Air National Guard Technical Sgt. Josh Lewis

CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE

When your skills meet the needs of the world and every day challenges you in new ways...that's an amazing career



MOUNTAIN CONQUEROR

Skydiving, scuba diving, mountain climbing: all are an adrenaline junkie's dream, but they're also part of the day-to-day duties of Air Force Reserve Pararescue Jumper (known as a PJ) Matthew Gaddy. For Matthew, not only did the Military open the door to opportunities in his life; it also exposed him to — and got him hooked on — activities that are not just part of his job now, but also his passions.

In the simplest terms, a PJ helps people, whether it's hikers who've lost their way or campers who've run into trouble. "It's just intrinsic human nature to want to help people, and I thought that was a really cool mission," Matthew says. He uses all sorts of skills in this mission: anything from rock climbing to reach an injured hiker to ice climbing, parachuting, scuba diving or even swift-water rescue. And while Matthew is in the Reserve, he currently works for his unit full time because he loves his job so much.

Matthew started college right after high school but admits he wasn't quite ready for it at that point in his life. He left school looking for a different challenge. He joined the Air Force Reserve after being impressed, and a little humbled, when he tried out to be a PJ. "It was super-challenging, and that's what I wanted."

When he's climbing, he says there are all kinds of things going through his mind. "It's 100 percent focus. It's a big puzzle that you're solving because you're looking for how you're going to move up this rock base," he says. "It's math, it's physics. You need to understand the technical specs of your gear: how many pounds of force can a certain lift support."

"Climbing is an infectious disease and you either catch it or you don't."

– Air Force Reserve Staff Sgt. Matthew Gaddy

And climbing isn't the only passion the Military has enabled Matthew to pursue. "I hadn't been skydiving before. I wasn't even certified. I couldn't afford to," says Matthew. "The Military gave me the financial means to pursue it, as well as actually getting paid to get certified." And now he's hooked — Matthew skydives in his downtime as well. "When I'm off-duty, I love to climb and skydive, and I picked up these activities because of my job," he says. "There's not another job I'd want to do."

Now back in school, Matthew is taking classes online while balancing working for his unit full time. "Being in the Military has given me perspective to understand how important a degree is and has given me the discipline and motivation to crush my schooling this time around, rather than it crushing me."

WANT TO GET AHEAD IN YOUR CAREER?

DID YOU KNOW A VETERAN'S ANNUAL INCOME IS ABOUT $10,000 HIGHER THAN THAT OF A NON-VETERAN?

VETERAN'S ANNUAL INCOME

Source: www.census.gov/how/pdf/census_veterans.pdf

SKY SURGEON

"I've always wanted to fly, ever since I was little," says Nicole Solana. But it wasn't something Nicole ever thought she could do — until she joined the Military.

Nicole's childhood dream became a reality when she combined her love of aviation with her passion for medicine, as an Army flight surgeon.

Nicole's decision to join the Military provided her with the confidence and resources to launch her career. Today, she does whatever is needed to help accomplish the mission: giving medical exams, flying with her unit and providing care in combat situations. Taking care of her fellow Soldiers is incredibly satisfying for Nicole. "It's a good feeling," she says. "It's just nice to help somebody."

"I have many friends from medical school who are still paying off student loans while I'm currently investing in my future."

– Army Capt. Nicole Solana

The Army was instrumental in helping Nicole achieve her dreams by providing her with educational opportunities. The Army fully funded Nicole's education from college and her master's program all the way through medical school. "I have all this education under my belt and no student loans," says Nicole. "I have many friends from medical school who are still paying off student loans while I'm currently investing in my future."

STORM WIZARD

When Kyle Yaffe prepares for his workday, the first thing he does is pull up the local weather on a variety of websites and apps. He looks at wind speeds, precipitation and temperatures, and begins to piece together what the week ahead will look like. Then, he starts to create a report that will show five- and 10-day forecasts both locally and across the United States.

"I really like the dynamic nature of weather. It's a constantly changing, giant puzzle that presents surprising conditions and learning experiences literally every single day," he says. "I enjoy solving that puzzle."

As a self-proclaimed "weather geek" and Air Force weather officer, Kyle's job is to provide the most detailed forecasts possible to ensure flight safety for pilot training missions at his base in Oklahoma. By using a combination of military and civilian resources, Kyle is able to tell if certain aspects of the weather, like atmospheric pressure, cloud layers and crosswinds, will pose a problem for aircraft carrying out a mission. "It's a lot more complicated than the guy broadcasting weather on Channel 5," he says. "Forecasting whether or not it's going to be sunny or rainy is one thing," Kyle says, "but forecasting at what levels of the atmosphere different types of icing will occur and for how long, and how it affects certain aircraft, is a different story."

"Weather is a constantly changing, giant puzzle that presents surprising conditions and learning experiences literally every single day. I enjoy solving that puzzle."

– Air Force 1st Lt. Kyle Yaffe

WEATHER AND THE MILITARY

A snowstorm in May, a warm week in January – unpredictable weather can ruin even the most well-thought-out plans, but have you ever thought about what it could mean for a military mission? The weather affects every military operation, for every Service, whether it be land, sea or air.

WIND

Reduces effectiveness of downwind forces, limits aviation operations; can cause personal injury, damage to material and structures, and decreased accuracy

TEMPERATURE

Impacts personnel and vehicle performance, leads to temperature-related injuries and equipment failure, and creates additional logistical requirements like special clothing and equipment

VISIBILITY

Degrades maneuvering, mobility, targeting and engagement

CLOUD COVER

Reduces illumination and visibility, and limits usage of air operations

SEVERE WEATHER

Any severe condition, like blizzards, hail and freezing rain, impacts every operation

Source: www.survivalschool.us/wp-content/uploads/FM-34-81-1-Battlefield-Weather-Effects.pdf

DRAFTING A ONE-OF-A-KIND CAREER

Josh Lewis

Michael Rosenberger

Sonny Gomez

Air National Guard Technical Sgt.

Graphic Designer

Real Estate Agent

BMW Mechanic

Air Force Reserve Airman 1st Class

Coast Guard Lt.

Prevention Officer

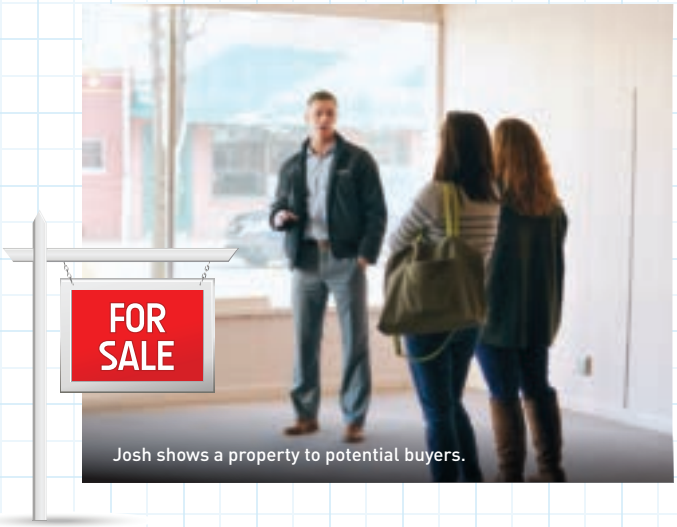
Investigator

Everyone who joins the Military has different plans and dreams. Some seek new experiences, while others want to develop specific skills. The training and education provided by the Military are the building blocks of a successful future.

JOSH OF ALL TRADES

Having three brothers in the Air Force played a role in Josh Lewis' consideration of the Military, but it was the benefits, like part-time service, tuition assistance and valuable hands-on training, that made him decide to join the Air National Guard. Though he knew these would all help him in life, he didn't know just how much the Military would help him succeed in his civilian career.

One weekend a month and two weeks during the year you'll find Josh drilling with the Indiana Air National Guard where he works as a munitions systems craftsman. In the line delivery section of the base munitions area, he works with a team to build, store and transport missiles, explosives and other ammunition that the planes carry. He helps pass the munitions from the storage area to the load crew on the flight line, who then load them onto the aircraft. A favorite part of his military job is the team he works with. "There's a lot of camaraderie in ammo," he says. "It makes for a great work environment."



Josh shows a property to potential buyers.

Josh (far left) walks the flight line with his brothers.

"Without a doubt, my military training has enhanced my civilian career."

– Air National Guard Technical Sgt. Josh Lewis

When he's not drilling, Josh is a real estate agent, auctioneer and vice president of a local real estate agency where he handles real estate and auction project management, as well as all aspects of the company's marketing, website development and graphic design. "I never expected myself to be there, but I've stayed with the company and gotten more and more engrained in it, and now I'm number two there. It's been pretty cool," Josh says.

By serving part time in the Indiana Air National Guard, Josh has been able to keep a normal schedule while learning the skills he needs to be a leader and vice president. "Without a doubt, my military training has enhanced my career. One of the Air Force's core values is excellence in all we do," Josh says. "Every day in my job I strive not to just complete tasks, but to excel in them. To exceed the expectations of my clients. To go above and beyond."

Part-time service isn't just helping Josh's career; it's helping him bring balance to his busy schedule by giving him the chance to have downtime. He spends much of that time with his family, who live nearby and get together regularly. "There's a good connection with family. Being in the National Guard, we live right at home. I can keep that family life. I go to the base, and then I go back home to my family at night. I sleep in my own bed, even on drill weekends," Josh says.

Josh has dinner at home with his family.

Sonny supervises a vessel inspection.

SEAFARING SONNY

"**Digging into maritime law** has opened up a world of possibilities for me," says Sonha Gomez, known as Sonny. "Transportation is the engine of America. Keeping that engine running smoothly and safely is more than a career path; it's a passion and a purpose."

Having graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy before joining the Coast Guard, Sonny has long been well-versed in the operation of seagoing vessels of all shapes and sizes. But her experience as a prevention officer, and now as a marine investigator, has meant expanding her knowledge and applying it — in the shipyard, on the water and in the courtroom — to maintain and enhance the safety of the waterways in and around her base in the Pacific Northwest.

"As a prevention officer, you learn everything there is to know about boats and boating regulations through detailed inspections of vessels of all sorts," Sonny says. "That base of knowledge is key to becoming an investigator. Today, I need to analyze, document and then present to a judge every aspect of the operation and performance of a vessel."

Sonny not only leads investigations to determine the causes of incidents on the water, she can also be found in the courtroom as a vital member of the Coast Guard legal team that prosecutes violations of state, federal and international maritime law.

"When we win a case, it's definitely a sense of accomplishment, not for us, but knowing that we did the right thing for the community and the waterways."

– Coast Guard Lt. Sonny Gomez

"I can honestly say that my experience in the Air Force Reserve has helped propel me into my civilian career."
– Air Force Reserve Airman 1st Class Michael Rosenberger

MECHANICAL MIKE

"I **stand out.**" That's the feedback Michael Rosenberger got when he started interviewing for civilian jobs to complement his part-time service in the Air Force Reserve. "Employers are eager to hire me when they see my military background and the fact that I'm so well-spoken," he says.

Since high school, Michael has loved cars, motorcycles and the mechanics behind them. His military job, maintaining and regulating huge A-10 aircraft as a crew chief, has only bolstered that interest. In the Military, Michael has been able to develop unique skills that helped him land a job working on BMWs.

"They said to me, 'You may not have experience working on cars, but if the Military can trust you with a $20 million jet, we can trust you with these cars,'" Michael says. "I can honestly say that my experience in the Air Force Reserve has helped propel me into my civilian career."

Mike inspects an A-10 aircraft.

THINKING OF STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

DID YOU KNOW VETERANS OWN

9% OF ALL U.S. BUSINESSES AND EMPLOY **5.8** MILLION PEOPLE, GENERATING **$1.2** TRILLION IN PROFITS

Source: www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/business_owners/cb11-88.html

Find What you Love And Let it Thrill you

DOING WHAT YOU LOVE

IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A LIFE WELL LIVED. THE MILITARY CAN HELP YOU

FIND YOUR PASSIONS

OR ENRICH THOSE YOU'RE ALREADY

PURSUING.

Creativity

in the Kitchen

While the kitchen may not seem like a place to discover innovation or creativity, that's exactly where Lauren Foley was able to unleash her passion for cooking.

Finding a job that allowed her to be inventive was important to Lauren, and so was serving in the Military. So Lauren decided to join the Coast Guard. And when the chefs on her first Coast Guard cutter found themselves shorthanded, Lauren stepped in to assist. That's where her passion for cooking merged with her military service. She decided to channel this passion into a career by transitioning to a food service specialist. "I like the creativity of cooking," she says. "I painted and drew a lot, and took a lot of art classes in high school, so I like being able to take all my artistic skills and put them on a plate."

Lauren's current assignment is to teach the next generation of Coast Guard chefs how to use their own creativity and skills to feed their shipmates. After teaching her students how to create classic dishes like cakes and braided breads, she teaches them how to run a kitchen financially — another essential skill for a food service specialist. "I feel

"I like the creativity of cooking. I painted and drew a lot, and took a lot of art classes in high school, so I like being able to take all my artistic skills and put them on a plate."

– Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Lauren Foley

that with the skills I've learned within the Coast Guard, I could easily run a small business on my own because I know the financial side of things that go into serving all this food to all these people and how much it's going to cost per plate," Lauren says.

Today, many individuals are more conscious of healthy living and eating, and members of the Military are no different. Lauren may know how to bake a mean flourless chocolate cake, but she also knows how to comply with the dietary restrictions and satisfy the food preferences of a diverse community of people. Wherever she is assigned, she tries to sit down with each crewmember to ask if they have any allergies or specific dietary requests, then strives to accommodate them as much as possible. "I'll try to go out of my way to offer them something. I just try to get to know my crew and help them out as much as I can. You live and work with these people every day, so I just try to assist in any way I can," Lauren says.

Lauren demonstrates how to cut, braid and prepare pastries.

Looking ahead, Lauren hopes to join the Food Service Assistance and Training Team. This would allow her to use the culinary skills she's already learned through the Military to offer assistance and training to other Coast Guard chefs, ensuring their kitchens and food service programs are running smoothly. "You're there to mentor the chefs on these ships — that's a career milestone I'd like to hit. I want to keep offering the knowledge that I've gained to train more people. I've really gotten into the training. I think it's a lot of fun," she says.

Directions

"I did a lot of research on what would bind a granola bar, and we messed with the recipe for two or three months before we got it to where we wanted it, and now we teach it in the baking course and it comes out great."

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Combine almonds, oats, wheat germ and sunflower seeds on a sheet pan and toast for 5–10 minutes. Set aside.
3. Line a shallow sheet pan with foil or parchment and coat lightly with cooking spray.
4. In a pot over medium heat, add the oil and honey. Bring the mixture to a boil and thicken, stirring constantly.
5. Once thickened, remove mixture from heat and add vanilla and salt.
6. Add toasted grains, nuts and dried fruit into the warm mixture and stir to combine thoroughly.
7. Pour warm granola mixture into lined sheet pan and evenly spread out the mixture.
8. Place a piece of parchment paper on top of the mixture, pressing firmly to set the granola. Cool for 2–3 hours.
9. Carefully turn the granola onto a cutting board and remove the foil or parchment paper.
10. Cut granola into desired size bars.

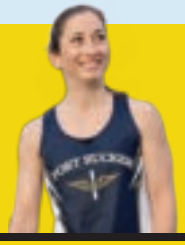
Running
with New Direction

Running 26.2 miles starts with a single step. For Nicole Solana and Paris Bledsoe, one critical step to unlocking their potential — and their love of running — was joining the Military. Both athletes have achieved personal and professional goals while in the Military: financing their educations, finding fulfilling careers and pursuing their passions.

Nicole took her first step toward success by joining the Army, which launched her career as a flight surgeon. (To read more about Nicole's career, turn to page 15.) And off duty, Nicole's Army experience has enhanced her passion for running. When a fellow medical student recommended she apply for the All-Army Triathlon and Marathon teams, her racing career began. Since then, Nicole has participated in more than 130 half and full marathons, triathlons and Spartan Races, and she doesn't plan to slow down.

"You have to have balance in your life. I put running and staying healthy as one of my priorities."
– Army Capt. Nicole Solana

RUNNING MARATHONS



NICOLE'S GO-TO PRE-MARATHON DINNER:

SALMON

Salmon provides high-quality protein and omega-3 fats "so you are ready to race!" And she recommends staying away from things that could cause problems on race day; this means no foods that are "new to you or spicy!"

Source: www.runnersworld.com/nutrition-for-runners/the-best-foods-for-runners

PARIS' TOP MARATHON TRAINING TIPS:

1. **TRAIN** — Gradually train — steady progress is key.
2. **EAT** — Eat healthy — use proper nutrition to fuel your body.
3. **ENJOY** — Enjoy the process!

Paris Bledsoe also created a running community when he joined the Army Reserve. His passion for running is contagious. He motivates fellow service members to run together, which builds strong friendships among them. "It went from working on our physical fitness tests to running marathons together. It was awesome," Paris says. One of their latest group accomplishments has been crossing the finish line in Paris' hometown of Birmingham, Alabama, when they completed the 2016 Mercedes Marathon.

Paris' desire to help others also translates to his Army Reserve career. As a sergeant and medical logistics specialist, Paris manages the quality control checks and distribution of medical supplies and equipment to his unit's Soldiers to keep them mission-ready. Whether he's encouraging his running teammates or overseeing and managing medical supplies, he's always willing to go the extra mile for others.

"Every chance you get to help somebody, whether it's on the military side or civilian side, is always rewarding," he says.

THINKING OF RUNNING A MARATHON?

50,000
STEPS
It takes more than 50,000 steps to cross the finish line.

2,600
CALORIES
The average person will burn approximately 2,600 calories running 26.2 miles.

1/2
OF YOUR DIET
When training for a marathon about half of a person's diet should be carbs.

550,000
PEOPLE
In 2015, more than 550,000 people finished marathons in the U.S.

1,050
MARATHONS
There are about 1,050 marathons held annually in the U.S.

Sources: www.challiance.org/Services/Marathons.aspx, www.theactivetimes.com/how-many-calories-does-running-marathon-burn, www.parentprojectmd.org/site/DocServer/FirstMarathon_RunnersWorldTrainingGuide.pdf?docID=12063, www.findmymarathon.com/statistics.php, running.competitor.com/2015/04/photos/what-percent-of-marathon-finishers-go-on-to-run-the-boston-marathon_126494

Lifting Others Up

Many people dream of making a difference in the world and leaving a lasting impact. For Tri Phu, the Military is helping him turn that dream into a reality. As an unmanned aircraft systems repairer in the Minnesota Army National Guard, he's responsible for leading and training his fellow Guard members in maintenance and flight missions.

But Tri isn't only making a difference on duty. "I am most passionate about helping others achieve their goals and discover what their dreams are, whether that be in the Military or the civilian world," he says.

"I believe in making a difference in this world, no matter how big or small… By joining the Military, I now have that opportunity to make a difference."
– Army National Guard Sgt. Tri Phu

Tri shares his passion for Olympic-style weightlifting as both a competitor and a coach. When he's not helping fellow athletes master new techniques, Tri works to perfect his own form while training for a spot on the national team. He trains two and sometimes three times a day in pursuit of his dream of going to the Olympics.

After 10 years of weightlifting, Tri has learned just how important it is to have a role model. And his natural ability to lead others — both in and out of uniform — has only strengthened his interest in mentorship.

HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED OF BECOMING AN ELITE ATHLETE?

THE ARMED FORCES SPORTS PROGRAM OFFERS SERVICE MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN

25 DIFFERENT MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SPORTS

Source: armedforcessports.defense.gov/About.aspx

AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAIN AND COMPETE IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS.

Amayah and her dance partner practice a swing routine.

Stepping
Up to Greatness

"I operate really big trucks." That's how Amayah Littlewolf describes her job in the Minnesota Army National Guard. But that's just one aspect of a very full life that's enhanced by her military service. Amayah is also attending college and hopes to go on to medical school to become a doctor.

When she's not in a lab or behind the wheel of one of those "really big trucks," you'll find this self-described "girly girl" in an unexpected place: the ballroom. One of Amayah's lifelong passions is dance. She started ballet as soon as she could walk and later added jazz, tap and swing to her repertoire. Today she's training with a partner to become a competitive ballroom and swing dancer.

"I take comfort in the fact that I'm always going to know what I'm doing in ballroom," Amayah says. "But for swing, it's more open, and you can kind of do whatever you want and be fun with that one."

"There are so many people who are just like me – we are girly girls and we're Soldiers, too."
– Army National Guard Spc. Amayah Littlewolf

Amayah is in good company among her fellow female Soldiers. "There is a misconception about being female in the Military," she explains. "There are so many people who are just like me — we are girly girls and we're Soldiers, too."

WHERE FRIENDS AND WORK COME TOGETHER

THE FRIENDS YOU MAKE, MENTORS YOU LEARN FROM AND SKILLS YOU GAIN IN THE MILITARY BUILD YOU UP TO BE YOUR BEST

TEAMWORK ON THE FLIGHT LINE

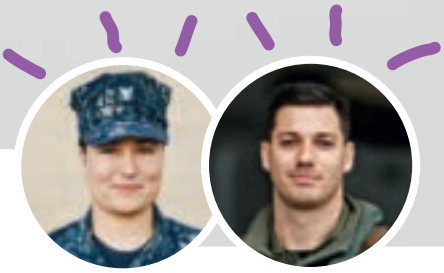
Naval aircrewman and rescue swimmer Kris Scotten and naval aviation technician Kelly Done work hand in hand to make naval aviation logistics run smoothly. Their roles show how working together can be the best way to accomplish anything.

It's Kelly's responsibility to ensure her unit's aircraft are working properly and are ready to fly. "I like the end result — when you realize what the problem is, you actually fix it and it works," she says. When she's finished working on an aircraft's navigation and communication systems, it's turned over to its crew, including Kris, for its next mission.

While flying in the back of the aircraft, Kris may be searching for submarines, operating the sensors for onboard weapons or monitoring the radar essential to a successful mission. Kris' airborne operations would not be possible without the hard work of naval aviation technicians like Kelly, who make sure the aircraft can fly safely and properly. From preflight checks and takeoffs to airborne missions and landings, it takes a team to do it all.

Kris and Kelly work closely not only with each other, but with their aircrew members as well. Kris says there's nothing better than seeing his instructions click for junior aircrew members. He's developed close relationships with his mentees, and many have even asked him to participate in their promotion and graduation ceremonies.

"Taking some of the experiences that I've had and being able to filter them back to the junior guys is so rewarding. I can't even put it into words, that's how great it feels," Kris says. "The camaraderie that comes with the Military is what I fell in love with."



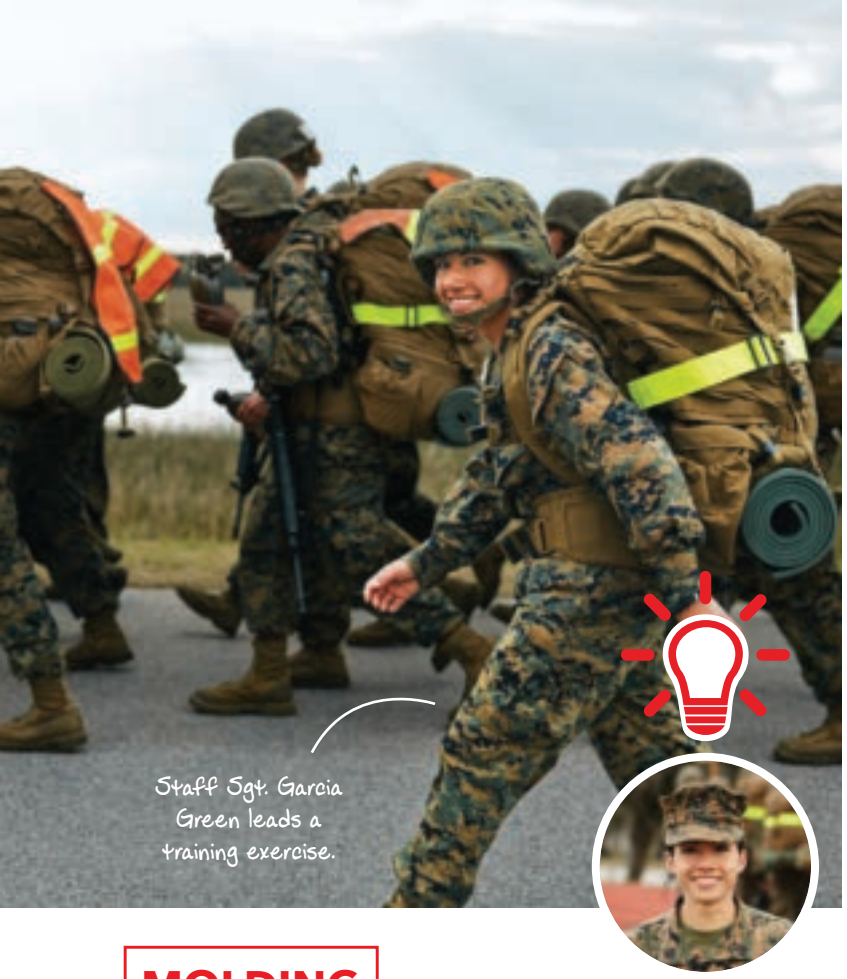
"The camaraderie that comes with the Military is what I fell in love with."
– Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Kris Scotten

DID YOU KNOW THAT MANY MILITARY BASES ARE LOADED WITH AMENITIES LIKE:

- GYMS
- MOVIE THEATERS
- PARKS
- BOWLING ALLEYS
- PRIVATE BEACHES
- CONCERTS

Source: www.todaysmilitary.com/living/family-social-life

Kelly (left) and Kris inspect their helicopter.



Staff Sgt. Garcia Green leads a training exercise.

MOLDING TOMORROW'S MILITARY

Military combat positions are now open to women, and as a senior drill instructor, Staff Sgt. Britni Garcia Green has the unique opportunity to develop, mentor and mold the next generation of female Marines. Every day, she demonstrates the skills, tenacity and leadership qualities young recruits must learn in order to become not only confident service members but also confident women."It's not just about making them Marines. It's about making them confident women," she says. "We're there to build them up to what we want them to be."

> **"I love to see the transformations that these young women go through as they develop into Marines. I love the connection that we build together."**
> ***– Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Britni Garcia Green***

That passion for mentorship has helped her create strong and important relationships that have had a lasting impact on her life. Watching her recruits become Marines is one of her favorite parts of the job. "I love to see the transformation that these young women go through as they develop into Marines," she says. "I love the connection that we build together."

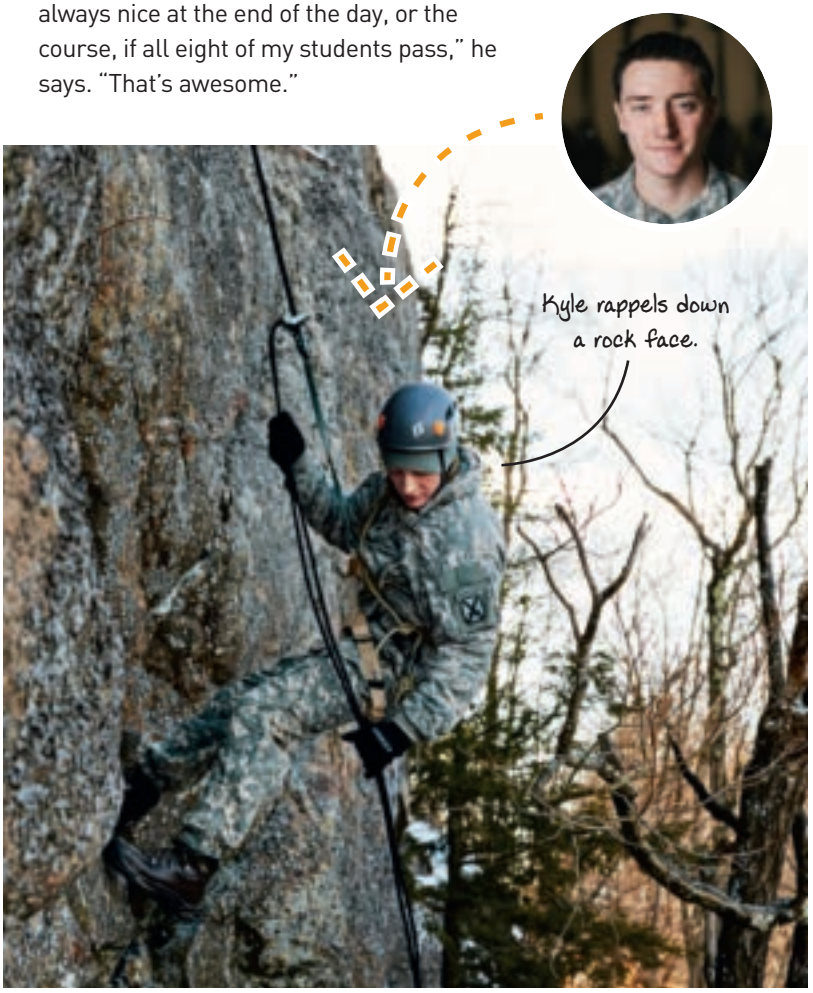
LEARNING THE ROPES

"I wanted to do something different; something new." That was the motivation behind Kyle Farr's transition from working on helicopters to teaching the skills needed to climb mountains.

Kyle has loved helicopters since childhood. He fulfilled a dream by becoming an Army helicopter mechanic, but after a few years, he wanted a new challenge. He told his commander how he felt, and the next day he had an interview scheduled with the Mountain Warfare Unit at Fort Drum, N.Y. But before he could start a job as an instructor, he had to learn the skills himself.

First was tying knots, the foundation for climbing and rappelling. "You can't set up a rope to rappel off a rock if you don't know how to tie a good knot." Kyle says. "I caught on really fast." Then he learned the basics of climbing, rappelling and belaying on both rocks and ice.

Now he teaches fellow service members the same skills he mastered during two-week-long mountaineering courses. "It's always nice at the end of the day, or the course, if all eight of my students pass," he says. "That's awesome."



Kyle rappels down a rock face.

Nicole enjoys dinner with friends.

FAMILY NEAR AND FAR

Relationships are important to most people, and service members are no exception. As an Air Force aerospace medical technician, Nicole Moore has made special connections with her patients and formed lifelong friendships with fellow Airmen, all while receiving support from her family back home.

> "We're like a family. We're all in the same situation and that's how we build strong relationships – because we can bond over things like that."
> *– Air Force Airman 1st Class Nicole Moore*

The opportunity to create bonds with people is one of the things she loves most about service. "I feel that you need to make strong, lasting connections in order to have balance in life," Nicole says. "My friends and family at home help to keep me grounded, and my military family helps me get out of my comfort zone and explore new things." Nicole relies on her Air Force friends for reinforcement and encouragement, making it easier when she has to be away from home.

FRIENDSHIPS FORGED

Derek Pflugradt and his best friend walked into their hometown Marine Corps recruiting office, intent on enlisting. He soon found friendships forged in the Military are unlike any others he would ever experience.

Today, Gunnery Sgt. Pflugradt leads a force reconnaissance platoon: 28 highly trained Marines who tackle some of the most challenging jobs the Marine Corps has to offer – from surveillance to limited-scale raids, specialized insertion and extraction, and ground and amphibious reconnaissance.

> "I can go anywhere and learn a new skill. But I can never replicate or replace the relationships I've built in the Marine Corps."
> *– Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Derek Pflugradt*

None of this is possible without a great team, and a team doesn't come together without strong connections. "I get to work with some of the country's greatest. I don't think in any other organization you can be given the responsibility for the lives of your comrades at a very young age, and then put that responsibility to the test in some of the most extreme environments," he says. "Because of what we've endured and experienced together, I have a closeness with my fellow Marines that I'll never have with anyone else. I can never replicate or replace the relationships I've built in the Marine Corps."

Gunnery Sgt. Pflugradt leads advanced underwater reconnaissance training.

"I gained confidence that you can pretty much do anything you want and the Military's going to support you."

— Army Capt. Nicole Solana

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