

SO YOU WANT TO ENLIST IN THE MILITARY..., JUST WHAT DID THE RECRUITER TELL YOU?

I am a proud retired United States Marine that as opposed to leaving my heart in San Francisco, I left my right leg in Vietnam. I carried home not only shrapnel, but also vivid memories of those left behind and screams of horror, pain, explosions and the smell of my own seared flesh.

Seemingly by chance, I recently stopped at a convenience store. Waiting to pay I was asked by a young man who observed my tattoo, "You a Marine?" I replied, Yes, why? He shared he was joining the Marines and his Uncle had made arrangements for the Recruiter to meet him that evening. I took a few seconds then asked his motivation for joining. Was he familiar with Marine Corps/Military training and what he was getting into? He seemed to hesitate, then offered, his Father and many relatives served, although he never did say why He was enlisting. I offered words of encouragement, "...keep in mind, no matter what the challenge, You Can Do It."

The chance meeting took me back to when I announced that I enlisted in the Marine Corps, and full range of reactions from parents, friends/relatives—most were sure I needed psychiatric help.

The reality of one's son or daughter making such an announcement is much like a time warp, whereby the parent must come to terms with their "baby" has grown up, and can (in most cases) choose to enlist regardless of their position/wisdom and experience.

The chance meeting caused me to recall reasons for enlisting—please do not laugh too hard. Some compelling notions: what I call John F. Kennedy syndrome, i.e., it is one's duty to give, not take—the Peace Corps being the best example of said paradigm; constant, "...you know who was killed..."; not knowing or really wanting to take time to face "what if" scenarios; gee, what am I going to do with my life; and certainly to ensure Communists do not enslave the world.

Most importantly the exchange incited me to respectfully offer that such a defining moment as enlisting in the Military warrants honest soul searching. I just can not ignore what I believe is an assignment from fallen comrades to ask that anyone contemplating enlistment there are some very basic, but overlooked, questions I believe one should **please consider before signing-on.**

This Booklet is an abbreviated excerpt from a Book that I am preparing. Due to space constraints, I left out personal experiences. In the Booklet I provide more detailed examination of issues for one to consider. As an enlistee, you are making the ultimate sacrifice and attesting to Thomas Jefferson's declaration that, "the price of freedom is eternal vigilance." Your Service to our Country will never be forgotten. God Bless!

Finally, in 1789, yes over 200 years ago, General/President George Washington stated: "**The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country.**"

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