

STARS, STRIPES AND TEXT BOOKS

tales of enlisting in the military

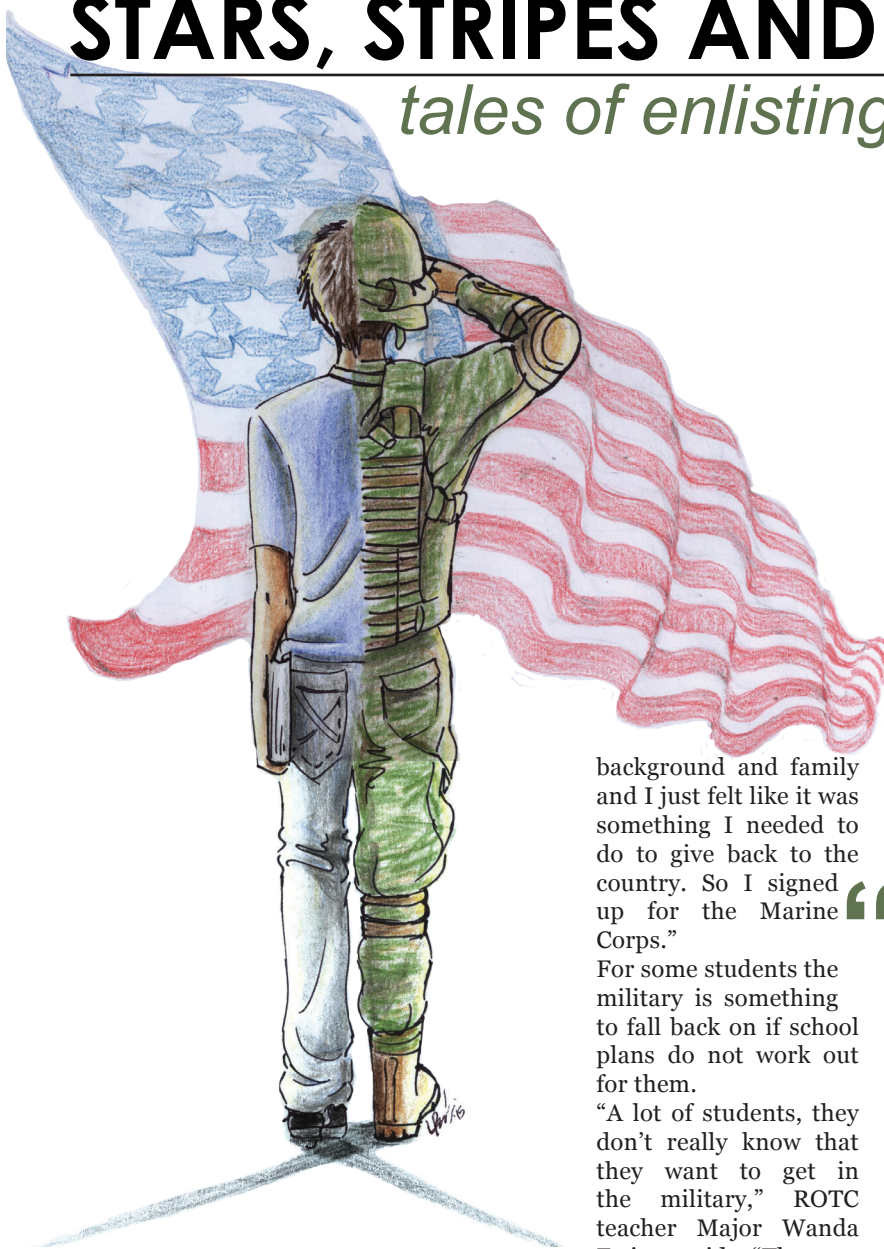


Illustration by: Laura Barbe

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Five branches and hundreds of positions. Medical and housing included. If you need money for college, they'll help you out. Just sign on the dotted line. With the cost of college rising students are turning to the military as a way to not only gain an education, but obtain work experience at the

same time. However for others, the decision to join military has nothing to do with school but is their desired career.

"The military will end up being my only career," senior Josh White said. "It was something I've always wanted to do, I come from a military

background and family and I just felt like it was something I needed to do to give back to the country. So I signed up for the Marine Corps."

For some students the military is something to fall back on if school plans do not work out for them.

"A lot of students, they don't really know that they want to get in the military," ROTC teacher Major Wanda Ewing said. "They go out, go to school, aren't successful, then they come back and want to go into the military"

No matter the reason for enlisting, there are steps students can take to help the process such as taking the ASVAB.

"Take the ASVAB," Major Ewing said, "at least you have the scores and they're good for two years if you decide to go to the military."

Know the enlistment

options.

"I talked to every branch before I joined," White said. "The Marines were more intense, in your face, and more of a challenge something harder to do. So I picked the challenge."

Enlisting in the military can have a positive or negative effect on a student's family life.

"My family was excited that I wanted to go this way with my life," White said. "They were still skeptical about me going into the Marines because that was more of a combat role and they didn't want to see me get hurt."

It can change a

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student's school life.

"It will change [my] viewpoint towards everybody," White said. "You view everybody differently,"

you talk differently, you stand a little taller with your head up higher."

Students chose to participate in programs such as ROTC to prepare for the military.

"I participated (in ROTC) for three years," senior Ethan Keller said. "It taught me obedience and responsibility and

respect."

There are benefits to participating in ROTC, even if you aren't planning on enlisting.

"It helps them with organizational skills, leadership skills, it gives them the opportunity to go to other bases and see different things," Major Ewing said. "I think it gives some kids self confidence and some feeling of belonging."

ROTC can give students who don't fit into a group an outlet.

"We have some students who don't fit into drama," Major Ewing said. "They don't fit into Ag or some of these other groups and organizations, but they find a niche here."

No matter which branch or program a student chooses, there are resources available to help make an informed decision about their future.

"Take the ASVAB before anything else," senior Jake Cudini said. "Without that you're not going to be able

to get anywhere. Once you've gotten your scores back, get a card for each one

"You stand a little taller with your head up higher."

of the recruiters and set up a meeting with them. Bring both your parents with you. Find out what jobs are available and the perks for each branch. Then decide."