

The Benefits of Serving Our Country

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On average, when kids graduate from high school, they are not one hundred percent on what to do. They are released into society to make their own choices. Some might want to attend college right away, and others might want to find a job first. Some of these recent graduates could be lucky enough to even have a college fund. Perhaps a few of these clueless people might even think they know what they want to do next. Regardless, joining the service would be the best idea for people because of the virtues they obtain, the life experiences they get, and all the post military V.A. benefits they receive afterward.

Once high school is over, the next steps these graduates take in life are the most important. The choices they make will reflect on the outcome of their life and what quality of life they will live. By sacrificing the next four years of their life to Uncle Sam, they will get the best head start possible. The military is an extremely proud organization, and it has every right to be. The military has many traits and morals that will benefit young adults for the rest of their lives. These virtues that are pounded repeatedly in their young minds will make them a better student, a better employee, a better friend, and just a better person all around. The traits that I am referring to are responsibility, neatness, punctuality, confidence, respect, discipline, determination, pride, loyalty, perseverance and self-control. Before I joined the Marines, I didn't have pride because there was nothing I did that I was proud of. I was unsure about what I was capable of and I never experienced what hard work really was. Now I am a proud, confident, and hard working citizen of the United States of America.

Although having good traits and morals are vital to success, nothing impacts someone as much as life experience. In this world, employers want to hire people with education or equivalent experience. Fresh out of high school they have neither. So their options are

extremely limited. If they are lucky enough to have a college fund from their parents, then they are still being deprived of the experience that is as important as education. The other option, out of high school, is getting a job that pays minimum wage. The experience these young people acquire from a job like that is very minimal. While working in a restaurant, before I was in the service, the only thing I learned was how to goof off at work and not get caught. The other kids and I that worked there would play pranks on one another and make plans for after work. We would joke around all the time and hardly do any work at all. The reason for that was because it was not a professional work environment. In the military everything is professional. Young adults will get opportunities to experience many different positions and learn how to do many different things. I learned how to keep good accountability of different items and people. I learned how to use many different kinds of equipment and tools. I also learned how to be part of a team and work as a team, but most importantly, I learned how to be a manager and take responsibility for my actions. The combination of experiences like these is impossible to find anywhere else. My last year in the service, my superiors put me in the office to learn the administrative side of the military. There I developed many of the computer skills that I use today. The wide variety of skills I obtained has made me an extremely well-rounded individual in everything from building bridges to making Excel spreadsheets on the computer.

People who have served in the military never forget the things they learned or the experiences they had. Those things stay with them forever. Something else that stays with them forever is the gift they receive when they are finished. The post military V.A. benefits are the government's way of saying, "Thank you for your service." There are many things the government does for veterans once they have honorably been discharged from the service. The government offers many different things to give veterans a head start in life. Veterans Affairs

provide veterans with healthcare at an extremely affordable rate, free for those who have been injured while serving. I get lower back pain from time to time because of building bridges, so now I get free healthcare from the V.A. for the rest of my life and a monthly compensation check. The government provides veterans with a home loan program which, in this economy, is very helpful. With all the foreclosures, banks don't trust people as much as they used to.

Depending on a person's credit score, banks are requiring five to twenty percent of the loan up front. The V.A. is zero percent up front no matter what a veteran's credit rating is. I was able to purchase my first home this way. At the age of twenty-four, I was proud to call myself a home owner. I couldn't have done that without the help of the V.A. home loan. The Veterans Affairs' most popular benefit would be the G.I. Bill. The G.I. Bill pays for college education. The veterans get thirty-six months of benefits to achieve a degree at the V.A.'s expense. The government will pay the college directly and, if the veteran takes seven credits or more and at least one class on campus, the government will also pay a housing allowance. This benefit has given me great opportunities in life. Not only am I going to get an opportunity to further my education, but I will also not have to pay for it and get extra money to ease the financial burden of owning a home. They give me a little more than one thousand dollars a month for a housing allowance. Veterans Affairs has made a tremendous difference for me and without their help I wouldn't have been able to get this far ahead in life at my young age.

With great opportunities comes risk. By enlisting in the service, there is always a possibility of going to war. That is the chance people must take if they want to get a major boost in life. I have spent a total of a year and a half of my life at war overseas, and I made it back with all my fingers and toes. There has not been one day that has gone by that I ever felt regret from the decision I made to join the Marines. The consequences from that decision have increased my

quality of life ten fold. Because of my sacrifice, I am now a confident, responsible, and determined twenty-six year old homeowner, with an impressive resume, who is currently going to college for free. Joining the service was the best decision I have ever made, and anybody who follows my example is guaranteed to be provided with all the tools necessary to get a head start in life and be successful.