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Open Letter to all Military Service Graduates

(letter by: Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Congratulations! Each of you have converged to this point in your lives from many different paths and have been inspired to pursue a career in the United States Military. Your path to making this decision has been influenced by many different factors. Some of you have family members who have served, or you have been inspired by some other force: adventure, national pride, opportunity, or professional development.

Regardless of your motivation, by choosing this profession, you have made the life changing decision to commit body and soul to the service of this great country. Welcome to the 1%. Your journey will not be easy.

For those serving full-time as part of the active component, you will be required to relocate, on average, every two years. For those serving in the reserve component, you will be challenged to manage two careers while maintaining all the standards of a full-time Soldier, Airman, Sailor, or Marine. Your mission will be protecting your fellow citizens from all enemies, foreign and domestic. All of you will be subject to long separations from family and your civilian careers. You will be required to make sacrifices uncharacteristic of the civilian world and you will be held to a higher standard than your civilian peers.

If you're lucky enough to find a spouse who is as equally committed to service as you are, your family will accept long separations as the norm and your family will become strongly independent. Your children will grow up to be stronger citizens and understand the obligation of service because of these hardships.

Unlike your civilian peers, the success or failure of your decisions will not be measured by a balance sheet, it will be measured in mission accomplishment, and quite possibly your life and that of your fellow servicemembers.

You'll have to fight in an environment of complex terrain, influenced by adversaries that place no value on human life, civilian, or military. You must grow comfortable with taking risks and making life-or-death decisions. You must shoot straighter, move faster, and lead better than your adversary. Your subordinates' lives will depend on it. Your journey will not be easy.

Your profession is one of the most gratifying, not in the money you'll earn, but in knowing you are a part of something bigger than yourself with a noble purpose. You are the best and brightest



asset our country has to offer, our national treasure. You are everything that is good about America.

Go forth and do great things, not for self-glory or personal gain, but because it is your calling. You are the 1%.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, Thank You and God Bless.

Major General Jeffrey H Holmes
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