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NJROTC Senior Essay

Going into high school I was a nervous, shy fourteen year old that would barely talk to you unless you were my friend. I had one friend that I knew very well from middle school, and lucky for me he was going to the same high school. Over the summer we drifted slightly and did our own thing.

As school came closer and closer I got more nervous and was very unsure what I was going to do with myself for the next four years. Looking for some advice I turned to my friend. He then informed me about this program called NJROTC. Not really knowing what it was, I asked him about it. He told me that it was really cool and his brother was in it, also there would be a freshmen orientation soon and I should come. Still quite unaware of what exactly I was getting into I said okay I'll come. My friend then said I had to do something that I thought I would never do, CUT MY HAIR! I finally manned up and cut it as short as it had been in God knows how long.

I arrived at the school and unfortunately I was one of the last kids there which made me extra nervous. When I entered the room I was directed to sit down at a desk, and of course the last one was in the middle of the class room and on the front row. I moseyed on over and sat down when moments later everything got quiet and a big scary man walked out. As he walked over I noticed his uniform, admiring it and thinking to myself that it was very impressive and intimidating. Stopping in the middle of the classroom he then looked at us as if we had just come from the island of misfit toys. He introduced himself as 1st Sergeant Cox and went on about what the unit was about. When he finished he said he was handing us over to the seniors of the unit. For the next two hours they yelled at us and ran us back and forth and had us PT until we dropped. At this moment I realized what I wanted to do with my life.

Being in NJROTC definitely changed me as a person. As I was in the drill team, it molded me into more of a team player. Each year we do TMI's (Technical Military Instruction) that helped me overcome my fear of speaking in front of crowds which has frustrated me for years. Climbing up the ladder in ranks I obtained the confidence to lead my fellow students. Hopefully this trait will help me in my future. Captain Wilkerson and 1st Sergeant Cox were mentors to me and encouraged me to do well in NJROTC but also stressed the importance of doing well in my other classes. Throughout my four years, NJROTC has helped me improve my grades in high school by instilling discipline and pride in myself. Commanding the Color Guard has helped me find a strong sense of patriotism and respect for our country.

My four years in the Lassiter NJROTC have helped me find my future path. I have always had an interest in the military because of family members that have served. Because of his commitment to service and my respect for him, 1st Sergeant Cox was the motivating factor in the most important decision I've made. Last summer, I took action and made a plan to start my life after high school by speaking with a Marine recruiter about joining the Marine Corps. In June of 2010, I was sworn into the Marines Pool on the Delayed Entry Program. I've been training with Marines to ready myself for boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina this June. I feel like NJROTC definitely helped start me on a journey to an eventful and successful life.