

Cadet Pezdirtz, Adam

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On August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, I left the Regular Army. It was not an easy decision but one that was ultimately decided on because of poor leadership. Over the course of four years, I had experienced both outstanding and outrageous leadership, the latter of which left me jaded and resentful. But my faith in the Army was not lost. My last day of active duty, I agreed to transition into the Army Reserve. I figured I could use it to beef up my resume, help pay for grad school and for its inexpensive healthcare. Really though I wanted to continue to serve on my own time, while satisfying my thirst for learning at college and maybe, just maybe, turning Army leadership around from the bottom up.

It quickly became apparent that overhauling Army leadership as a brand new E5 in the Army Reserve was hard. Really hard. Unlike the Regular Army, I was spending far less time with my Soldiers and my Chain of Command. Change came about even slower, if at all. We were being done a disservice every month and there was little I could do but watch. The failure of my leadership to affect change resolved me to become an Officer. Becoming an Officer was something I'd considered previously but after becoming a Non-Commissioned Officer, commissioning seemed unnecessary. After earning my Bachelor's, I planned to attend Officer Candidate School, pin on my butter bar and get to work executing missions and taking care of Soldiers at a higher level. As an added bonus, I figured that I could branch Aviation and learn to fly helicopters, giving me an edge in the private sector.

They say, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." Well God must think I'm hilarious because again, my plans changed. From an obvious but unconsidered source, inspiration struck. My sister, Victoria, is an MSIV, an ROTC cadet studying at Marywood in Scranton. Inspired by my service and the prospect of earning a scholarship, she joined ROTC three years ago. Not once in that entire time had I considered ROTC as a route to commissioning. It was only three months ago that it dawned on me; why spend months in OCS post college when I could join ROTC like Victoria and commission even sooner? The inspirator became the inspired.

One weekend a month and two weeks a year, I am still Sergeant Pezdirtz. But three days a week and during volunteer events, I'm now Cadet Pezdirtz. While adjusting to "Cadet Land" has been frustrating at times, it's certainly beats a JRTC rotation. In the end, if it means that I can become an Aviation Officer in the United States Army, then anything ROTC throws at me will be worth it. And for that, I have my sister to thank.