

Applicant's Name: Ronnie Santos, Jr.

Applicant's SSN: _____

ESSAY PAGE

Turning Challenges into Opportunities

The Fork in the Road

As the great New York Yankee Catcher Yogi Berra once said, "If you come to a fork in the road, take it." I took Mr. Berra's deceptively simplistic advice and took the "fork in the road." Fortunately because of the many challenges I faced as a military dependent, I have always learned to choose the "fork" leading to the high road. This high road of opportunity will lead me to enrolling in the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Course, while studying Aerospace Engineering. My decision to join the "Greatest Air Force in the World" was directly influenced by the challenges I faced as a military dependent.

While growing up on six different bases was very challenging, I couldn't help but immediately fall in love with fighter jets. Ever since I first saw a plane fly, I told my dad I wanted to help design the future jets of the Air Force. My dad's personal challenge and response of "when you do that could you please make them quieter" did not deter me because I loved the power of those fighters. The annual air base shows sealed my love for airplanes and "fueled the fire" inside me to become an Aerospace Engineer.

Applicant's Name: Ronnie Santos, Jr.

Applicant's SSN: _____

ESSAY PAGE

Turning Challenges into Opportunities

Living on six bases in eighteen years can take it's toll. Certainly, the hardest challenge about being a military dependent is leaving familiar surroundings and faithful friends. Although constantly moving around was difficult, I chose to turn this personal challenge into a unique learning opportunity. While others have lived life I've chosen to experience life. I've learned to be flexible and open-minded. Although I lost many friends, I also made new friends quickly. I will continue to use my unique "chameleon like" adaptability talent to successfully take advantage of any challenging situation.

Thirdly, I want to praise the local village school I attended when I was six years old and also commend the Department of Defense School System (DODDS). I believe that the challenging schools I attended as a dependent was the foundation I needed to succeed in school. The village school I attended did not go through a "fork in the road" but rather through a round-about. Discipline was the rule of the game and my memories are vivid because you had to mind your p's and q's. Homework was mandatory and non-participation was unacceptable. This early type of

Applicant's Name: Ronnie Santos, Jr.

Applicant's SSN: _____

ESSAY PAGE

Turning Challenges into Opportunities

school discipline challenged me as I entered DODDS. Although the DODDS school environment was challenging, it also offered a stimulating learning environment. The classes were tough and the activities multi-cultural. My exposure to these types of strict experiences and cultures will help me as I continue my collegiate education.

In closing, I know that the road of a military dependent is very bumpy and full of many challenges; however, now that I'm at my "collegiate fork in the road", I will take Yogi's sage advice and take it down the road of opportunity.