

JROTC Members Head to Elite Military Academies

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News Editor

While many seniors have only a vague idea of what they intend to do with their lives during or after college, some have bigger plans already in place. Three Durant JROTC seniors have been accepted into prestigious military academies across the nation, and two underclassmen are also taking opportunities to explore their future options.

Senior Tyler O'Connor, the Outgoing Commander, has received a full ride NROTC Marine Corps Scholarship to Embry-Riddle University in Daytona Beach. The school is ranked as the number one aeronautics university in the nation, and after graduating, O'Connor is obligated to serve eight years in the Marine Corps. "I've known I wanted to be in the military since I was little," said O'Connor. "I just didn't know which branch until this year."

Less than a quarter of the NROTC Scholarships awarded are Marine, which are the more physically demanding scholarships, involving multiple interviews, and, as O'Connor puts it, the longest waiting period of your life. His scholarship pays for all of his expenses, and he will receive a monthly paycheck ranging from \$300 in his freshman year to \$500 in his senior year.

Military opportunities are also available to Durant JROTC

Vice Commander Deborah Shin, who was admitted to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Long Island, New York, to study electrical engineering.

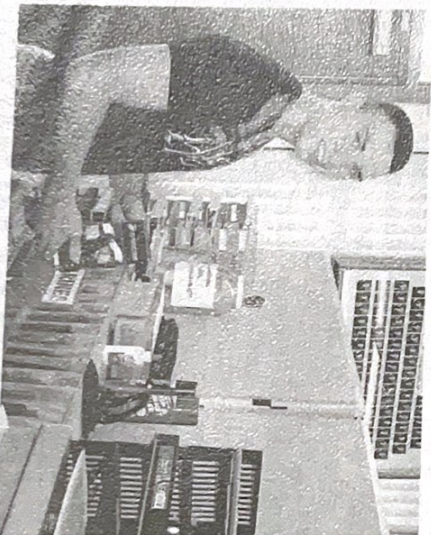
"It's not all Marines," said Shin. "You can choose which branch you want to go into. I'm going to be in the Air Force."

Shin's education will also be completely covered, and she will be going to sea for a year.

Another senior looking into military colleges is Shawn Rogers, who will attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

"It's a tough decision," Rogers said. "[These are] crazy times, tough financially. It's a very complicated time right now."

Even numerous underclassmen have begun their pre-college journeys through ROTC summer leadership workshops, like



Lindsay Marshall/PawPrint Senior Tyler O'Connor shows off a brochure for the Marine Corps.

Seniors Austen Sugi and Samuel Drake.

Sugi will be attending an Aerospace and Technology Honors Camp at the University of Oklahoma for a week in June, and will be participating in activities such as flight simulators, team building, high ropes course, and aviation ground school at Tinker Air Force Base.

Sugi is not yet sure what his future holds for him after high school.

"I might try to go to a military academy, but I don't know which branch," he said.

Drake will be attending a similar workshop in July at the University of New Mexico. The entire program is paid for by the Air Force, and gives students leadership training and is college-oriented, simulating a week of the Air Force ROTC.

"I'm excited. This will make my summer busier," said Drake. "And it will benefit my interest in the Air Force later in life."