

## **How can I prepare for PJ Indoc and CCT Selection?**

Congratulations on being invited to try out to be a part of one of the most elite groups of Battlefield Airmen in the world.

If you were days, weeks, or months away from competing in a triathlon or taking the SATs, would you show up unprepared? Hopefully not. Chances are you would be training, studying, preparing in whatever way you could to increase your chances of success. So, how can you prepare for indoc/selection? Below are a few suggestions that we know have helped other people in the past.

### **I. Physical Fitness:**

Although perfect physical fitness alone will not get you through indoc/selection, you should show up at 100% physical ability. The less you struggle with physical tasks, the more you can focus on leadership and critical thinking, which will be what separates the top from the bottom of the class. Don't just work your "show me" muscles, work on core strength and endurance.

### **II. Stress Management:**

Having no stress is not a reasonable goal. Stress can serve to motivate us and help us accomplish difficult tasks, however, you should do whatever you can to show up to indoc/selection with as few unnecessary stressors as possible.

This means:

- Your finances should be taken care of when you leave and while you are gone
- Your family should have appropriate support in your absence
- You should make major habit changes well before indoc (e.g. quitting smoking/dipping) so that your body has time to adjust
- Medical issues should be resolved prior to your arrival

### **III. Motivation:**

People have various reasons for pursuing a career as a Battlefield Airman. Only you know your true motivation. It is important that you devote time to thinking about why you are attempting to become a Pararescueman or Combat Controller. Hopefully you find that your reasons are sound and genuine. There is no one right or wrong reason for becoming a Battlefield Airman, but some reasons that might require some additional thought are:

- Looking to escape current job/unit/base
- Only looking to move to a certain base/state
- Saw a movie that made the job look appealing but never researched it
- Money

Some reasons that are helpful and healthy to focus on include:

- The opportunity to work with elite warriors
- Saving lives
- Serving your country to the best of your ability
- Having direct impact on the battlefield

It is normal to second guess your career choices, especially ones that are as meaningful as this one. You are embarking on a journey that will change who you are and how you see the world. Most people welcome this and are seeking this transformation, but it is important that you realize what you are applying for is not a job, but a journey, a lifestyle, the ultimate adventure and a chance to serve your country in one of the most unique and challenging ways possible. Are there other paths that will help you better accomplish your goals? If so, carefully weigh the pros and cons of these options. It often helps to

bounce your thoughts and ideas off of a trusted family member, friend, or colleague early on in the process of deciding to apply.

#### IV. **Mental Preparation:**

If you have a long wait between enlisting and entering indoc/selection, you might find that over time your motivation waivers. This could come out in several ways, including your exercise routine fading or you questioning why you applied to become a PJ/CCT in the first place. It is your responsibility to remain **actively engaged** in the process while you wait for your class date. Your recruiter will make efforts to engage you via phone calls, visits, e-mails, etc., but you are ultimately responsible for keeping your motivation high. The higher your motivation is when you arrive at indoc/selection, the easier it will be to stay focused and push past the difficult moments. Let's face it, indoc/selection is going to be hard, but why would getting the opportunity to serve with an elite group of men be easy? Isn't the challenge part of the reason you applied?

Some things you can do to stay actively engaged and mentally prepared for indoc/selection are:

-Talk to Battlefield Airmen; ask them why they do what they do and ask for suggestions on how to prepare.

-If you are a spiritual/religious person, seek support from your church/clergy in staying focused and motivated. Gather strength and purpose through prayer and meditation.

-Read books about Battlefield Airmen and the missions they have accomplished.

Some examples are:

-Lone Survivor by Marcus Luttrell and Patrick Robinson

-No Room for Error by Col. John T. Carney and Benjamin F. Schemmer

-Not a Good Day to Die by Sean Naylor

-The Rescue of Bat 21 by Darrel Whitcomb

-That Others May Live by Jack Brehm and Pete Nelson

-None Braver by Michael Hirsh

-Visualize your success. Imagine yourself graduating from indoc/selection. When you read books about PJs/CCT, think about what it would be like if you were the main character in the story. Sports medicine has shown that visualizing your success increases your chances of actual success.

-On an index card or post-it, write down the reasons that initially motivated you to become a PJ/CCT. Put this paper up somewhere you will see it every day.

-Engage in open and honest conversations with your family about what it would mean for all of you if you became a Battlefield Airman. You can have both a family and a high-speed, exciting career. Your family needs to know what they are committing to in supporting you. If you don't know what realistic expectations for your family are, find someone who is currently doing the job and ask them; have your family talk to their family. The choice you make does not affect you alone and you'll find the support of your loved ones makes the entire process smoother and more meaningful for everyone.

You have applied to try for something that only a select handful of people are lucky enough to experience and understand. You should be proud to have the courage to try. Good luck!

//SIGNED//

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