



Name: Brendan Ryan

Military Branch: United States Coast Guard

Military Rank (optional): E5, Second Class Petty Officer

Service Dates: Active Duty 1991-1998, Reserves 1998-2001



The United States Coast Guard is a very small branch that is extremely selective with the men and women they recruit. We are responsible for a long list of duties including: law enforcement, drug interdiction, search and rescue, pollution response, defense readiness, marine safety, port and waterway security, and aids to navigation. The Coast Guard was a great maturing period for me. It provided me with the opportunity to travel, gain invaluable life experiences and adventures, train and create lifelong friendships. I could not have gained all these experiences as an 18-year-old kid anywhere else.

Why was it significant to you?

The lives we saved and the assistance we provided people isn't something that you forget. The mission may have been routine to us, but these people may be going through the scariest or darkest moments of their lives. To be able to come to their rescue is humbling. Their appreciation and gratitude fills me with a sense of pride and makes me proud to be a member of the Coast Guard.

What was the lasting impression or changing moment for you?

One thing that stands out the most for me is when I qualified for different collateral duties. It gave me an overwhelming sense of pride. You might be in charge of a small boat and its crew, a law enforcement boarding team, monitoring equipment, or standing watch on a hundred-million-dollar ship. All that trust and responsibility has been put on you. We didn't go to war, but our search and rescue teams and law enforcement members did go into harm's way. It was a great feeling of camaraderie knowing that the guy next to you had your back and I had his to complete the mission.

Any details of struggle or impossibility that were overcome?

We always made it back home. When everyone is hiding from the storm that's when you had to go. I don't feel like I was ever in an impossible situation. We had close calls and near misses, but our training and equipment never let us down. There is an old saying in the Coast Guard "You have to go out but you don't have to come back." That is not true in the modern Coast Guard. There is always a chance of danger or mishap when you're dealing with men, equipment and weather but I always felt prepared.

Anything else you would like to share?

Semper Paratus! Always Ready

Family Military History

What/who/where is the subject of history?

My grandfather was in the Army Aircorp, my father was in the Navy and my cousin in the Marine Corp.

Why is it significant to you?

My cousin was a hero of mine and the reason I always wanted to join the service since I was young. I was on my way to join the Marines when I walked by a Coast Guard recruiter. I love the Marines for what they do but I'm very happy I didn't make it to that appointment.

How has it impacted the future of our military?

Most people aren't very familiar with the Coast Guard or what they do. After I joined and people in my orbit saw what I did and learned about the Coast Guard I had four friends join.

Any details of adversity that were overcome?

I was a knucklehead kid from the wrong side of the tracks. The military gave me a sense of discipline, responsibility, accountability and made a man out of me. For that I am very thankful.

Anything else you would like to share?

I'd like to salute all our veterans. Thank you and Cheers!