

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight



Presented by Subway



Hobbs' Velasquez to Serve her Country after Graduation

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

"I, Alyssa Velasquez, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic..." With her right hand raised to her side, these were the words Velasquez, a senior cheerleader at Hobbs High School, recited in September as she took the Oath of Enlistment to become a U.S. Marine.

Ever since she can remember, Velasquez has wanted to join the United States Armed Forces, although it wasn't until just recently that she decided on the branch in which she would serve.

"I have always wanted to enlist into a military branch but I wasn't sure which one until recently. First it was the Army, then the Air Force but the Marine Corps sat me down and talked to me and everything they could offer me was perfect. I've always wanted to be like 'G.I. Jane.'"

She continued by saying, "My uncle served in the Army when he was my age and after that he was very successful and the military taught him how to work hard for what you want and go after what you desire. I knew I wanted those same things."

Velasquez looked at all her options, from the Army, to the Air Force, the Navy and the Marines but in the end she felt that the Marines offered everything she wanted, including an opportunity to have her education paid for.

"I wanted something that was going to be a challenge. I want to be pushed. The Staff Sargent told me that boot camp wasn't going to be easy and that I would want to quit. He said the Marine Corps is probably the toughest of the military branches other than the Navy. The only question was did I want to be on a boat? I said that I had never been on a boat and I wasn't sure that was what I wanted to do, so I chose the Marines."

"He also told me that while I was in the Marines they would pay for my schooling and when I got out I could qualify for the G.I. Bill as well. To have my education paid for was also a big reason for me to join a military branch."

Most high school students with the desire to join the military might wait until after graduating, but not Velasquez. She knew this is what she wanted and wanted to be able to jump right in immediately following graduation.

"I like to plan ahead and know where I'm going and what I'm doing. I decided to enlist now so after high school I have a plan and I'm physically and mentally prepared for boot camp next July."

What did her parents think about the early enlistment? Well, they have always supported their daughter in everything she has done but when they found out Velasquez wanted to join the Marines they were



not too excited at first.

“At first, my parents were okay with me wanting to go into the military. When they found out I wanted to go into the Marines, they were not too excited about it. My dad wanted me to go to the Army and my mom wanted me to join the Air Force. The one branch they didn’t want me to go to was the Marines but when they saw my passion for it, they supported my decision.”

She continued by talking about why she wants to serve her country, “All I have ever wanted was to serve my country and make a difference. To be joining the Marines or any military branch is the all-time win in my mind.”

In a weird way, maybe Velasquez’s time as a Hobbs cheerleader has prepared her for life in the military by learning to work with others as part of a team.

“I’ve cheered since eighth grade and it has been a great experience. Cheerleading has taught me how to work with people and my teammates have become like a family to me. Cheerleading is a full-time job. You are continuously working out and trying to make yourself better. To be a Hobbs cheerleader means a lot to me and my teammates. It’s a great responsibility because, as cheerleaders, it is our job to keep the crowd into the game and excited.”

Right now, Velasquez plans to serve her four years in the Marines, get her degree and then decide if she will stay in or move on. Either way she wants to continue to serve in some capacity.

“I hope to get a degree in Criminal Justice when I get out of the Marines I can be a police officer or criminal investigator. Depending on my experience during my first four years in, I will also look at a career in the Marines.”