

ORDINARY PEOPLE DOING  
THE EXTRAORDINARY

# IRON MEDICAL MEN



**“These things we do . . . that others may live.”**

– motto of the Air Force Reserve Pararescuemen



AIR FORCE RESERVE

The requirements to qualify for Pararescuemen training are tough. The requirements to become a Pararescueman, better known as a PJ, are physically, mentally and technically demanding.

"It's often not the most physically fit who make it. It's the person who is most determined to do the job – the one who is most committed to being a PJ," said Chief Master Sergeant Jeffrey Curl, 308th Rescue Squadron Pararescueman, who has served for a couple of decades. "Qualifying isn't easy. It took me two tries before I was accepted into the program."

The PJs began during the Second World War when medical corpsmen had to be dropped into an aircraft crash site on the China-Burma border to care for the injured. That incident evolved into one of the most elite military missions in our nation's history.

The creed of the Pararescuemen is "These things we do. . . that others may live." These men, who frequently serve with Navy Seals and Army Rangers, are trained to rescue those who are in need, offer medical assistance and guide them to safety. They primarily render medical assistance during conflicts, especially to downed pilots in combat zones. At other times, they may assist victims of natural disasters, such as the patients stranded on hospital roofs during Hurricane Katrina or injured hikers in the Cascade Mountains or lost travelers in snow storms.



### Prerequisites to Enter the PJ Program

- Male only
- U.S. Citizens
- Normal color vision
- Vision in best eye of 20/70, worst eye of 20/100, correctable to 20/20
- High school diploma or GED
- General score of 44 in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- SECRET security clearance
- Pass a Class III Flight Physical
- Pass a Physical Ability and Stamina Test (PAST), and those requirements are:
  - 25 meter underwater swim
  - 1500 meter surface swim in 34 minutes
  - 3 mile run in less than 24 minutes
  - 100 max sit ups in 2 minutes
  - 85 max push ups in 2 minutes
  - 16 max pull ups in 2 minutes
- Minimum physical profile (PULHES) of 111111
- Strength aptitude of "K" for retention of Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)

### The Training Pipeline

Once accepted into the Pararescuemen, you will receive intensive training and education for 18 to 24 months:

**The Pararescue Indoctrination Course:** A ten-week program at Lackland Air Force Base, this is an intensely physical program, and those who pass move on to specialized PJ training.

**U.S. Army Airborne School:** Three weeks at Ft. Benning, Georgia, to learn and earn parachutist's wings.

**U.S. Air Force Combat Divers School:** Six-week USAF Combat Diver Course, Panama City, Florida, to become a combat diver and learn SCUBA skills.

**U.S. Navy Underwater Egress Training:** A day at NAS Pensacola to learn how to get out of an aircraft that has ditched in the water.

**U.S. Air Force Basic Survival School:** Two-and-a-half weeks are spent at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington learning to survive in physically hostile environments.

**U.S. Army Military Free Fall Parachutist School:** Five weeks at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and Yuma Proving Grounds, Arizona, concentrating on high altitude, day/night free fall jumps.

**Pararescue EMT-Paramedic Training:** This is an intense 20-week course at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, leading to paramedic certification through the National Registry.

**Pararescue Recovery Specialist Course:** Another 20 weeks at Kirtland Air Force Base trains participants to use paramedic skills in adverse conditions. After completion, the Maroon Beret of the Pararescuemen is awarded.



AIR FORCE RESERVE

**We can teach you, but you train your body to be a SCUBA diver, parachutist, mountain climber, swimmer, marksman, and certified paramedic. What we can't teach you is personal commitment. That you bring with you."**

**-CMSgt Jeffrey Curl**



### **What Happens Next?**

The commitment to getting into shape, maintaining that physical condition and intensely studying for nearly two years is extraordinary. After such training, Pararescuemen continue to serve in the Air Force Reserve, which permit them to live at home, work at civilian careers and serve as part-time Pararescuemen.

### **Benefits**

- The Air Force Reserve offers the Montgomery G.I. Bill and waives contributions from Reservists.
- Tuition Assistance is also available.
- Continued training may result in course credit through the Community College of the Air Force, which is certified to grant Associates Degrees.
- Time served in the Air Force Reserve counts toward a non-contributory Military Retirement. There are also BX and Commissary discounts.

***Being a Pararescueman is a very personal choice. Many want to do it, only a select few have what it takes.***



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