

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

February 2023



Jessica Etheridge

United States Marine Corps

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Prairie Chapter, NSDAR

In 2003, Jessica Etheridge's brother, who was serving in the Marines, was killed in Iraq. This experience, and coming from an abusive family, led Jess to follow in his footsteps and enlist in the United States Marine Corps in August 2013. Jess states she was looking for a family and found it in the Marine Corps.



Her first duty station was Okinawa, Japan where she traveled around Indo-Pacific Asia. She served in Public Affairs documenting the activities of every unit she followed, including but not limited to, intel, scout snipers, and aviation. She helped document each unit during deployments and training. She was with III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF). While in Japan she was attached to the Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), 3rd Marine Division, and Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC). Following her service in Japan, she was aboard the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina.

Throughout her career, she learned to shoot machine guns, sniper rifles, and became certified in underwater survival. She loved this experience due to the variety of things she was able to undergo. She was able to fly in aircraft during this tenure and describes flying as a roller coaster ride. In fact, she fell out once but was pulled back in!

Her favorite at that time was being attached for two weeks to the K-9 unit which trained in tracking, explosive detection, patrol, and search and rescue. She loves animals and watching them work and be so dedicated to their handlers. It was such an experience. During the venture, she made long-term friends. She stated it was such a struggle to just watch and on more than one occasion was asked to stop petting the dogs! She said they worked so hard she thought in their downtime they could use some love.

She states the most interesting activity in the service was interviewing some of the most amazing individuals including a gunnery sergeant who stepped on a land mine while serving as an infantryman. Carrying his foot, he crawled back to his infantry unit where he was then evacuated and got his foot reattached to his body. He continues to serve in the Marines under extended permanent limited duty and is currently a lawyer. Jess has been able to talk with him and his entire family.

Jess was honorably discharged in August 2019 with the rank of Sargeant. Following her discharge, she served as a government contractor for a technology company where she was able to obtain her top-secret clearance, working on advancing technology and software for the government, but learned this was not for her. She remembered her excitement working with animals and wanted to get back to something she could be passionate about.

Jess earned her B.A. degree in Management and Marketing and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Information Systems and Business Analytics. She is now working for Lee's Summit Animal Hospital North. She states her happiest time was her service in Japan working with the dogs. The vet clinic is the perfect place for Jess.

When asked about her family, she replies the Marines are her family. One person in particular. While in Korea with an infantry unit, she met those who served in her brother's platoon including the man who was his sergeant and is now a master sergeant. She has met his family and continues to go there for the holidays.

She attributes her service in the Marines as the only reason she is a proper adult today. It was here that she found the right tools to be who she wanted to be. She states joining the Marines was the best decision she ever made. Her best advice for someone looking for a purpose or family—join the Marines!