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AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE- ARMY OFFICER

Why did you choose to undertake a gap year in the Defence Force? I chose to do the ADF Gap year as I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do when I left school and some of my mates were applying. The ADF gap year provided me with a challenge and a great financial opportunity. Of all the applicants I was fortunate enough to be chosen as 1 of 30 gap year members from 3000 applicants to be Commissioned as an Officer in the Army.



What has your job been like so far and what duties do you undertake? My job for the first 6 months consisted of 5 vigorous but amazing and enjoyable modules of training. During these modules as an officer cadet I developed the skills, knowledge and attitude to command at platoon level and confirmed that I had the attributes, skills and values to be an officer in the ADF.

It also confirmed that I had the leadership, management, operational skills and knowledge required of an officer in the Australian Army. Post my Commissioning in July of 2018, I went on to complete my training to become a fully qualified infantry Platoon commander where I went through a further 2 months of 22-hour days in barracks and out field and we thought the HSE was hard.

Post my training, I got to experience the climate of North Queensland and how the army works outside a training establishment which I came to love and cherish.

What personal skills have you developed from doing the gap year? The ADF Officer Gap Year has enabled me to develop personal skills I could not have developed elsewhere or as efficiently. Two of the main attributes I believe that the Gap Year, particularly the Officer scheme has really helped me to develop is my confidence in leadership and resilience.

To be an Officer in the Australian Defence force and to conduct the program myself and my cohort participated in, in such a condensed timeframe requires a natural level of confidence to start with but to excel and ensure each and every one of us made it to the commissioning in July, we had to not only become more confident in ourselves but more confident in our leadership, we were expected to possibly lead 30 other soldiers who may be older or have more experience than ourselves.

For a group of 18 and 19-year-olds, this can be very intimidating and was a very steep but beneficial learning curve. Resilience being the other aspect that the Gap Year developed and elicited in me was one of the most important I believe. Some moments of the training conducted in the first 6 months, you could say was arduous and required a significant level of resilience in order to push past differences or challenges that may lie in front of you or are yet to come to allow yourself to not only pass the course but to enjoy and excel.

What have been the highlights of 2018? My highlights this year have been Kapooka and the excitement of not only learning how to correctly and confidently fire a rifle and machine gun but strip it down piece by piece in a matter of seconds. Another thrilling moment was every second I got to spend out field. Field came to become a very loved and hated time but overall a beneficial and thrilling experience.

Being commissioned as an Infantry Lieutenant was by far the most exciting and electrifying night of the entire year. The other amazing thing about the Gap Year would be the exposure to living away from home and getting to explore different areas of Australia independently alongside work. On the whole I have absolutely enjoyed and thrived this year.

What are you looking forward to in 2019? The opportunities afforded to me have been incredible and I couldn't recommend this program more. In fact, I have chosen to spend another year (2019) in the Army to further excel my career before attending university in 2020.