

Monica Flores

Employee development specialist • Learning, Training and Development • St. Louis

SERVICE: U.S. AIR FORCE, 1988 TO 1992 • AIR FORCE RESERVES, 1993 TO PRESENT

I had been out of high school for a couple of years in 1988 and joined the Air Force to follow in my older brother's footsteps. It was one of the best decisions I ever made—absolutely no regrets and I'd do it again in a heartbeat. I experienced Desert Shield/Storm while on active duty and Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom when my reserve unit was activated from 2003 to 2006.

As a C-17 Loadmaster I was responsible for everything located behind the flight deck, including supervising the loading crew, providing for the comfort and safety of the troops, and accomplishing personnel and cargo airdrops. We'd leave Charleston Air Force Base in South Carolina, stop at a staging point in Europe, and then fly on to locations within Iraq and Afghanistan. From there we would pick up and drop off cargo and personnel. This cycle would last up to 21 days, at which point we would head back to Charleston and start over again.

My military experience helped me get a job with Boeing in 1997 as a C-17 simulator instructor. I moved to St. Louis about a year ago and now work in the Learning, Training and Development organization supporting Midwest Supplier Management.

My experience in the Air Force has transformed my personality and outlook on life. It hasn't been easy by any means, so my accomplishments have built my confidence and helped me to not only be a leader but also see when I need to follow. As a military member, it helps so much to have a supportive work group here at Boeing that understands my need to be away to fulfill my reserve obligations. I'm grateful for all the experiences and everything I have been able to accomplish.

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