

Name: Robert Apodaca
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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *Marines 1984-1988, Crash/Fire/Rescue at El Toro, CA*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *Lance Corporal*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *No*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *Decided after High School to enlist.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *Respect for the uniform.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *Pay and benefits. When I considered the pay/benefits for the same job in civilian life that I was doing in the Marines, it was just not worth it to stay in and do the same job.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *Crash of a World War II AT-6 Trainer at an air show at El Toro in 1985. They crashed into the church on base. That was my first emergency call. But there were many more over my four-year stint.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *When I enlisted in the Marine Corps, I enlisted on a general contract. When I first thought about enlisting, I considered going into the Navy underwater welding and salvage team, but before the paperwork was completed, I approached the Marines about what I needed to do to be a police officer with the goal down the road of becoming a member of a SWAT team when I got out. I was told I would have to go through infantry training, then become a sniper, which would allow me to join a SWAT team. But out of boot camp, they didn't make me an infantryman, they made me a Crash/Fire/Rescue man. Up to that point, I had no thought of being a fireman. I found that I liked it.*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *Every aspect of the job. Good pay and benefits, you get to hang around with your buddies, you go on emergencies where you can help people out, you're a problem-solver for people who don't know what to do. The variety of the job is great.*
- 10) What do you like least about firefighting? *Lack of sleep from calls coming in at 3 AM, 4 AM, 5 AM.*