

Firefighter Name: Troy Velin  
Position: HazMat Engineer  
Fire Station: Riverside County FD/CDF, CA  
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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *Air Force Reserves Firefighter at Beale AFB since 1998.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *Tech Sergeant.*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *Still in Reserves. Just got back from five months in the desert.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *Dad retired Air Force, in high school discovered firefighting, so did the Air Force because I wanted all the benefits of being in the military, but once I got there it was the camaraderie in the ranks. I like doing service-oriented tasks.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *Being part of the best country in the world's military. I enjoy being part of something so impressive.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *The media spin on the military. You get the feeling they're trying to take apart everything we've accomplished for the last 200 years. Most in the media don't understand service above oneself like someone in the military does.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *Fighting fires on seven different continents.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *I can't sell cars, but I can bust through a door and put out a fire. It's a way to give back to society through service to the community.*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *Variety. Telling kids about personal safety in a fire (like stop, drop, and roll), camaraderie in the fire service which is much like that in the military, dealing with hazardous waste disposal, always something different. Firefighting is the closest thing to being in the military, we're definitely a para-military organization. You have to have that discipline on the job because it's generally chaos by the time we arrive at an emergency. HazMat duty is like being part of the 'A-Team'. We have to take many extra hours of training to do the job. HazMat requires a methodical approach instead of just rushing in like you would with most other emergency-services jobs. There are only two HazMat teams for all of Riverside County. We cover the western half of the county, so it's a lot of territory to patrol.*
- 10) What do you like the least about firefighting? *Nothing in particular.*