



CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how "We the People" interact with the government and each other. Let's help each other expand our civic literacy.

The Armed Services Oath of Enlistment & Oath of Office

Over the last 245 years, our nation has been **tried and tested** by its people, its friends, and its enemies. Sometimes the blows that were dealt stung. Other times, they downright hurt. But through it all, the nation remained steadfast, united in the faith that our nation was more than the sum of its parts. It was a belief in something greater than ourselves that helped our nation be triumphant when our way of life was threatened, and when challenged, it was our dependence on the men and **women**, who voluntarily answered the call to "support and defend" the Constitution of the United States, providing for our "**common defence**."

Since the days of the Continental Army, civilians wanting to enlist or become officers in the armed forces have taken an **oath**. Over time, the wording of the oaths changed. Currently, the **oaths** taken to enlist or to be appointed an officer read:

Oath of Enlistment

"I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

Oath of Office

I _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.



In each instance, the enlisted and officers swear to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that [they] will bear true faith and allegiance to the same." In so doing, our service men and women verbally commit to preserving something greater than themselves.

Only the soldiers, sailors, Marines, **Guardians**, and airmen know what these words **mean to them**, but their willingness to sacrifice everything to ensure our founding principles prevail is a testament to the strength of our Republic and our resolve as a nation. Because of their commitment to and belief in the oath they took, the promise of the **Constitution's Preamble** remains fulfilled.



To Think and To Do: Think about the words contained in these oaths. How do they reflect the goals and purposes of our government as guaranteed by the Preamble to the Constitution? Explain.

LEARN MORE about the branches of the United States military.

- Army
- Marine Corps
- Navy
- Air Force
- Space Force
- Coast Guard
- National Guard



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