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Why I Want to Go to Space Camp

From a young age, I have been fascinated by the stars. I would look up at the night sky, hoping to catch a glimpse of the Milky Way or see a meteor on its life-ending journey through the atmosphere. At the time, it was all aesthetics to me. I had little idea of what was really involved. I had yet to be exposed to all the science, math, engineering, and technology aiming to look beyond the nearby stars. These experiences as a young child have stayed with me throughout childhood and molding my dreams and goals steering me into adulthood. These dreams of being able to look further and understand more of the universe have been the driving force in my life. All of my choices are aiming to complete my vision, to go beyond; beyond the limits of the earth, beyond the physical atmosphere, and beyond the current bounds of imagination.

As people grow older, it seems their imaginations dull and their fascination with the little things in life dwindle. Whenever I look at the night sky today, at seventeen years old, it is as if I am a young child again. The unending fascination with the stars and their phenomena does not wither; it does not shrink. It stands strong, among everything else, and keeps its hold on my curiosity, unquenchable, and while other auxiliary focuses in life come and go, this one has persisted.

Currently, I plan to attend the United States Air Force (USAF) Academy and major in Physics. While on active duty, I hope to become a pilot getting the 1000+ pilot hours in order to continue past the basic astronaut applicant requirement. Proudly serving the USA as a USAF officer, I also want to pursue and further my education in the field of astrophysics, hoping to work with NASA and the space program soon after.

As a Life Scout, I volunteered as a Boy Scout Summer Camp merit badge counselor in 2014, instructing the Astronomy and Space Exploration merit badge courses. This helped solidify my desire for the study of astronomy. Then, in the summer of 2015, I was given the opportunity to attend the Summer Residential Governor's School for Math, Science, and Technology (one of 160 gifted students from across Virginia). I was afforded the opportunity to study Astronomy as my curriculum. In this course of instruction, I received actual exposure to the world of astronomy and space exploration. There was much more math than I had previously thought involved, but I was only more attracted to the subject, its opportunities, and more sure of what I wanted to do as a profession.

This scholarship is a major opportunity for me to learn more about my passion. I would be honored to be able to go to Space Camp because I want to fulfill my vision to go beyond the limits of Earth.