

# Good personal statement on why i want to be a civil affairs specialist (army 38b)...

[Sociology](#), [Population](#)



A Civil Affairs Specialist (38B) in the United States Army has a multifaceted job requiring the integration of many skills in order to successfully accomplish the tasks assigned to him or her. The chief job of the Civil Affairs Specialist is to liaise with local citizens during operations resulting from combat or from catastrophes that the United States Military responds to. This position is key to maintaining order amongst civil populations of areas under military control in order to ultimately support the military objectives as laid out by the planners and commanders. Specific duties run the gambit of the professional world and include administrative operational work, such as coordinating interagency responses to events, assisting with civil-military planning, organizing military resources to support objectives, support services and government agencies responding to unfolding events, and promoting an open interchange with civilian non-governmental organizations also interested in providing relief to a stricken region.

As a sailor in the Navy from 2004-2009, I was exposed to many experiences. Most relevant to the position of Civil Affairs Specialist is the time I spent in foreign countries building relationships and friendships with people from all over the world. I have been to many countries and continents, including: Dubai, Israel, Greece, Spain, Lebanon, Africa, Turkey. The diverse environments required me to rapidly adapt to the local flavor of the people, a task in which I took great delight. Instead of simply being a tourist in the countries I visited, I made an active effort to understand the nuances of the peoples that I had the good fortune to come into contact with. For instance, in discussions with locals in Lebanon, I learned about the many sects that make up the patchwork of Lebanese society. The legal system of the country

recognizes factionalism and even gives certain groups particular political responsibilities. Action in Lebanon requires interaction between the Christian population, the Shia, the Sunni, the Druze, and a substantial number of political and sectarian groups that all compete for authority. Understanding the nuances in such a country would help me in my job as a Civil Affairs Specialist by enabling me to recognize what are the formulations for making projects work in such a society. Indeed, understanding the makeup of nations is key when considering the projects that I would undertake. Similar to Lebanon, the history of Turkey is also replete with sectarianism between the Christian Orthodox populations, largely expelled after the First World War, Ataturk inclined secularists that abhor religion in any manifestations, a reemerging Islamic religious force in the country driven largely by a burgeoning rural population, and Armenians and Kurds in the East and South East of the country clamoring for a greater voice in governance. The ability to recognize that nations are not homogenous units and that the needs and desires of different populations must be measured and balanced in accordance with our ultimate military objectives is of prime importance in completing the work of the Civil Affairs Specialist.

After 2009 I left the Navy and joined the Army, largely because of the broader skills that the Army employs and the greater opportunities for learning. During a tour in Afghanistan, I was once again exposed to the idea that a population is not a monolithic unit and that within a society there are shades of grey and differences that may not be immediately discernable to an outsider, but to someone “ inside,” the differences mean the entire world. In Fort Benning, Georgia I enrolled in the three-week negotiation skills course

that I found very useful. Amongst the skills that I learned were the identification of different negotiation styles, such as a business-like negotiation where the solutions sought are in theory of mutual benefit to the parties, or the legalistic style that is more based on presented facts and an underlying professionalism, or a moralistic approach wherein the negotiation is entered into as a moral imperative to improve something, or finally, the hegemonic approach which is ultimately based on overwhelming fire-power enforcing our dictates. We also learned the importance of avoiding cultural pitfalls that make the negotiator look foolish and or disingenuous to the people he is negotiating with. In sum, this course has given me preparation to identify and undertake the necessary methods of negotiation when I would be called upon to act in my capacity as a Civil Affairs Specialist. Ultimately I joined the military in an effort to help people through their struggles. I have a strong desire to learn as much as I can about different people, and to learn the intricacies and nuances of their cultures. My knowledge of tactical operations and of different ethnic backgrounds combined with my logical thinking and love of my problem solving. This opportunity would provide me with the chance to further develop my understanding of the diverse people of the world and to make a lasting impact truly helping civilians caught up on war or catastrophe as well as having a continuous effect on the interactions the United States Military has with the citizens of the world.