

From a Homemaker and mother to a daring Officer- Journey of Lt Priyanka Khot

From a small village in Maharashtra, Lt. Priyanka wife of late Naik Nilesh Khot rose to clear the SSB in her very first attempt and converted her grief into grandeur

Every journey to the olive green uniform begins with a spark of determination but the path is rarely straight. For Lt. Priyanka Khot, the road to becoming a commissioned officer was paved with personal loss, daunting doubts and an unshakable resolve to rise for her family and herself. From a small-town upbringing and modest beginnings to the heart-breaking loss of her husband, she transformed grief into grit—slowly building the confidence, skills and mental strength. Her story is not just about clearing SSB; it is about courage in the face of tragedy, relentless preparation despite language barriers and the quiet power of perseverance.

She was commissioned into Army Ordnance Corps on 6 September 2025 from OTA Chennai. Today, as she proudly wears the Indian Army's uniform, her journey stands as living proof that resilience and self-belief can turn life's toughest trials into a path of service and honour—an inspiring story she shares in her own words below.

Q: How do you feel after getting commissioned into the Indian Army?

Priyanka: I feel relaxed now. Initially, when I thought of the SSB and decided to go for it, things were not clear and I had a lot of confusion and pressure on my mind. I used to think whether I will be able to clear it or not. Since I had my family responsibilities as a mother of a 5-year old daughter and as a daughter-in-law, I wasn't sure if I would be able to complete my preparation and studies. But now I feel the sense of relaxation in me and I am able to give time to my family as well. Earlier, when I started my preparation after my husband's death, I wasn't able to give time to them.

Q: Tell us about your education and your family.

Priyanka: I come from a middle-class family. My father is a farmer and my mother is a homemaker and I have a younger brother. Broadly, I was an average student and got decent grades in studies. I completed my schooling from Marathi medium, scoring 1st position in academics in 12th, and then moved to a nearby city for my college where I pursued B.Com from Shivaji University, Kolhapur. I was the first one in my immediate family who did graduation. During my Graduation, since I had interest in stitching and designing, I use to take orders for the same and do stitching. At that time, I didn't have a specific aim in my life, I was pursuing my interest in fashion designing and was doing good in that. I was an active learner. As soon as I

completed my graduation, I got married to Late Naik Nilesh Khot. I pursued my higher education after marriage from distance learning.

Q: How did you handle the grief of your husband's death? How did your family support you?

Priyanka: After marriage, I was living a normal and stable life and was happy in that. My husband's death came as a big shock to me. Just one and half months back of this incident, I lost my Father-in-law. And then after losing my husband as well, that time was very hard for my family. But after that I firmly decided that I wanted to do something in life. My daughter was just 5 years. My family supported me a lot in my decision and took complete care of my daughter in my journey.

Q: Tell us about your preparation journey.

Priyanka: Initially, I started preparing for State Public Services Examination and started my preparation from the scratch. Since I didn't have English medium background I started by improving my English by reading newspaper. I used to invest more time in studies. During my entire preparation, I have slept for four to four and half hours at the maximum. Alongside, I also joined the Brahmakumari centre and started practicing meditation for my mental wellbeing. Gradually I gained confidence. Then when I got to know about SSB, I decided about joining AMAS.

Q: How did you come to know about SSB and what motivated you to join Armed Forces as an officer?

Priyanka: While doing some documentation for the pension, I came across an officer who told me that I can join Indian army as an officer being a Veernari. Initially, I had doubts whether I will be able to do it or not. But then I took the decision of going forward. After my Husband's death, I was determined to do something for my daughter and my family and not sit idle. After coming to know about SSB, I was motivated to join the Armed forces.

Q: How did you prepare for SSB?

Priyanka: I first joined the online English Communication Course at AMAS that helped me to improve my English speaking to a greater extend. Then I attended the 21 days SSB Course at AMAS. I understood every task in detail. I participated in various competition conducted at the institute that boosted my confidence further. I made good notes that later helped me in my preparation after coming back from AMAS. I also joined Gym in order to keep myself physically fit.

Before going to my SSB, I started teaching into a School in my village and that helped me a lot in shaping my personality, increasing my confidence and improve my English communication. My job experience later helped me a lot in my SSB interview. I cleared my SSB in first attempt from 24 SSB Bangalore on 11 May 2024 and joined OTA Chennai.

Q: What challenges did you face in your journey?

Priyanka: My major challenge was that I didn't have an English medium background and hence I had to practice English speaking a lot. For that I joined the English Communication Course at AMAS and started to work upon the same. Another challenge for me was that my daughter was very young. But I deliberately kept her away from me during my preparation because I felt that I needed more time to prepare since I had a lot to improve in myself. I got her enrolled in various classes for her homework and most of the time my family looked after her.

Yet another challenge that I faced was that I wasn't able to imagine and form stories during TAT. I started reading books to improve my imagination and started collecting stuff from the newspaper that can help in my story formations.

Q: How was your experience in Academy?

Priyanka: Before going to SSB, I had some fears. I thought about how I would be able to manage among the young cadets since I had a very different path and journey from them. I had many questions in my mind. But as gradually training progressed, everything fell in place automatically. My course mates really supported me in every aspect. My fears turned into confidence. My overall training period went well. One of the difficulties that I faced was that I had to devote more time in academics as compared to other cadets but that also I was able manage in the long run. One learning from the Academy that I will always follow is that '*Correct time, Correct Place, Correct Attire*'. The time management skills that I learnt there would help in my entire life.

Q: What advice and message would you like to give to other Veernaris and to other students preparing for SSB?

Priyanka: I want to tell them that don't hesitate, come forward and clear all your doubts and questions. They should never think negative about themselves. Try to be positive. It is very difficult and emotional when such incidents happen but I would like to tell them that '*Don't Cry*', instead come forward and do something. Decide something for yourself and bring an aim in your life. There is no point in living an aimless life. Find your reason to live and move forward in life.

For other students, I would like to say that '*Patience*' is the key. Religiously follow your notes and do your studies. Just follow what you were taught in 21 Days at AMAS and follow the routine that you followed in those days even when you come back.