

IF YOU TALK WITH A RECRUITER

Don't rely only on the recruiter.

Military recruiters are salespeople: their job is to "sell" you on enlistment. To keep their jobs and advance their careers, most recruiters must sign up a specific number of people each month. They stress the benefits of the military — not the problems.

Your decision about enlistment will affect your life and the lives of others. **Don't rush.**

- ✓ Talk with recently discharged veterans — both those who had good experiences and those who didn't — about the questions raised in this brochure.
- ✓ Talk with a civilian counselor who can help you think about the military or suggest other options.

Take along a relative or friend.

You have a lot to think about when you talk with a recruiter. A family member or friend can take notes, ask questions, and watch out for your best interests. Also take along a relative or friend if you discuss job selection with a military "guidance counselor" at a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS).

Never give false information or cover up anything.

Be honest about police records, health problems, and school. If you lie to a recruiter, *you* will suffer when the truth comes out.

It's wrong, and in some cases illegal, for a recruiter to tell you a lie. Report any recruiter who does this to your Congress members and school officials. You will be protecting yourself and others.

IF YOU DECIDE TO ENLIST

Do not sign any papers until you take them home for a parent, teacher, or someone else whom you know and trust to review.

Make sure to get all the recruiter's promises in writing in your enlistment agreement. Spoken promises will not protect you.

Find out whether you need to pass a special test, get a security clearance, or do anything else before you can get the job or options you want.

If you've already signed up through the Delayed Enlistment Program (DEP) and are having second thoughts, call the GI Rights Hotline at 800/394-9544. This is a free nongovernmental service.

Keep this brochure. If you have problems in the military, call the GI Rights Hotline.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about these issues, check out our web site. It offers up-to-date information about military recruitment, what it is like inside the military, and alternatives to the military.

www.afsc.org/youthmil.htm

Local Contact:

Published by the
American Friends
Service Committee
National Youth and Militarism Program
1501 Cherry Street, Phila., PA 19102
Phone: 215/241-7176
youthmil@afsc.org



December 2000
Photos by Terry Foss & Melissa Elliott



Do you know enough to

enlist?

Military recruiters and
ads promise

- ✓ job training ...
- ✓ money for college ...
- ✓ adventure...
- ✓ leadership skills
and more.

**Before you
join, take a
good look
at what
you're
getting
into.**



Ask yourself these questions

Will enlistment help me achieve my goals?

Many people enlist hoping to get job training and work experience. But you may find that military enlistment hurts, rather than helps, your search for a good job. Going into the services also may not be the best or only way to get money for college or vocational training.

Before you decide to enlist, look carefully at what you'll actually be doing — not just your job title. You may find that your job isn't what you thought it would be.



- The military might not give you the job training and work experience you expect. Jobs with fancy sounding titles often are low skill and non-technical.
- Many military jobs are so different from civilian jobs that you may not be able to use your training after you leave the military, or you may have to be retrained.
- The military is not required to keep you full time in the job for which you trained or for the entire time you are in the military.
- The military's money for education plan (New GI Bill) is not as easy to use as it sounds. It is only after you leave the military that you find out whether you've met all of the requirements. The largest amount of money mentioned in the ads — \$50,000 — is offered only to those GIs who take jobs the military has a hard time filling.

Am I trying to escape my own problems?

If you're thinking about joining the armed forces to get out of a bad personal or family situation, don't rush to enlist. Don't make this important decision when you are upset, confused, unsure about your future, or pressured by your family.

Many people discover that their problems get worse, not better, in the military. Others find after enlisting that their situation at home improves, or they don't want to be in the military after all.

Don't enlist unless you're sure. If you change your mind after you join, it's very hard to get out.

Am I willing to give up control?

If you enlist, the armed forces will be part of your life for at least eight years, including time in the Reserves.

A lot could happen during those years. The United States could go to war and you would have to fight. If you're in the Reserves, the military could call you away from your home, job, or school.

What if you don't like life as a soldier or sailor? You can't just quit, and the military considers it a crime for you to leave your unit or disobey an order.

A recruiter may tell you that you can give the military a try and automatically get out after six months if you don't like it. This is not true. **There is no such thing as a "period of adjustment" in the military.**



Am I willing to kill...and be killed?

The military prepares for war. This purpose guides everything it does.

Are you willing to kill another person if ordered to do so? Would you destroy people's homes or food? Would you help others who are fighting, even if you're not in combat yourself?

Would you risk your life in a fight for somebody else's cause? Even soldiers who believe in fighting to defend their country have found themselves ordered to fight when they felt it was wrong. Once you enlist, you can't choose.

If you answer "no" to these questions, you're not alone, and you're not unpatriotic. You don't need to join the military to serve your country.

Do I have other options?

Even though it can be hard, you may be able to find a job or go to school. Talk with employed friends and neighbors to find out how they got their jobs.

A school guidance counselor, nurse, or social worker may have resources and connections that you can use to find a job or job-training program, get money for school, or get help with a bad personal or family situation.

Organizations — such as neighborhood job counseling programs, church groups, city and state employment agencies, career centers, and union training programs — also can help you find a job.

If you want to earn money for college, find adventure, or travel, don't assume you must enlist. You can learn about lots of other options at your public library or on the Internet.