

**ADVICE FROM
VETERANS
ON MILITARY SERVICE
AND RECRUITING PRACTICES
A RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
CONSIDERING
ENLISTMENT**

Prepared by the
Veterans' Education
and Outreach Project



Veterans For Peace, Inc.
Humboldt Bay Chapter 56



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For information, address inquiries to:
VEOP Committee
Veterans For Peace Chapter 56
P. O. Box 532, Bayside, CA 95524-0532
www.vfp56.org
E-mail: VFP-56@aol.com

This Resource Guide is available as a free PDF download at www.vfp56.org.

While every attempt has been made to provide accurate and factual information, the reader must realize that this Guide is not legal advice. The information provided herein has been gleaned and condensed from many sources including but not limited to the personal experience of the veterans who participated in the writing of this Guide.

SECTION I

EXPLAINING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS



MILITARY RECRUITING & RECRUITER FRAUD

The recruiter is not a teacher, counselor or your buddy.

S/he is a salesperson. In a letter to the Secretary of the Army, Senator Barbara Boxer stated, "I am writing to express my deep dismay over new evidence that Army recruiters are providing grossly misleading information to potential recruits in an effort to convince them to enlist" (Press release from Senator Boxer's office, November 3, 2006).

Recruiters' promises are often false, or not kept.

During GI Hotline counseling work, "My recruiter lied" is the most common complaint given in thousands of calls. The reason recruiters often lie is not hard to find: they are under tremendous and relentless pressure to meet recruiting goals. If recruiters fail to meet their enlistment quotas they may be reassigned to more difficult duty, perhaps combat! Reports have exposed recruiter misrepresentations.

Recruiter fraud has become a serious problem in the military.

In a three-year period, 400 recruiters were released for misconduct. But in 2004 only three of every 10 recruiters who were found to have committed improprieties were relieved of duty.

The Government Accountability Office released a report August 14, 2006 stating allegations of wrongdoing by military recruitment personnel rose from 4,400 cases in fiscal 2004 to 6,600 cases in fiscal 2005, with substantiated cases increasing from 400 to almost 630. According to the report the number of cases found to be criminal violations more than doubled, from 33 to 68.

The increase in violations was noted despite a significant decline in the number of people who joined the military. The number of new recruits fell from 250,000 in fiscal 2004 to 215,000 in fiscal 2005, even as recruiting efforts were significantly boosted, according to the GAO report.

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Sometimes recruiters try to convince enlistees to lie on the enlistment agreement and give false information so that the enlistee will be accepted into the service. They may also lie to you or to your family. In the "Record of Military Processing," for instance, you will be asked questions concerning your character and social adjustment. These questions concern previous drug use, involvement with Communism, whether or not you are a conscientious objector (CO) to war, and whether you have previously been in trouble with military. All of these categories are considered character defects by the military, and anyone who fits these categories is considered unfit for military service. When filling out the enlistment form, recruiters frequently suggest that you lie—particularly in this section. **Do not lie.** It is a felony to give false information on the enlistment form. When

fraudulent information is uncovered, the recruit is often the only one punished.

Recruiters have harassed potential recruits.

Women are routinely sexually harassed in the military. Recently four Marine Corps recruiters were charged in connection with the rape of two prospective women recruits. Two recruiters were convicted and discharged while the others were given lesser punishments and allowed to remain in the Marine Corps. ("Santa Rosa Marine recruiter convicted, demoted," CBS TV Ch. 5, San Francisco, Oct. 7, 2005, 9:30 A.M. US/PST; "Two women sue Marine Corps, Navy for alleged rapes," *Navy Times*, March 9, 2006)

Recruiters in the News

Reports about recruiters' aggressive tactics, including lies, fraud and broken promises, are not hard to find. Several such reports, available on the Internet, are listed below:

- An Atlanta TV news report, for which Quaker House was a major source, uncovered systematic misrepresentation by recruiters. The reports were titled "GI Lies" and are at:
<http://www.fox5atlanta.com/iteam/gilies.html>
- A former Marine recruiter, Chris White, declared that "Recruiters lie about college benefits, duty station assignments, veterans' benefits, and countless others aspects of the military in order to convince their clients to sign."
<http://www.objector.org/insider.html>
- Recruiters in Dallas, "arranged with a diploma mill to print required high school diplomas for recruits with GEDs". Some recruiters profited personally from the practice.
<http://www.ire.org/contest/past/99winnerslist.html>
- Recruiters for the Indiana National Guard falsified scores of physical exams to sign up recruits who were physically unqualified. *The Indianapolis Star* ran a series of articles exposing this scandal.
http://www2.indystar.com/library/factfiles/mil/ind_national_guard/2002/investigation.html
- On May 11, 2005 the Army ordered a one-day halt in recruiting activities nationwide to address complaints about aggressive tactics used by military recruiters as they struggle to meet monthly goals.
<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/05/12/MNGF4CNN711.DTL>

THE MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL : PLENTY OF PROMISES, LITTLE MONEY FOR EDUCATION



Going to college is part of the American Dream. But how can you afford going to college? The military offers a possible way for obtaining money for college, but there are strings attached to the money that may not be worth the cost.

- To receive any benefit the recruit must pay a non-refundable \$1,200 deposit (\$100 per month). The deposit must be started at the beginning of basic training. The funding must be continuous with no breaks in payment.
- To receive the benefit, veterans must receive an honorable discharge, something that 25 percent of all veterans don't receive.
- You must have a GED or a high school degree to be eligible to receive the Montgomery Bill funding.
- Less than 50 percent of those that join the military to receive funding receive any money.
- Approximately 30 percent receive only one-half the funding needed for their college costs.
- Any non-military financial aid you qualify for will usually result in your GI Bill benefit being reduced by the same amount.
- Unlike other financial aid, the GI Bill pays a set monthly dollar amount, regardless of the cost of the school you attend.
- Most non-military financial aid (NMFA) increases with the cost of your school and it pays more the less money you have. Such NMFA can come from the federal government, state

governments and directly from college or university programs which can include grants, loans or work study.

The Montgomery GI Bill was not created to send you, or anyone else, to school. It was

designed to recruit soldiers. The result is a program popular with most recruiters—but not most veterans. Often veterans get less money for education than what they expected.

Financing College Without Joining the Military

1. It may take some digging to find a combination of loans, scholarships, grants and work. You can start at your public library or your school counselor's office. All schools will require that you fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), available from your high school counselor or college financial aid offices.
2. There are so many different types of scholarships and grants that most anyone can qualify for one! There are scholarships for people with specific skills or interests; for students who want to pursue certain majors; for employees of large companies and their children; and for members of particular ethnic and religious groups, and many more. Books like **The Scholarship Book** (Cassidy, 1996), and **College Scholarships and Financial Aid** (Arco, 1996) contain listings of scholarships and contact addresses for applying. Most public libraries have scholarship books, and you can ask a librarian for help.

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THE MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL *(continued)*

3. Once you're ready, you should write to the colleges you are interested in to request their financial aid information. This information should tell you the cost of tuition, what types of financial aid are available, and how to apply for aid. More expensive schools often have more generous aid programs, so don't rule them out in advance.

The Montgomery G.I. Bill (MGIB) presently offers up to \$32,400 in tuition in return for a three-year commitment to full-time duty. The MGIB is the basic plan. The recruiter may offer additional educational funds for signing-up in a selected Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) such as infantry, armor or artillery. These MOS's usually are the less desirable from the point of view that the recruit is more likely to face death, or serious injury. The recruit will have to sign at least a six-year enlistment to be eligible for the additional funds.

THE ENLISTMENT AGREEMENT: FACT VS. FICTION

The enlistment agreement is a very unusual contract.

While the exact wording may vary from one branch of the military to another, the overall *intent* set forth in an enlistment agreement remains unchanged. The enlistment agreement is an unusual contract because, unlike a traditional contract between two parties, the enlistment agreement is a one-way or one-sided agreement; that is, the contract is binding upon the recruit but not binding upon the military. In other words, regardless of the circumstances, you must live up to your side of the bargain but the military can pick and choose which parts of the agreement it will uphold, if any!

In the enlistment agreement it will state that the enlistee is, "...entitled to receive pay, allowance, and other benefits, as provided by law and regulation." However, the enlistment agreement also states, "*Laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice to me. Such changes may affect my status, pay, allowance, benefits, and responsibilities as a member of the Armed Forces REGARDLESS of the provisions of this enlistment document*" (emphasis added).

The military does not have to honor any promises made at the time of your enlistment. You are obligated for eight years of your life to the military, to obey all legal orders, and possibly kill or be killed. You may be subject to health hazards, discrimination, and emotional or physical abuse. Your superiors may decide to cut your pay or benefits without even telling you.

If you refuse to obey orders, you may be harshly disciplined, face Courts Martial, be imprisoned in a military stockade, and perhaps receive a dishonorable discharge. A dishonorable discharge will prevent you from working for or receiving funding from the state or federal government. Many civilian jobs may also be off limits to you because a company has a government contract.

Military enlistments are potentially unlimited in length.

In fine print, usually on the back of the first page of the enlistment contract, you will find a statement that declares, "...*that the stated length of enlistment can be extended.*" In other words, while a four-year enlistment may be typical, an individual can be held in the service almost indefinitely (termed, "Stop-loss"). If you are fortunate enough to be released from active duty you remain in the "ready reserve" until your eight-year obligation has been fulfilled. While in ready reserve status, you are subject to being called back to active duty at anytime; regardless of whether you participate in a reserve unit or not. For example, in 2004-05, some individuals with so-called "special skills" were reactivated even after they have served out their eight-year obligation.

Because of the unending, so-called, "war on terror" you may be kept on active duty much longer than your original agreement. Keeping people in the military beyond their initial obligation is often referred to as the "**back door draft.**" Thousands of men

and women have already been subjected to it. With the never-ending "war on terror," when will your obligation end?

Many details about enlistment are not well explained.

Recruiters typically neglect to mention or discuss the enlistment agreement with a potential enlistee. Unless you ask for it, you are not likely to see the contract until just before you take the oath. By then it's too late. You will face tremendous pressure to sign the agreement—often without reading it—and assemble with the other recruits to be sent to basic training.

Get a copy of the enlistment agreement.

Long before you make your final decision, get a copy of the enlistment agreement. If a recruiter won't provide you with a copy download one off the internet. Be prepared for the recruiter to balk at your request. Contrary to what recruiters may say, they really don't want you to be an intelligent, informed recruit. They especially don't want you to be an inquisitive recruit! But, it is your right to review the enlistment agreement beforehand and discuss it with family and friends and even an attorney if you wish. Read the enlistment agreement carefully, especially the fine print! Be particularly aware about what the military can order you to do.

Training or duty station assignments are not guaranteed.

According to Citizen Soldier (see References), the Army's current enlistment contract states that if "my program school course or training of my choice is [unavailable] then, 1) I will elect another program, School Course, or training of my choice for which I am qualified, or 2) I will be separated..." A veteran recruiter with many years experience told Citizen Soldier that, in his experience, such recruits have always been re-assigned - never separated (discharged).

Furthermore, Section 4 of the basic enlistment contract states: "[If] the Secretary of the Army determines for [reasons] of military necessity or national security members be available for immediate reassignment, any guarantees...may be terminated. Under these conditions I (i.e., you) may be reassigned according

to the needs of the Army." Enlistment agreements of the other service branches contain similar language.

In simple words, the preceding language means that the military can deny you any training your recruiter may have promised and, even if you receive that training, may reassign you to less desirable—or more dangerous—duty. You may be trained to work on sophisticated electronic equipment but you can still end up carrying a radio on your back on a battlefield.

Get all your recruiter's promises in writing.

Remember that the military can change the terms such as pay, job, and benefits of your work. Although there are no guarantees, a written statement may offer you (as a service member) some protection if promises are not met. In order to be valid, any written agreement must be included in the enlistment contract and signed by the Commanding Officer of the recruiting station where you enlist, that is, where you take the oath and sign the agreement.

Keep in mind that the enlistment agreement is binding on you and not on the military. As noted above, the enlistment contract has a clause that in general states that your status can be changed for the good of the service. For example, your recruiter may promise you specialized training, and even put it in writing, but later—usually after basic training—you discover that you are being ordered to do something else; something that bears no resemblance to what was promised you. This is so common it's almost the norm.

So why bother getting anything in writing? Because, if the military does not give you what was promised in writing you maybe able get out of your contract, that is, receive a discharge from the military. But don't be misled, it is very difficult to receive a discharge under these circumstances. In the meantime, you must continue to uphold your end of the bargain—even though it isn't the bargain you agreed to—otherwise you are subject to military discipline.

There is no adjustment period.

Once you sign the enlistment agreement and take the oath you leave immediately, in most cases, for basic training. You are

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THE ENLISTMENT AGREEMENT *(continued)*

obligated to fulfill the agreement and serve the entire number of years stated in your enlistment contract. You cannot leave of your own free will. In contrast; however, the military—at any time—may decide you are “unsuitable” or “unfit for military duty” and discharge you without your consent.

Final advice to those considering enlistment.

You are ultimately responsible for the information on the enlistment form. Don't lie, even if pressured by your recruiter, because it's a felony to sign a false form.



When You Visit the Recruitment Office

- Take along a parent or friend as a witness.
- Do not sign anything while at the recruiting office. Take the enlistment contract home. Review it. Discuss it with your parents, trusted relatives, and friends. Especially helpful is to discuss the agreement with a trained counselor who understands how recruiters operate. (See the Resources at the end of this Guide).
- Read over the entire enlistment agreement very carefully. The recruiter must give you a copy of the agreement if you request it.
- Get any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Get all promises in writing. Spoken promises do not have to be honored.
- Last but not least, get a copy of everything you sign. Take a large, addressed envelope, with postage affixed, with you on your final enlistment day. Somewhere between leaving the recruiting station and arriving at basic training, you should have an opportunity to mail the copies to yourself or a relative or friend for safekeeping.

THE DELAYED ENTRY OR FUTURE SOLDIER TRAINING PROGRAM

What is the Delayed Entry Program?

The Delayed Entry Program (DEP), or Future Soldier Training Program (FSTP), is a program whereby you join the military and promise to report for active duty training (i.e., Boot Camp) on a future date. The DEP/FSTP activation date will be specified in the contract you sign and may be up to a year later. The activation date is something you *negotiate* with the recruiter although he/she may make it seem like there is no alternative to the date that is presented to you.

A person in the DEP/FSTP is part of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). Members of the IRR do not belong to any military unit, have no military rank or duties, and ARE NOT subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). This last part is important. In simple terms, it means—irrespective of any language in the DEP/FSTP contract—you CANNOT be given orders, detained, arrested, jailed, or prosecuted by the military (i.e., Courts Martial) while you are in DEP/FSTP status. Only after you report for activation, and are sworn in onto active duty, do you become subject to military law.

Why a DEP/FSTP?

Simply put, it reduces "sales resistance!" The military has learned that it is EASIER to recruit young people if they are not faced with the consequence of having to leave family and friends almost immediately. In other words, the DEP/FSTP is a SCAM, designed to make you feel less pressured by your decision to enlist by removing the necessity of having to report for duty right away. [The recruiter may explain that the DEP/FSTP helps the armed forces plan their training activities and efficiently fit recruits into available "slots." This may be valid; however, suppressing "sales resistance" is the fundamental goal.] Because many high school seniors are unsure about what to do after graduation, the military has implemented the DEP/FSTP as a way to capitalize on that uncertainty. It's a popular way to sell cars, stereos, and other products ("Buy now, pay later!") ... and now, the military is using the ploy to "sell" enlistments. *A lot can happen in a year!* You may—and many teenagers do—decide that you want to do something else with your life.

Can you get out of the DEP/FSTP?

The good news is: **YES!**, you can opt out of the program relatively easily if you change your mind. The bad news is: they're not going to like it. But, don't despair; keep reading.

How do you get out of the DEP/FSTP?

Despite the fact that you have incurred a legal obligation to the military, getting out of the DEP/FSTP is as simple as writing a letter. Your letter will request that the military command issue you a *Certificate of Separation* from military service. In the letter you will state the reason: "refusal to enlist," and further state that your decision is irrevocable and ask that recruiters make no further contact with you. A sample letter for release from the DEP/FSTP is provided below.

What kinds of reasons are acceptable?

You may state and explain other reasons, if you wish; however, no additional justification beyond "refusal to enlist" is necessary. As long as you clearly state that you are no longer interested in serving in the military almost any reason is acceptable. Except in the most dire of circumstances (e.g., full scale war or a draft), the military prefers to deal with a willing and pliable subject; not someone who is being forced to serve against his/her will.

Where do you send the separation request letter?

The recruiter does not have the authority to grant a separation and, indeed, may simply throw your request into the trash. Address your letter to the "Commanding Officer" at the recruiting station where you signed up for the DEP/FSTP. The address will be on your enlistment agreement. If you don't have it, the address will be listed under *US Government* in the telephone book. Send the letter via *Certified Mail with a Domestic Return Receipt (USPS Form 3811)*. Attach the receipts to *your copy* of the letter and store in a secure location. You should also send copies of the letter to local congressional offices (attention: "military caseworker"), school administrators, ministers, etc.

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THE DELAYED ENTRY PROGRAM *(continued)*

You are strongly advised against going to the recruiting station or contacting the recruiter to discuss a request for separation from the DEP/FSTP. The recruiter *will not* help you with your request for separation. Recognize that the recruiter's failure to complete the enlistment process (i.e., bring you in) is a black mark against him/her. The recruiter's comfortable assignment—in an office rather than on a battlefield or ship—is contingent on his/her success rate in talking young men and women into military service.

What happens after the separation request letter is sent?

The Commanding Officer will review the letter and forward it for processing. Despite occasional threats from recruiters, the military currently releases all DEP/FSTP recruits who request a separation. You may be asked to appear at the recruiting station for a brief interview but this is usually not necessary. When your separation request has been processed, you will receive a *Certificate of Separation* in the mail. Separation will not affect your record, education, or career.

What kind of reaction can be expected?

You can expect a concerted effort to get you to change your mind. In fact, your recruiter is required to do so as a condition of his/her assignment. Despite your request not to

Sample Letter for Release from the DEP/FSTP

[Your name]
[Your address]

[date]

Commanding Officer *[no name is required, the title is enough]*
Navy Recruiting Station Eureka
3220 Broadway
Eureka, CA 95501

Dear Commander,

I am currently a member of the Navy Delayed Enlistment Program (DEP) *[or Future Sailor Training Program (FSTP)]* scheduled to enter active duty on *[insert the date]*. I signed up for the DEP/FSTP *[insert the date]* at the Navy Recruiting Station in Eureka, California, where I was recruited by *[insert rank and name of recruiter, e.g., FCI James M. Cramer]*. I am requesting complete separation from the DEP and the Navy. My request for separation is based on the fact that, after due deliberation, I have decided to refuse to enlist in the Navy.

In addition, in the past five months I have had a complete change of career plans. I intend to take a part-time job and begin to further my education as time and money allow. *[This is optional, you don't need to explain your decision or provide additional information beyond "refusal to enlist."]*

Therefore, I request that I be issued a Certificate of Separation as soon as possible. In the event that this separation request has not been fully processed on the date I am scheduled to report for active duty, I request an extension in my delay status until my separation request has been finally decided.

Lastly, I wish to emphasize that my refusal to enlist decision is irrevocable. Given that decision, I request that recruiters make no further contact with me.

Sincerely,

[Your signature]

[Your typed name]

[Your Social Security Number]

Cc: Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Representative Mike Thompson

THE DELAYED ENTRY PROGRAM *(continued)*

be contacted, expect a telephone call or personal visit not long after you mail the separation request letter. The recruiter may lie, saying that you are not permitted to get out of the DEP/FSTP (not true!). S/he may threaten you with involuntary activation; even going so far as coming to your front door and saying s/he is taking you in for activation (this is harassment, IRR members cannot be *involuntarily* placed on active duty by a member of the recruiting command). The recruiter may threaten you with arrest and jail if you don't withdraw your request or report immediately for activation (it won't happen—requesting a separation is not against the law). If you or your family are immigrants, the recruiter may threaten to have your family deported unless you agree to complete the enlistment process (this too is intimidation and harassment). When asked, one recruiter candidly stated:

"Confrontation can be a useful tool" (Tod Ensign, *America's Military Today: The Challenge of Militarism*, The New Press, New York, NY, 2004, p. 29.)

If the recruiter contacts you, tell him/her that you mailed a letter requesting separation to the Commanding Officer and instruct the recruiter not to contact you again and that all further communication shall be done through the US Mail. Stand your ground!

If the recruiter persists, tell him/her you will file a restraining order for harassment if they don't cease and desist. Remind the recruiter that this will not look good in his/her military record.

If you have any questions about what to do if faced with a recruiter's efforts to get you to retract your request for separation, here are some suggestions to follow:

- Contact your US Senator's and Representative's office and ask them to intercede with the recruiter's Commanding Officer on your behalf (their addresses and telephone numbers will be listed under *US Government* in the telephone book);
- Contact the GI Rights Hotline at 1-800-FYI-95GI (1-800-394-9544) for advice.

What if you receive a request to come to the recruiting station for an interview?

The keyword is "request." As a member of the IRR, you are not subject to military chain of command nor can you be ordered to comply. If you decide to go, **DO NOT GO ALONE!** Take along a parent, guardian, relative or adult friend who supports your decision. Under no circumstance should you agree to meet with the recruiter, or his/her associates or superiors, alone. Don't let them intimidate you. It's common for the recruiter to use phrases like: "It's time to let go of the apron strings" or "It's time to stop hiding behind your mommy/daddy" or "It's time for you to grow up and start acting like a man/woman" or a similar statement. This is not an impromptu remark. It is calculated to get you to react emotionally and contrary to your interests. Your best response is to reiterate that: "Nothing could be further from the truth. I stand by my decision. The request for a separation was made after due deliberation and the request is not negotiable!" Then say: "This interview is concluded!" and leave.

What if the military does not respond to your request for separation?

Contact the GI Rights Hotline at 1-800-FYI-95GI (1-800-394-9544). People there have experience with this issue and can offer guidance.



The service is free.
The call is confidential.

www.girights.org

The GI Rights Hotline

800 394 9544

THE ARMED SERVICES VOCATIONAL APTITUDE BATTERY

The Military offers over 4,100 jobs and may have the perfect occupation for you. If you are interested in finding out if your talents and abilities would fit into life in the Military, visit the ASVAB Web site at www.asvabprogram.com to learn more about the ASVAB multi-aptitude test. The ASVAB testing program is maintained by the Department of Defense and consists of eight individual tests. This free three-hour test can be given to students in grades 10, 11, and 12.

[*Career World*, April-May 2005]

Military Aptitude Test: Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?

1.25 million students in over 14,000 schools are given the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) each year. The ASVAB was developed by the U.S. Department of Defense (Ref. asvabprogram.com) as a recruiting tool and is an "aptitude" test designed and administered by the US military.

United States Army Recruiting Command Regulation 601-59 requires recruiters to be present during testing and serve as test proctors.

The scores derived from the ASVAB are useful to military recruiters for two reasons:

- The US Armed Forces uses the information to recruit students who take the test.
- Once a recruit has taken the ASVAB in high school and is in the recruiting office, she or he need not be tested further for placement purposes. The testing has already been done by the ASVAB!

Despite the military claims, the ASVAB is not designed to help students make informed career decisions. Instead, it is a covert-recruiting tool designed to lead promising young people directly into the military.

The ASVAB is Deceptive

According to Joe Flanagan, Army Education Service Officer, "The ASVAB is the 'wolf in sheep's clothing' that encourages stu-

dents to join the military." The ASVAB claims to be a "free" career interest test that the military markets to schools in place of more expensive interest tests. No correlation has been established between ASVAB testing scores and civilian career skills. After carefully examining the ASVAB, a US Congressperson said, "The ASVAB testing program has no proven value to anyone except the Armed Forces. I believe each community should make a conscious, careful decision whether it is willing to accept covert military recruiting activity carried out with the official sanction of the school as the price it must pay for this 'free testing service'. Flanagan confirms military deception: "Once they've filled out the chart, and know they're interested, we're ready to recruit them."

Here are Your Choices

1. Refuse to take the test
2. Refuse to sign the initial form that releases personal info. to the military
3. Demand the use of ASVAB "Option 8," as explained below.

When a student takes the ASVAB, she or he must first sign a document, which states the student's test scores may not be processed unless they sign the form. This releases the student's personal information (i.e., name, home, address, telephone number, social security number, test score, etc.) for use as a part of a computer listing for recruitment purposes. Recruiters often use the personal information to mount a high-pressure sales pitch, calling incessantly even after students and their families

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ASVAB (continued)

indicate that they are not interested. Although most students taking the ASVAB are minors, and the law does not consider their signature legally binding, the military considers this document legally binding.

If a school or individual decides to use the ASVAB, they should utilize **Option 8**. The option prevents students' names from being added to the military recruiting list. The military makes absolutely no mention of this very important option, and it is often purposely left out. Another option that the military intentionally fails to mention is that the ASVAB is a voluntary test that students can refuse to take.

The Whole Picture

Military recruiters who administer the ASVAB have a quota to meet, much like salespeople. As educators, counselors, and activists, our responsibility is to provide a complete view of career alternatives. Too often, military recruiters are allowed to present a one-sided picture of military life, thereby depriving students of a realistic perspective they need to make informed decisions.

Reference

Flounders, Anne, "What careers interest you?", *Career World*, April-May 2005.

How Parents Can Support Their Children

To keep the military's hands off your child, just say no to the ASVAB. Here's how:

1. Call your child's school and ask, "Will the ASVAB will be given?"
2. If the answer is yes, ask what the consequences will be for students who refuse to take it (there shouldn't be any).
3. Ask if the school will require written parental consent before students can take this military "aptitude" test, the way it does for field trips to museums, etc.
4. Ask what arrangements are provided for students not taking the test (what they'll be doing during the time when the test is being administered). The school should have an interesting learning or recreational experience planned for opt-out students, not something that feels like (and is) punishment (going to the office, sitting silently while others take the test, or being given busy work).
5. Ask what the procedure is for "opting out." Some schools require that the student go to the guidance office to sign an "opt out" statement. Students usually have to sign something stating their refusal to take the ASVAB, which may be accompanied by legal-sounding words, written or stated, such as "I hereby state that I am refusing to take the ASVAB aptitude test...." At some schools, the burden is on the parents ("let the buyer—parent—beware") to figure out what the ASVAB really is, and then write letters refusing consent for their children to take the test.
6. Take all steps required by the school to keep your child safe from the ASVAB scam.
7. If the burden is on the child to refuse the test (which can be very difficult due to peer pressure or adult insinuations that it's required), you'll need to reassure your child ahead of time that it really is safe to refuse. Sometimes what's said in opt-out procedures can intimidate students: "Do you realize that you are refusing to take an important test?," "All your classmates are taking this test; we have nothing for you to do while they're taking it," "Okay, but I hope you understand that if you don't take the test your aptitudes won't be on file," or even "Why don't you want to serve your country?"
8. Spread the word to all the parents and children you know. Educate them about the ASVAB's real purpose.
9. If you can, talk with other parents and sympathetic educators about arranging an ASVAB Parental Advisory, which could be a one-time talk at the next PTA meeting, or a discussion group announced at school and held in a nearby library.
10. Suggest that the school hold an honest informational session for all students on the ASVAB, its purpose, how the military could use students' information (now and in a military draft)—and how students can opt out of the test. Every school, if it's really doing its job, should encourage students to think for themselves and understand their rights. Schools should be places of learning, not tools of the Pentagon.

THE “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT”: OPTING OUT OF THE NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

ATTENTION PARENTS!

The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2002 **requires** high schools to release personal data on their students to military recruiters **unless written notice is given to the school** to withhold that information. If a parent/guardian fails to give written notice to withhold contact information, military recruiters will, at a minimum, be given your son's or daughter's: name, home address, and telephone number. Recruiters also have the right to demand that the school furnish cell-phone numbers and student e-mail addresses. Other information, such as participation in sports or extracurricular activities may also be demanded. In the experience of some Veterans, this helps recruiters “tailor” their approach to the particular student and also targets candidates who are more likely to enlist.

Parents/guardians must act promptly.

The Act further requires the school to furnish contact information to the military on each student soon after the start of the school year. The only way to prevent military recruiters from getting personal contact information on your child is by providing written notice to the school, immediately after the start of the school year, that you “Opt Out!”

Don't wait until the school notifies you!

Act immediately at the beginning of the school year when your son or daughter first enters high school. If your child is already in high school and you haven't opted out yet, **DO SO NOW!** The recruiters undoubtedly have your child's contact information but this will prevent them from getting it again (and again, and again) in the future. Recruiters will focus their efforts on the students closest to enlistment age (17 years and older) and those they deem to be the “best candidates” for enlistment. Close the door on the recruiters at the earliest opportunity.

To aid you in this effort, an “Opt Out” form is provided below. Make a copy of the “Opt Out” form for each high school student in your family. Complete the form and make a copy for your records. Mail or take the completed form to your child's school.

The “Opt Out” form provided in this *Guide* stipulates that the privacy directive is valid for the entire time your child is enrolled at the school. Nevertheless, it is advisable, and may be necessary, to complete a new “Opt Out” form at the beginning of each school year.

STUDENTS!

This section on opting out of the *No Child Left Behind Act* notification requirement is primarily oriented towards your parents/guardians because the overwhelming majority of high school students are considered minors. **If you are 18 years of age or older, or legally emancipated**, you can “Opt Out” on your own, with or without your parent's/guardian's consent or knowledge.

**STUDENT INFORMATION
PRIVACY DIRECTIVE**

Date: _____, 20____

Principal _____
 School _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____

Student's Name:
Student I.D. Number (if applicable):

Effective immediately, you are hereby notified that NO PERSONAL INFORMATION, of any kind, concerning my child shall be given, mailed, electronically transmitted, or otherwise distributed to any military recruiter or any person requesting such information for military recruitment purposes as is provided for under Paragraph 2, Subsection (a) of Section 9528 of Public Law 107-110. As parent or guardian, I reserve the exclusive right to determine whether or not my child shall receive literature or telephone or personal contact pertaining to military service.

Unless withdrawn or modified, in writing, by the undersigned, this privacy directive to withhold my child's personal information cannot be revoked or superseded, under any circumstance. **Furthermore, this directive shall remain in force throughout my child's tenure at this institution.**

Signed _____ Name _____
PARENT or GUARDIAN PRINTED or TYPED

Address _____

**STUDENT INFORMATION
PRIVACY DIRECTIVE**

Date: _____, 20____

Principal _____
 School _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____

Student's Name:
Student I.D. Number (if applicable):

Effective immediately, you are hereby notified that NO PERSONAL INFORMATION, of any kind, about me shall be given, mailed, electronically transmitted, or otherwise distributed to any military recruiter or any person requesting such information for military recruitment purposes as is provided for under Paragraph 2, Subsection (a) of Section 9528 of Public Law 107-110. I reserve to myself the exclusive right to determine whether or not I shall receive literature or telephone or personal contact pertaining to military service.

Unless withdrawn or modified, in writing, by the undersigned, this privacy directive to withhold my personal information cannot be revoked or superseded, under any circumstance. **Furthermore, this directive shall remain in force throughout my tenure at this institution.**

Signed _____ Name _____
STUDENT PRINTED or TYPED

Address _____

EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING IN THE MILITARY

Veterans earn less than non-veterans.

Perhaps one of the best measures of the economic impact of joining the military is the analysis of whether a person who enters the military, on average, earns more or less than a comparable non-veteran. In a comprehensive overview of 14 studies which analyzed this question, Stephen R. Barley of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University found that the average post-Vietnam War-era veteran will earn between 11% (Crane and Wise, 1987) and 19% (Rosen and Taubman, 1982) less than non-veterans from comparable socioeconomic backgrounds. According to a 1990 study by Bryant and Wilhite, the average veteran will earn 85 cents less per hour (about \$1700 less per year) than non-veteran peers. [<http://www.objector.org/before-you-enlist/myths.html>]

Military Training is Primarily for Military Jobs.

Above all, the military exists for war. Most soldiers will be trained to fight and kill: skills, which aren't marketable in the civilian world. For this reason, you're not likely to transfer military skills to a civilian career. The Medical Corps specialist, for instance, may get credit only for "first aid" when he or she applies for nursing school. Bryant and Wilhite found that veterans averaged only 1.78 months of training in 31 months of active duty. Mangum and Ball, Ohio State researchers who received



Your military service is over...now what?

funding from the military, found that only 12 percent of male veterans and 6 percent of female veterans surveyed made any use of skills learned in the military in their civilian jobs. Barley concludes,

"The evidence on rates of return to training and the probability of finding a job in one's chosen occupation, strongly suggests that, all else being equal, young people should look to sources of training other than the military if they wish to optimize their careers."

[<http://www.objector.org/before-you-enlist/myths.html>]

Military service does not pay off in future job earnings.

Recruiters promise that training will lead to better jobs in civilian life; however, most military training does not teach skills that are usable in civilian jobs. Even high-tech military job skills are not directly useful in the civilian market because they are very specialized and oriented toward warfare.

Recruiters often emphasize the high tech, state-of-the-art, sophisticated equipment that you will get to work with. While some soldiers are trained for highly skilled jobs, most of those jobs go to soldiers who were already trained, educated, or technically skilled **before** joining the military.

Many high-tech jobs are filled by civilian contractors who work for the military. In reality, few military assignments could be described as high-tech, although many of the job titles sound high-tech. For example, one US Army brochure includes assignments with titles such as: "combat engineering," "general

engineering," "supply and service," and "food service." These assignments offered by the military tend to be low-skill, manual labor. The armed forces simply do not have the time, the need, or the resources to train soldiers for highly skilled work.

Many civilian job-training programs offer better options than joining the military for training. For example, community colleges offer affordable two-year programs in a range of fields that can result in immediate, well-paid employment, such as: computer repair, graphic design, or medical technology. Local employers may have internships and job training programs, apprenticeships with trade unions. And, school-to-work agencies like the Job Center at the Private Industry Council (707-441-4600) can match your interests to appropriate employers who can pay you while you are learning skills to last a lifetime.

There are no job guarantees in the military. The military is not required to keep you in the job you trained for. The job placement that the recruiter promised you can be changed by the military. The actual job that one is assigned is determined by the military's needs.

After You Leave the Armed Forces

Soldiers are often discharged with no money to continue in the civilian world and no transferable job skills.

Unemployment lines are filled with veterans who are poorly qualified and lack useful job skills. Many veterans remain jobless for long periods and become part of the homeless and prison populations. Even those employed will remain behind civilian counterparts in income during their careers. *The Army Times* reported that over 50,000 unemployed veterans were on the waiting list for the military's "retraining" program. The Department of Veterans Affairs and Veterans of Foreign Wars both estimate that one-third of the homeless population are veterans. A significant number of veterans develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many turn to alcohol and drugs to relieve PTSD symptoms, and this hinders or destroys job performance and is a prime reason that many veterans are homeless.

Job Training Resources

Many communities have special government, private sector, or non-profit youth-training job programs. These opportunities help you get started in actual programs that interest you.

COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

College of the Redwoods (CR) has low tuition and classes that can lead to excellent, well paying jobs. Take advantage of CR's work study, scholarships and grants. The Academic Support Center (ASC) helps students reach their educational goals by developing their academic skills and encouraging them to become independent learners. In addition to responding to student requests for assistance, the ASC staff anticipates student needs and provides services such as individual and group tutoring, instructional handouts, workshops, and supplementary computer programs.

<http://www.redwoods.edu/FinancialAid/during.asp>

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

Community & Economic Development courses are not- for-credit classes offered at CR in addition to the college's academic program. Programs are offered in two areas: 1) Business and Professional Training Program which responds to the needs of the business community by providing job-related seminars and customized training. 2) Community Education provides activities which include vocational courses and special events.

<http://www.redwoods.edu/Departments/Community-Ed/index.asp>

HUMBOLDT REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAM

Humboldt Regional Occupational Program (HROP) offers tuition-free classes and on-the-job training providing entry level skills, skill upgrading if you're already employed, preparation for advanced training or education or help in getting a job. If you are at least 16 years old or currently enrolled as a junior or senior in high school, you can enroll. Courses are also available for adults. Call 445-7018 and ask about specific times for the course(s) you want to take. High School Students: Tell your counselor you want to enroll in HROP. <http://www.humboldt.k12.ca.us/wfp/hrop/index.php>

AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps is a network of local, state, and national service programs that connects more than 70,000 Americans each year in community service. AmeriCorps members serve with more than 2,000 nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based and community organizations. Since 1994, more than 400,000 men and women have provided needed assistance to millions of Americans across the nation through their AmeriCorps service. Full-time members who complete their service earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of \$4,725 to pay for college, graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans. Members who serve part-time receive a partial Award. Some AmeriCorps members may also receive a modest living allowance during their term of service. In Humboldt Co. call 839-9892.

<http://www.americorps.org/>

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Job Training Resources *(continued)*

CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC)

The California Conservation Corps is a workforce development program that offers young men and women the chance to serve their state and become employable citizens through life skills training and hard work in environmental conservation, fire protection, and emergency response. The CCC has both residential and non-residential programs and centers. The California Conservation Corps helps improve the lives—and prospects—of thousands of 18-25 year old Californians every year. In the process, the CCC improves the ecology of California's lands and rivers and contributes to the state's public safety. To find out more call 1-800-952-JOBS For Humboldt Co. call 839-9892.
<http://www.ccc.ca.gov/>

PEACE CORPS

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to the 1960s and John F. Kennedy. Since that time, more than 187,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have been invited by 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. Peace Corps Volunteers continue to help countless individuals who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

From practical benefits such as student loan deferment, career benefits like fluency in a foreign language, and the intangible benefits that come with making a difference in people's lives, there are a variety of rewards for the dedicated service of Volunteers. The Peace Corps provides Volunteers with a living allowance that enables them to live in a manner similar to the local people in their community. Returning from overseas requires some adjustment, so when you complete your service, the Peace Corps provides just over \$6,000 toward your transition to life back home. This money is yours to use as you wish: for travel, a vacation, making a move, or securing housing.
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm>

NOVA YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICE

The NOVA Youth Employment Office is a welcoming, information-rich environment where youth ages 14-24 can learn how to conduct an effective job search, research a career, access Internet and traditional job listings, use the resource center, find a volunteer opportunity, and much more.

NOVA Youth Employment Office
505 W. Olive Ave. Suite 550, Sunnyvale, CA, 94886
(408) 730-7232
<http://www.youthatwork.org>

YOUTHBUILD

This is a comprehensive youth and community development program, and an alternative school. YouthBuild offers job training, education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities to unemployed and out of school young adults, ages 16-24 through the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing in their own communities.

Youthbuild U.S.A. — West Coast Regional Office
1755 Broadway, Suite 584, Oakland, CA 946 12
(510) 663-4688
<http://www.youthbuild.org>

AMERICA'S JOB BANK

Computerized network linking the 2000 state Employment Service offices across the nation, providing job seekers with a vast pool of active job opportunities. Openings represent all types of work, most are in the private sector and are full-time. Search for jobs, create and submit a resume to the system. Conduct and save customized job searches.
<http://www.ajb.org>
<http://www.caljobs.ca.gov>

CAREER INFONET

Provides information including job market trends and wage figures, helping prospective job searchers to make better, more informed career decisions.
<http://www.acinet.org>

JOB CORPS

Job Corps is the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential education and job training program for at-risk youth, ages 16-24. Students who are admitted receive their training (academic, vocational, and social skills) at a selected Job Corps center. With good performance they can also receive advanced training.
Job Corps (800) 733-5627
<http://www.jobcorps.org>

PEPNET

The National Youth Employment Coalition, along with the U.S. Department of Labor and several private foundations, have put together the Promising and Effective Practices Network. Pepnet recognizes organizations which are particularly excellent at youth employment and training (especially economically disadvantaged youth). There are currently 43 recognized outstanding programs from around the U.S. in Pepnet.
<http://www.pepnet.org>

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

This department oversees job training for many people, including youth and economically disadvantaged. Training is afforded through grants to states for local training and employment programs. Program services include an assessment of an unemployed individual's needs and abilities and services, such as classroom training, on-the-job training, job-search assistance, work experience, counseling, basic skills training, and support services.

Office of Employment and Training Programs
Rm. N4469 U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington D.C. 20210
<http://www.doleta.gov>

The Labor Department's Office of Education and Training Administration list many youth job training programs at:
<http://www.doleta.gov/jobseekers>

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION AND WAR



Putting a face on "collateral damage"

With wars raging in Afghanistan and Iraq, at some point you probably wondered whether you could kill another person, or be part of war. If you realized that you couldn't kill or be a part of war, then you are a conscientious objector.

The laws of the United States require the government to recognize conscientious objectors (CO). However, the time to think about whether you are a CO is before you enlist. Yes, you can join the military and then realize that you cannot kill another person or support war and you may be classified a CO. However, the process is time consuming and complicated with an uncertain result. Too often an applicant for CO status will be shipped out while his or her paperwork is incomplete. Since a CO cannot take part in combat, the applicant will often refuse to ship. If so, he or she will face courts-martial, jail time and a dishonorable discharge. So, before you join the military decide where you stand on war and killing.

The Purpose of the Military

The military has one overriding purpose: To prepare for and fight wars. Every member of the armed forces, from medic to mechanic, is trained to fight and kill.

America's wars in the Middle East proved that the fighting and killing could begin very suddenly. You may enlist for money for college, for a job, for adventure, out of boredom or a desire to get away from home. However, once in the military you may be faced with participating in war. You owe it to yourself to think seriously about where and when it is justifiable to kill another person.

Who is the "Enemy?"

In war you may have to kill or witness the killing of a child, a mother, a father, or a whole family. This is not hypothetical. In modern warfare most of the casualties are civilians.

What about killing "enemy" combatants? American soldiers report going through the pockets of the dead "enemy" and finding pictures of their loved ones: girl friends, wives, children or extended family. To retain your humanity you must realize that the "enemy," whether com-

batant or noncombatant, is a living breathing human being like you, with similar fears, hopes and dreams.

Psychologists have discovered that it takes a lot to get one human being to kill another. According to Dr. Erich Fromm, there is an inborn human inhibition against killing those we are familiar with and have empathy with. There seems no, or a limited inhibition against killing the other, the stranger, the "enemy" [Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, New York, 1973). During training the military will try to make you think of the "enemy" as a nonperson, stranger, or other so that your natural reluctance to take a life is suppressed.

The military intentionally incites hatred, racism and bloodlust toward the "enemy." No one can participate in violence and remain either unscarred or indifferent whether they realize it at the time or not. Any harmful actions you take part in or witness will be forever with you. You will never forget the people you kill

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CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION *(continued)*

or see killed. For some, the weight of those memories is too heavy to bear. One consequence of exposure to killing and abuse is a high level of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in combat veterans. (See the section on PTSD.)

Think About It!

The decision to go to war is probably the most important decision a nation or person will ever make. It shouldn't be made lightly. Remember war is not a movie or a video game. You cannot turn it off when it gets too boring, or too horrifying. Charles Hutto, a U. S. soldier who participated in the massacre of hundreds of innocent men, women and children at My Lai in Vietnam had this

advice: "I was 19 years old, and I'd always been told to do what the grown-ups told me to do. But now I'll tell my sons, to use their own judgment, to forget about authority, to use their own conscience. I wish somebody had told me that before I went to Vietnam. I didn't know. Now I don't think there should be even a thing called war, 'cause it messes up a person's mind." *

*Cited in Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States 1492-Present* (Harper Collins, New York, NY, 2003). Of the officers involved in the My Lai massacre only Lieutenant William Calley was found guilty. Some believe it was unjust to single out Calley when, according to Vietnam vet, Colonel Oran Henderson, "Every unit of brigade size has its My Lai hidden someplace." The massacre at My Lai was only unique in details. Such is the nature of all war. Consider the massacre of 24 innocent Iraqis in Haditha by U. S. Marines that was subsequently covered up by the U. S. military. How many units in Iraq are hiding a Haditha?



SECTION II

LIFE IN THE MILITARY

MILITARY SERVICE CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH



Once in the military, you become government property, your ability to make choices is impaired. At times you will have no choice. You do what you are ordered to do, whether or not you like it, whether or not you believe it may be detrimental to your health, whether you think the order is just plain stupid, or all of the above. You will follow orders or face disciplinary action. Consider what has happened to many of those who only wanted to serve their country:

The Atomic Vets

Shortly after WWII the armed forces began incorporating nuclear weapons into their arsenals. They had little information about how atomic explosions would affect our own troops. How soon after an explosion could troops be moved into the targeted area? How much radiation could a service member withstand before becoming unable to fight?

To answer these questions, the Army exploded many nuclear weapons with thousands of enlisted men and junior officers placed in close proximity to the blast site. Typically, these human guinea pigs were given little or no protective gear or radiation measuring devices. About 250,000 military personnel participated in these crude experiments.

Most were ordered to take part. Few had any idea of the risks

they were being exposed to nor of the long-term health problems many would endure for the rest of their lives. Counting the participants involved in radiation testing performed in later years,

almost 800,000 personnel have been exposed. No comprehensive epidemiological study has ever been conducted on the Atomic Vets and fewer than 500 are receiving compensation for their injuries.

But that was in the 1950s, you say, surely the Military has learned from its past mistakes. If only that were true... Read on.

Exposure to Biological/Chemical Weapons

Starting in 1963, thousands of sailors and other military and civilian personnel were deliberately exposed to chemical and biological warfare agents during Project SHAD (Shipboard Hazard and Defense) which was part of a larger bio/chem weapons testing program known as Project 112. Most of the human subjects of this program were not advised that they would be subjected to some of the most deadly forms of poison in the military arsenal. They were neither told about the negative impacts to their short and long term health nor were they given effective protective gear in many cases.

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HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH *(continued)*

Deadly nerve gasses such as Sarin, VX, and biological agents for Q fever and rabbit fever were used as were many other 'less dangerous' agents meant to simulate more toxic substances. Unfortunately, many of the dangers of the simulants were not recognized at the time and many caused cancer and other major health problems on their own. To compound matters, the test subjects were administered experimental vaccines for some of the diseases they were to be subjected to yet these vaccines had never been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. It took almost 40 years for the government to admit to the truth about these tests and it did so only when it was forced to. By then, many of the test subjects had long since died.

Exposure to Agent Orange

From 1961 on into the 1970s, hundreds of thousands of US military personnel and millions of Southeast Asian civilians were exposed to the dioxin-containing defoliant called Agent Orange. Dioxin is the most toxic man-made chemical, second in toxicity only to radioactive waste. It can cause cancer in those exposed to it and birth defects in their offspring.

During the Vietnam War US aircraft sprayed 19 million gallons of Agent Orange primarily in Southeast Asia. There is no effective defense against the deadly poison and contact with it can be made long after the spraying ended. Residual effects of the poisoned ground continue to this day, causing birth defects and chronic health problems for the people of Southeast Asia.



Specialist Robert Acosta describing the recurring nightmare of the attack that cost him his hand when his Humvee was ambushed.

Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

Returning Vietnam Veterans soon began to experience illnesses many believed were caused by exposure to Agent Orange. They began petitioning the Veterans Administration (VA) for redress for their suffering as early as 1975 but were repeatedly rebuffed.

Eighteen years later a report by the National Academy of Sciences proved conclusively that

exposure to Agent

Orange was linked to a

variety of cancers. The VA was thus forced to reverse itself and began awarding disability benefits and medical treatment to those who were fortunate enough to have survived their illnesses. Tragically, it wasn't until 2004 that a decision by the US Court of Appeals awarded disability benefits and treatment to members of the "Blue Water" Navy; those who served offshore but near enough to be affected by Agent Orange spraying along the shorelines of Vietnam.



*25,000 maimed and injured...
...and counting.*

Exposure to Radiologic Weaponry

In the 1990s, once again hundreds of thousands of Gulf War troops were exposed to a toxic, cancer causing and radioactive substance. This time it was the residue of expended depleted uranium (DU) munitions. See the DU section in this Resource Guide for more of the ugly details.

Exposure to Unapproved Vaccines

In both the 1991 and 2003 Gulf Wars, hundreds of thousands of military personnel were forced to take the PB (pyrodostigmine) vaccine for supposed prevention from the effects of the nerve gas Soman that was allegedly in the hands of the Iraqis. (There is no evidence that Iraq had supplies of Soman.) PB had never been approved by the US Food and Drug Agency and it was never tested on women.

Ordered Into Combat with Inadequate Protective Gear

Starting in 2003, military personnel were shipped to Iraq with rolling equipment that lacked armor plating adequate to withstand homemade bombs (IEDs). Many service members weren't even issued Kevlar flak jackets to protect their vital body parts and organs. Yet absence of this vital protective gear did not excuse service members from combat duty exposing them to fatal and near-fatal injuries that need not have happened.

Increasing Number of Cases of Mental Trauma

The nature of the current Gulf wars has caused a major increase in the number of cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among the service members on duty there. PTSD is the psychological disorder formerly known as Shell Shock whose effects are severe and can be permanent. PTSD victims were often excused from combat duty and prescribed extensive therapy. Today,

many PTSD patients are simply given some medication and returned for extended assignment to the same theater that gave them PTSD in the first place. See the section about PTSD in this Resource Guide for full details.

The List Goes On

Many other examples of the Military's disdain for the health and safety of large numbers of the young men and women who volunteered to serve their country have not been listed here for reasons of space. That includes the grisly saga of 60,000 WWII troops who were guinea pigs for mustard gas testing. Equally as sad as the accounts of service members being conscripted for these tests without being given adequate information about them is the stonewalling of their government when later in life they try to find out what caused their chronic health problems or what killed their comrades. Many veterans have learned the sorry truth that they simply cannot count on their government doing the right thing for them.

DEPLETED URANIUM PRIMER

Radioactivity on the Battlefield

If you are thinking of joining the military you should know that you could be exposed to radiation on the battlefield simply by breathing because the United States military uses radioactive weapons on the battlefield. These munitions are made from nuclear waste called depleted uranium. Depleted uranium (DU) is a radioactive,* chemically toxic, heavy metal.

What is the military's position regarding DU? *"Neither the Air Force nor the Army has publicly presented an analysis of the health risks to soldiers and to others who inhale or ingest radioactive fallout particles of DU, or the health risks of living in an environment contaminated with DU after these munitions have been fired: these are the real safety issues they ignore.*

Furthermore a General Accounting Office report to Congress states, '...[A]rmy officials believe that DU protective methods can be ignored during battle and other life-threatening situations because DU-related health risks are greatly outweighed by the risks of combat" (Metal of Dishonor, Dr. Leonard Dietz, pp. 146-147).

Chemically Toxic

The half life of DU is 4.5 billion years. If you had 10 pounds of DU, in 4.5 billion years you would have 5 pounds. Over billions of years DU breaks down into lead. Think of lead poisoning. DU is a heavy metal which has a chemical toxicity similar to lead. If one is exposed to an acute dose of DU (see health effects) one

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*DU is 60% as radioactive as natural uranium. Some uranium atoms are more radioactive than other uranium atoms and are partially removed from natural uranium to make enriched uranium, which is why what's left over is called "depleted" - but it is still radioactive. DU is 99.75% uranium 238. One gram of U 238 emits ionizing radiation at the rate of 12,430 disintegrations per second. As the U 238 breaks down or "decays" into daughter products, or "progeny", these decay products also emit radiation so that after 30 weeks one gram of DU and its progeny emits over 36,000 disintegrations per second. Just one milligram of DU (1/1000 of a gram - barely visible to the human eye) in one year emits 450 million alpha particles, 900 million beta particles and 900 million gamma rays. For reference, a pound is 453.59 grams. That's 453,590 milligrams. U 238 emits alpha particles, which cannot penetrate your skin, but the decay products emit beta particles which do penetrate skin.

DEPLETED URANIUM PRIMER (continued)

might feel sick due to the chemical or heavy metal toxicity. Radiation generally is not detected by human senses.

DU Burns On Impact

DU is pyrophoric, which means it has a propensity to burn. Why is this significant? When DU burns it creates a toxic dust. When the dust is inhaled there is an internal exposure. What's the difference between an internal or external exposure? If you stand next to a DU shell there is some radiation, but when you walk away the exposure is over. However when radioactive particles lodge in the lungs exposure can go on for years or decades. When a DU projectile hits a hard target, the projectile burns releasing up to 70% of the mass of the projectile as tiny micron-sized airborne particles. This aerosolized DU dust at dense concentrations looks like smoke. At lower concentrations the radioactive particles are invisible. These particles can be inhaled, sticking in the lungs, constantly exposing nearby cells to radiation. Some soluble particles move through the blood stream affecting organs or bone, some is excreted.

Although DU is much more dangerous once it is dust in the air, the munitions themselves are radioactive. "The U.S. Army states that at the surface of the DU warhead, the radiation levels can be 250 millirems per hour. For someone stationed next to the warhead, this means about a chest x-ray per day. By contrast, background radiation on the surface of the earth is 100 millirems per year.... Thus, someone sitting next to the shells will absorb in just one hour 2.5 times the normal yearly exposure to radiation" (*Metal of Dishonor*, Dr. Michio Kaku, p. 114). U.S. tanks are armored with depleted uranium. Tank crews are continually irradiated by their own armor. "After just 32 continuous days, or 64 twelve-hour days, the amount of radiation a tank driver receives to his head will exceed the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual standard for public whole-body exposure to man-made sources of radiation. Unfortunately, U.S. tank crews were not monitored for radiation exposure during the Persian



Gulf War" (*Metal of Dishonor*, Dan Fahey, pp. 28-29).

Health Effects

DU exposure risks include cancer, leukemia, kidney and liver disease, thyroid problems, respiratory problems, fatigue, motor control problems and to the children of those exposed, increased infant mortality and increased birth defects. Researchers reported a 500 percent increase in cancer in Iraq six years after the use of DU in Gulf War I. After exposure to radiation, cancer can take 5 to 60 years to develop.

The higher the exposure the greater the risk. No exposure is without risk. "A micron-sized particle can stay lodged in the lungs for years and even decades, bathing the surrounding tissue with a constant stream of gamma, beta and alpha radiation" (Dr. Michio Kaku, nuclear physicist, "Depleted Uranium: Huge Quantities of Dangerous Wastes,"

in *Metal of Dishonor*, p. 113).

Dr. Leonard Dietz, a physicist at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory from 1955 to 1983, stated that a dose in "the tens of milligrams range due to inhalation" is an acute dose. Dr. Dietz further states that DU aerosol particles "can be transported great distances by wind action in the atmosphere" (*Metal of Dishonor*, p. 136).

Carol Picou, Sergeant First Class worked with the 41st Combat Support Hospital in Gulf War I. She was along the "Highway of Death" among vehicles targeted with DU rounds. She is sick. "When I was in Iraq I started noticing these black specks all over my skin, so I reported it. My health started changing. I was getting sick. I couldn't control my bowels and my bladder anymore...I said to my husband, something is wrong with me, I don't feel the same, my brain doesn't feel the same, my body doesn't feel the same. Something happened over there, and I knew it wasn't combat stress because that war was so quick and so rapid. I have been in worse situations than that war" (*Metal of Dishonor*, pp. 44-45). Carol Picou tested positive for exposure to DU but she had to call her congressman to be tested.

Low Level Radiation Exposure

Dr. Abram Petkau, of the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment in Canada, in 1972 experimented with the breakdown of cell membranes from radiation exposure at two different rates. He discovered that at 26 rads (a rad is a measure of radiation) a minute (fast-dose rate) it took 3,500 rads to destroy a cell membrane, but at 0.001 rad per minute (slow-dose rate) the cell membrane was broken after an exposure of only 0.7 rad. How big a difference is that? $3,500/0.7 = 5000$. So, it took 5000 times more radiation at the fast-dose rate to accomplish the same damage done by the slow-dose rate. One cannot dismiss the potential damage done by constant exposure to low level radiation. An internal exposure is constant and will be low or high depending on the exposure, but even if the exposure is low such an exposure cannot be dismissed as trivial or without risk.

Death and Disability Rates

In World War II casualty rates (death and disability) were around 5 percent. In the Vietnam War around 10 percent. From the first Gulf War over one-half (50 percent) of U.S. soldiers have reported serious illness and 30 percent are chronically ill. These high rates have multiple causes. Exposure to DU is suspected. Modern battlefields without question have hidden dangers that can effect both military and civilian populations for years to come.

How Much DU Has Been Used?

In the first Gulf War estimates of DU used vary from 300 tons to 800 tons. In the second Gulf War estimates vary from under 200 tons to 2,200 tons. The lowest estimates used are large. A-10 "Warthog" jet planes fired 940,000 thirty millimeter DU shells in Gulf War I, each shell weighing about two-thirds of a pound. The Warthog is capable of firing 4,200 rounds per minute. Tank rounds are heavier. The 105 millimeter tank round carries approximately 4.8 pounds of DU. The 120 millimeter round has 10.7 pounds of DU. With a half life of 4.5 billion years the problem we have created will not go away. Continued use of DU projectiles will only increase concentrations of radioactive material in the air. Once DU dust is released into the environment it contaminates the air, water and soil. DU dust cannot be cleaned up or destroyed. The dust will travel anywhere the wind blows.

Since the half life of DU is 4.5 billions years, modern battlefields and surrounding areas remain dangerous to the health of civilian and military personnel long after the battle is concluded. The half life of a radioactive isotope is a measurement of its mass, not its radioactivity. In 4.5 billion years DU will be as radioactive as it is today only there will be one-half as much. It should be understood, however, that the "daughter products" that result from the decay will create highly radioactive beta and gamma radiation by-products during DU's lifetime.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

DU munitions have been defined as both a weapon of mass destruction and a dirty bomb. Currently no international treaty specifically bans DU munitions. However attorney Karen Parker, who served on the UN Commission on Human Rights, determined DU munitions violates humanitarian law.

Rules violated:

- The effect of a weapon must be limited to the actual field of combat.
- The weapon must not continue to harm or kill after the war has ended.
- The weapon must not be unduly inhumane.
- The weapon must not cause long-lasting, wide-spread environmental damage.

DU munitions fail all four tests.

For additional information on Depleted Uranium see the following web sites:

Veterans For Peace, Chapter 56

www.vfp56.org/DU.html

International Depleted Uranium Study Team

www.idust.net

Military Toxics Project

www.miltoxproj.org

International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons

www.bandepleteduranium.org

WISE Uranium Project

www.wise-uranium.org

Uranium Medical Research Center

www.umrc.net

Traprock Peace Center

www.traprockpeace.org

Uranium Weapons Conference

www.uraniumweaponsconference.de

For books on Depleted Uranium, see "Suggested Reading."

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (P.T.S.D.)



The horrors of war often come back to haunt soldiers after they have returned home.

Many veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have already shown symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, most commonly known as "PTSD." PTSD has contributed to a high rate of depression and a significant number of suicides among both active duty personnel and veterans. Until the last couple of decades, PTSD was not known about nor understood by most Americans. Vietnam Veterans brought it to the public eye when many veterans were haunted by the war. Previously, this condition was called "shell shock" or "battle fatigue." The American Psychiatric Association calls PTSD an anxiety disorder. PTSD begins with an extremely traumatic event that feels life-threatening to the victim. It can be caused by extreme child abuse, a natural disaster, a serious accident, a rape, seeing somebody killed, and/or from the experience of war. Not every war veteran develops PTSD; it is hard to predict who will have problems later.

These traumatic situations can cause permanent changes in human brain chemistry, especially if traumatic events happen repeatedly. The brain has a natural defense system that transmits fear signals through cells which release adrenaline to enable the person to act quickly when in danger. Repetition of extreme fear strengthens these cellular connections and these modified connections are irreversible.

After the war, the veteran may know that he or she has changed as a result of the war but may not recognize or want to admit

that something is wrong. PTSD comes in many forms not understood by most people. Among the most common symptoms are depression, anger, regret, being confrontational, anxiety, chronic pain, compulsion, delusions, grief,

guilt, dependence, loneliness, sleep disorders, suspiciousness/paranoia, low self-esteem, emotional numbness, nightmares, flashbacks and extreme startle responses.

The veteran needs counseling to learn how to adjust to life with PTSD, and medication, while it can cause serious problems on its own, is often necessary to control anxiety, depression, and insomnia. Sadly, four out of five Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who screen positive for combat-related stress disorders are not being referred for treatment by the Pentagon according to a recent government report (*Army Times*, May 22, 2006).

Many of those who do not seek help or who are unable to get help, end up self-medicating with drugs and alcohol to escape their symptoms. Continual self-medicating can lead to addiction, homelessness, and if left untreated - death - often by suicide. Veterans are over-represented in the homeless population, about one-third of the homeless are veterans. Large numbers of veterans have died on the streets of America over the years and have become the unknown casualties of war.

It is important to emphasize that PTSD lasts a lifetime. You simply cannot predict what will happen to you during your military service.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE MILITARY

"The American people are infected with racism—that is the peril. Paradoxically, they are also infected with democratic ideals—that is the hope."

— Martin Luther King Jr. (quoted in Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68*)

Racism and discrimination, endemic in society, plagues our military, past and present. As one black PFC put it in 1969: "You should see for yourself how the black man is being treated over here. And the way we are dying. When it comes to rank we are left out. When it comes to special privileges we are left out. When it comes to patrols, operations and so forth, we are first." African-Americans were sent into dangerous "patrols, operations and so forth" nearly always by white officers. Of the 380 combat battalion commanders in Vietnam in 1967 only two were black. (Quotation and statistics cited in William L. VanDeburg, *The New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975*.)

By 2006, the power relationships of race have changed little. While one-third of the enlistees are people of color in today's military, 89 percent of the officers are white (Center on Conscience and War, *Combat-Related Jobs*). Disproportionate numbers of African-Americans and Latinos face courts martial and receive bad discharges.



BAGHDAD, APRIL 8, 2003—A boy watches his dying mother on the emergency room floor of Kindi Hospital after his brother and sister were killed when a missile landed on their house in the eastern part of Baghdad. Doctors who believed they could do nothing to save the woman moved on to patients who could be helped. Iraqi civilian casualties at hospitals in the capital reached a peak as U.S. forces slowly gained control of the city on the ground. Deep racism is one of the factors that allows the lives of civilians to be so devalued during war.

PHOTO CREDIT: Kael Alford / Panos Pictures

Part of the reason is their reaction to the use of racism and discrimination as tools for training our military.

The New York Times reports that despite a policy of zero tolerance for recruiting members of hate-groups such people are showing up in military units. Scott Barfield, a Defense Department investigator claims that "recruiters are knowingly allowing neo-Nazis and white supremacists to join the armed forces and commanders don't remove them from the military even after we positively identify them as extremists or gang members. They don't want to make a big deal about neo-Nazis in the military because then parents who are already worried about their kids signing up and dying in Iraq are going to be even more reluctant about their kids enlisting."

Partly the problem with not enforcing the Department of Defense's zero tolerance policy towards accepting racist members of hate groups is an unacknowledged acceptance of racism as a means of training our armed forces. Racism and discrimination are institutionalized as the primary method of revving up hatred and bloodlust. People identified as the enemy are routinely dehumanized by the use of

racially charged names and labels. When asked about the practice of training our soldiers to hate through the use of racism and discrimination, conservative commentator Michael Savage commented: "We need racist stereotypes right now of our enemy in order to encourage our warriors to kill the enemy."

WOMEN AND THE MILITARY: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE



Spc. Swift, facing a redeployment to Iraq while serving under the command of the same individuals that allowed her to be raped and sexual harassed, suffered a breakdown due to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and went absent without leave rather than subject herself to the horrors she experienced during her first tour of duty.

PHOTO CREDIT: AP / Ryan Gardner

As racial stereotypes abound in the military, so does sexual stereotypes, harassment and assault. Often men use rank to exploit women. Women who complain about harassment have been labeled lesbians. It is a fact that women in the military are more likely than men to be discharged for homosexuality.

In 2004, over 150 women who attended the Air Force Academy claimed that for over a decade their reports of being raped or sexually assaulted were routinely ignored and they were encouraged to keep quiet. A recent survey found that 30 percent of women reported being victims of rape or attempted rape while in the military. Seventy-five percent report being sexually harassed (*Reuters Health*, 3/24/03).

The military is not necessarily a place where a young female recruit is safe. These are the grim realities facing the young American men and women who serve in our armed services. If we are ever to meet the challenge of evolving as a species at the very least we must demand that our military begin to think, talk and act professionally in their gender and racial relationships. Ultimately, we must rethink our use of racism, hatred and misogyny as tools for training those tasked with defending our country.

SECTION III

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

LOCAL RESOURCES IN HUMBOLDT & MENDOCINO COUNTIES

Veterans For Peace, Chapter 22
P. O. Box 69, Garberville, CA 95542-0069
(707) 923.2638
www.humboldt.net/~veterans/Chapter22/

Veterans For Peace, Humboldt Bay Chapter 56
P. O. Box 532, Bayside, CA 95524-0532
(707) 822-4975
www.vfp56.org

Veterans For Peace, Mendocino County, Chapter 116
Patrick Tate, Willits, CA, Email: pstate@sonic.net
(707) 459-4486

G.I. Rights Hotline
(707) 826-0165
(800) FYI-95GI / (800) 394-9544
www.girights.org

Mendo-Lake Draft Counseling Network
(707) 937-1316
E-mail: silermfc@mc.org

SOURCES / REFERENCES

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO)
405 - 14th Street #205
Oakland, CA 94612
1515 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(800) 665-7682 (Philadelphia)
www.objector.org

Center on Conscience & War
1830 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington DC 20009
(800) 379-2679
www.centeronconscience.org

Citizen Soldier
267 Fifth Avenue #901
New York, NY 10016
www.citizen-soldier.org

FAME/Finding Alternatives to Military Enlistment
www.famedetroit.org

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
770 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003
(212) 982-9699
www.optruth.org

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW)
www.ivaw.org

Military Free Zone
c/o Underground Action Alliance
P. O. Box 7591
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
www.militaryfreezone.org

Mothers Against The Draft
P. O. Box 656
Sparks, NV 89432
(775) 356-9009
www.mothersagainstthedraft.org

SOURCES / REFERENCES *(continued)*

National Lawyers Guild

143 Madison Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016
(212) 679-5100
www.nlgmltf.org

No Draft, No Way

39 West 14th Street, No. 206
New York, NY 10011
(212) 633-6646
www.nodraftnoway.org

Resource Center for Nonviolence

515 Braodway
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 423-1626
www.rcnv.org

Think First

P.O. Box 641163
San Jose, CA 95164-1163
48 South 7th Street
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 998-8504
www.justthinkfirst.org

Traprock Peace Center

103A Keets Road
Deerfield, MA 01342
(413) 773-7427
www.traprockpeace.org

The Smedley Butler Society

www.warisaracket.org

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. (VVAW)

P. O. Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640
www.vvaw.org

Veterans For Peace, Inc. (VFP)

216 South Meramec Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63105
(314) 725-6005
www.veteransforpeace.org

SUGGESTED READING

- Andreas, Joel. **Addicted to War: Why the U.S. Can't Kick Militarism**, 3rd ed. Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004. ISBN: 1-904859-01-1. (Order at: www.veteransforpeace.org)
- Butler, Smedley D., Major General, US Marine Corps (Retired), **War is a Racket**. Gainesville, FL: Crises Press, 1995. ISBN: 0-9640119-3-X. (Order at: www.veteransforpeace.org)
- Catalinotto, John and Sara Flounders (Editors). **Metal of Dishonor: Depleted Uranium: How the Pentagon Radiates Soldiers & Civilians with DU Weapons**, ISBN: 0-9656916-0-8.
- Ensign, Tod. **America's Military Today: The Challenge of Militarism**. New York: The New Press, 2004. ISBN: 1-56584-883-7.
- Gunther, Siegwart-Horst. **Uranium Projectiles: Severely Maimed Soldiers, Deformed Babies, Dying Children**, ISBN: 3-89484-805-7.
- Hedges, Chris. **What Every Person Should Know About WAR**, New York: Free Press, 2003. ISBN: 0-7432-5512-7.
- Morizumi, Takashi. **Children of the Gulf War: A Different Nuclear War**. ISBN4-9901380-1-5.
- Tashiro, Akira. **Discounted Casualties: The Human Cost of Depleted Uranium**. ISBN: 4-88517-301-9 C0036.
- Welsome, Eileen. **The Plutonium Files: America's Secret Medical Experiments in the Cold War**. ISBN: 0-385-31954-1.
- Weill-Greenberg, Elizabeth (Editor). **10 Excellent Reasons Not to Join the Military**. New York: The New Press, 2004. ISBN: 1-59558-066-2.
- Zinn, Howard. **A People's History of the United States 1492-Present**. New York: Harper Collins, 2003, ISBN: 0-06-052837-0.

Stuck Between Iraq and a Hard Place?

Active Duty, Guard, Reserves?

We can help with **discharges**
such as:

- Hardship
- Conscientious Objection
- Don't Ask, Don't Tell and
Homosexual Conduct
- Entry Level Separation
- Medical
- Psychological

AWOL or UA?

Experiencing hazing, harassment,
discrimination or sexual assault?

We can help.

You can get out of the
Delayed Enlistment Program!



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network of **nonprofit**,
non-governmental
counseling agencies that
provides information to
members of the military about
discharges, grievance and
complaint procedures,
and other civil rights.

**The service is free.
The call is confidential.**



www.girights.org

The GI Rights Hotline

800 394 9544