

Information about the JAMRS Database (and JAMRS opt-out letter on page 5)

From: <https://www.nyclu.org/en/information-about-jamrs-database>

JAMRS/DoD Site: <http://jamrs.defense.gov/Recruiting-Database/> (Note the bullet: “Singular control of the database aids the Services in removing individuals from mailing lists who do not want to receive information from the Military.”)

In 2005, the Pentagon announced in the Federal Register the existence of the JAMRS Database—a massive registry of 30 million Americans between the ages of 16 and 25 for military recruitment purposes. First authorized in 2002, the JAMRS program collects information on young people from a variety of sources, including the Selective Service, Departments of Motor Vehicles, and commercial data brokers.

The Defense Act of 1982 gave the Department of Defense permission to gather information for recruitment purposes but set limits on what type of information could be maintained. For example, the Defense Act limited the database to only include students over 17 years old or in the eleventh grade or higher, only contain "directory information" (i.e. name, school, contact info), and only allowed the Pentagon to keep the information for a maximum of three years.

In practice, the JAMRS database violated the Defense Act in a number of troubling ways. The JAMRS database included much more than directory information: the Department of Defense was collecting phone numbers, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, social security numbers, racial and ethnic data, grade point averages, college intentions, and height and weight information. Also, the database included all sixteen-year-olds and the Department of Defense was keeping information for five years.

In response to these violations, the NYCLU filed a lawsuit against the Department of Defense in 2006 (*Hanson v. Rumsfeld*) which resulted in a settlement forcing the DoD to stop collecting Social Security Numbers, keep student information for only three years, restrict the ages of students included in the database, and maintain better privacy standards for student information. Also, the Department of the Defense clarified the procedure for opting out of the database.

While the JAMRS database still has many troubling implications for students' privacy, there is a way to keep the military from harassing you or your child.

JAMRS FAQs

Joint Advertising Market Research Studies (JAMRS)



In 2005, the Pentagon announced the existence of the JAMRS Database - a massive registry of 30 million Americans between the ages of 16 and 25 for military recruitment purposes. JAMRS stands for the "Joint Advertising Market Research Studies." The JAMRS database is funded by the Department of Defense with the goal of maximizing recruitment efforts. It contains personal information for potentially hundreds of thousands of young New Yorkers. JAMRS Opt-Out Form. (Word document)

Frequently Asked Questions about the JAMRS Database

1. What type of information is kept in the JAMRS database? The JAMRS database includes information such as name, date of birth, gender, mailing address, e-mail address, race and ethnicity, telephone number, high school name, graduation date, Grade Point Average, college intent, military interest, field of study, and the ASVAB Test score.

2. Why does the military collect data on race and ethnicity? The military has long focused its recruitment efforts on areas with high populations of people of color and low-income communities. In our lawsuit the NYCLU sought to compel the Department of Defense (DOD) to cease gathering information on race and ethnicity, yet the military refused to stop. The NYCLU believes the DOD's resistance stems from the military's on-going efforts to target racial and ethnic minorities, especially from Latino and African-American communities, for aggressive recruitment campaigns. [Click here](#) to take a look at some of the military's training materials for recruiters on how to attract Latino and African-American recruits. Some may consider it to be quite racist. They have since been removed from both the DoD [and](#) this NYACLU website).

3. How long does such information stay in the JAMRS database? According to the Department of Defense's Privacy Act Statement of January 2007, records are kept in the JAMRS database for no more than three years.

4. How does the Department of Defense get my information? The Department of Defense has many ways of acquiring your information for the JAMRS database. Much of the information is obtained by spending millions of

dollars purchasing information from private data brokers, particularly marketing companies that specialize in collecting information about youth. In addition, the military collects information that individuals voluntarily contribute on recruitment brochures or questionnaires and buys information from the Department of Motor Vehicle, the Selective Service System, the College Board, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB test), among other places.

‘5. Isn't the JAMRS database illegal?

The NYCLU filed a lawsuit against the Department of Defense in 2006 (Hanson v. Rumsfeld) claiming the unconstitutionality of the JAMRS database. We succeeded in getting a settlement forcing the DOD to stop collecting Social Security Numbers, keep student information for only three years, restrict the ages of students included in the database, and maintain better privacy standards for student information. Also, the Department of the Defense clarified the procedure for opting out of the database. The Department of Defense updated those procedures in January of 2011.

6. What does the Department of Defense do with the data it compiles? The information is used by the military to recruit young people for the armed services. It can only to be used for purposes of military recruitment and cannot be shared with any other departments.

7. How can I keep my information out of the JAMRS Database?Technically, there is no way to keep your personal information out of the JAMRS database. However, if you fill out the opt out letter (page 5) and send it to the JAMRS headquarters, the Department of Defense will is supposed to keep your name in a "suppression file." Your information will be inaccessible to recruiters and remain sealed in the suppression file.

8. Do I need a parent's signature to opt out of the JAMRS Database? No. If you are older than 18 years old, you do not need a parent's signature. If you are under the age of 18, you do need a parent's signature.

9. How often do I need to opt out of JAMRS? You should only need to opt out of the JAMRS database once. If you change addresses, however, you should send a new opt-out letter.

10. I thought I already opted out of military recruitment by turning a form into my high school office. Shouldn't the military already be prevented from getting my personal information? The military gathers information from a wide array of sources. One source is information gathered

under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which allows recruiters to request directory information (name, address, phone number) of eleventh and twelfth grade students from the Department of Education. The NCLB information is completely separate from the JAMRS information. If you opt out of NCLB and are still being contacted by the military then your information is probably contained in the JAMRS database. You must opt out of **BOTH NCLB and JAMRS.**

11. What can I do to spread the word about JAMRS? Not very many people know the huge scope of the JAMRS database or even that it exists at all. The only way for young people to keep their personal information private from recruiters is to opt out. Here are some things you can do to spread the word:

- Tell your friends and family! The best way to get somebody to take action on anything is if the information comes from somebody they trust and who cares about them. Make sure your friends and family opt out of the JAMRS database.
- Ask your teacher or principal to hand out opt out forms to the whole school
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper.
- Alert a local sports team, religious youth group, PTA meeting, or school club about the JAMRS database and their ability to opt out.

SAMPLE JAMRS OPT-OUT LETTER

[MM/DD/YYYY]

Joint Advertising, Marketing Research & Studies(JAMRS)

ATTN: Survey Project Officer

Suite 06J25

4800 Mark Center Drive

Alexandria, VA 22350-4000

Dear Direct Marketing Program Officer:

Please remove all information and data regarding the following individual from the JAMRS military recruitment database:

Full Name: [First Name Last Name]

Date of Birth: [MM/DD/YYYY]

Address: [Street Number, Apartment Number]

City: [City]

State: [State]

Zip:[ZIP Code]

I believe that the JAMRS database is an intrusion into my family's privacy and the Department of Defense should not be compiling this information.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(parent or legal guardian if individual is under 18 years old).