

## MONEY FOR COLLEGE

A lot of people believe the military offers recruits a free college education. But tuition benefits aren't free—they are what you work for as a soldier. Nor are the GI bill education benefits guaranteed. In fact, most recruits receive much less financial aid for college than the ads promise. This can happen to you if:

- Ⓢ **You receive a less than fully honorable discharge.** About 25% of soldiers do. If you do, you will lose all GI bill benefits.
- Ⓢ **You leave the military early.** This happens to one-third of all recruits, and means greatly reduced benefits.
- Ⓢ **You want to go to college outside your home state.** The military will only cover part of your tuition there.
- Ⓢ **You do not qualify for or accept assignment to a job the military has trouble filling.**

While it is possible to get help financing your college education through the military, there are a lot of conditions, and you will pay for the help with eight years of your life. Be sure you have checked into the many alternatives for college grants, scholarships, and other aid before you enlist.

Begin by visiting our web site at [www.nnomy.org](http://www.nnomy.org) for resources.

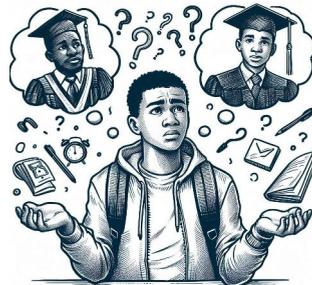
## JOB TRAINING

The military sells job training as an attractive benefit to recruits. And you may in fact get job training—for a job in the military. Many military jobs give you little or no experience that would help you get a civilian job later. Or you may not get the training you were promised at all, because the enlistment contract says the military can assign you to any job they choose.

Then, too, while you are serving out your time in the military, other people your age are in college or getting work experience. This helps to explain why **the unemployment rate for young veterans is two times as high** as for others their age who did not enlist.

## PERSONAL FACTORS

Some people find themselves in difficult personal situations and think that joining the military will help them to escape their problems. But enlisting often just makes things worse. At best, you may discover that signing up for military duty is a long-term solution to what may be a very temporary problem. Enlisting is a serious, life-changing decision. Don't make it when you are upset or confused. And don't let pressure from your family or others rush you into a choice you may regret.



## WOMEN IN UNIFORM

Women who join the military are often told they will not be sent into combat. The truth is, women are deployed to combat zones and often risk death or injury. More than 100 female troops have died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and over 600 have been wounded. Women in the military also face the threat of sexual harassment and rape. According to government surveys, **30% of women in the military are sexually assaulted.**



## WAR

Have you been led to believe you won't be sent to war because...

- ? **You were promised a specialized non-combat job?**
- ? **You are female?**
- ? **You are enlisting in the National Guard?**
- ? **You are enlisting in the Reserves?**
- ? **You are training to be an officer?**

The reality is that people in all of those groups have seen combat. Remember, the **main purpose of the military is to fight wars.** believe in fighting to defend your family or country, you may be ordered to fight when you think it is wrong to do so. Once you enlist, you can't choose.

Before you sign up, it's important to ask yourself some hard questions:

- ? **Would I risk my life for somebody else's cause?**
- ? **Am I willing to carry out missions I think are wrong?**
- ? **Could I support actions that may cause terrible destruction and loss of civilian lives?**
- ? **Am I ready to kill or be killed?**

If your answer to any of these is no, you're not alone, and you're not a coward or a bad American. There are many ways to serve your country besides joining the military.

## SERVING YOUR COUNTRY

There are a lot of good people who enlist in the military for the best of reasons. Like them, you may want to serve others and make a difference in the world. Once you enlist, however, you may discover—too late—that military service is not what you had in mind. Visit our web site at [Peacefulcareers.org](http://Peacefulcareers.org) and find out about kinds of community service without causing harm to yourself or others.



## THE MILITARY AND YOUR FUTURE

Even after you complete your term of enlistment, your service record can still have a major impact on the opportunities you'll get in civilian life. The type of discharge you receive has the biggest effect on your future.

Anything less than a fully honorable discharge can have serious negative consequences for your future. For example, a general discharge that is less than fully honorable means that you may not receive ANY benefits under the GI bill. An other than honorable discharge can have a major effect on your ability to get hired, especially for a government job. So instead of helping your career by getting work experience, you may find that your military service makes it harder to get a job.

Apart from job prospects, many soldiers find it difficult to adjust to civilian life once they leave the military. Even those who do not see combat are often deeply affected by their experiences. The Department of Veterans Affairs reported that more than 500,000 veterans were treated for post-traumatic stress disorder in September 2009. Your decision to enlist today will likely have lifelong effects on your mental, and possibly physical, well-being.

## ALREADY ENLISTED?

If you have already signed up through the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) or the Army's Future Soldiers' Training Program, you CAN change your mind. However, recruiters will not help you figure out how. If you want to be released from your enlistment contract, do not report to boot camp or any other military base. Contact the GI Rights Hotline at 877-447-4487, or [www.GIrightshotline.org](http://www.GIrightshotline.org) for help.



TV ads and recruiter sales pitches can make the military sound great— job training, adventure, serving your country, and money for college. They're advertisements, like the ones that sell dog food or cars. Their job is to make the product seem attractive. But you wouldn't buy a car without checking out the dealer's claims. Don't enlist before you get the whole story on military life, because the military doesn't offer refunds if the product doesn't live up to the hype. Your enlistment contract obligates you to the military for eight years.



## THE ENLISTMENT "BONUS"

Recruiters may tell you that you will receive a bonus of up to \$60,000 just for joining the military. In reality, any bonus money you may get is paid out over a period of time, often several years. And if you don't meet certain requirements, you may have to return that money. Or you may not receive the money to begin with. In 2005, only 6% of Army recruits received the full amount while **47% got no money at all.**

# NNOMY

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# THINK AGAIN