

# Ten Points to Consider Before You Sign a Military Enlistment Agreement

## **1. Do not make a hasty decision by enlisting the first time you see a recruiter or when you are upset.**

A recruiter is a salesperson who will give only a positive, one-sided picture of life in the military. Don't make this important decision when you are depressed, hard up for work, confused or unsure about your future, or pressured by your family. This decision will affect the rest of your life; don't make it lightly.

## **2. Take a witness with you when you speak with a recruiter.**

There is a lot of information to take in. A friend can take notes and help you ask questions.

## **3. Talk to veterans.**

Veterans can give you their views of military life, good and bad.

## **4. Consider your moral feelings about going to war.**

The mission of the military is to prepare for and wage war. If you cannot in good conscience engage in war or in killing, you should not consider enlisting. You cannot pick and choose the wars you want to fight. If you become opposed to war after you join, you have the right to seek a discharge, but it is a long, difficult process.

## **5. Get a copy of the enlistment agreement.**

Read the fine print carefully, especially the part about what the military can order you to do. You have a right to take this home, look it over, and ask others about it.

## **6. There is no "period of adjustment" during which you may receive an immediate honorable discharge.**

Once you have left for basic training, you must fulfill the full number of years (usually eight, with some of these in the reserves) on your enlistment contract. You cannot leave of your own free will. The military, however, may decide you are "unsuitable" and discharge you without your consent.

## **7. Get all your recruiter's promises in writing – but remember that the military can change the terms (such as pay, job, or benefits) of your work at any time.**

Though there are no guarantees, a written statement may offer you (as a service member) some protection if promises are not met. However, the contract is more binding on you than on the military. You are ultimately responsible for information on the form, so don't tell lies, even if pressured.

## **8. There are no job guarantees in the military.**

The military is not required to keep you in the job you trained for on a full-time or permanent basis. In fact, most recruiters were involuntarily reassigned to their jobs. Placements are mostly dependent on what the military needs. Most military jobs are in areas that account for only a small percentage of civilian jobs.

## **9. Military personnel cannot exercise all of the civil liberties enjoyed by civilians.**

You do not have the same constitutional rights as a civilian. Your rights to free speech, assembly, petition, and exercise of individual expression (such as clothing or hairstyle) are restricted. You must follow *all* orders given to you, whether you agree with them or consider them right or fair.

## **10. Many opportunities exist for you to serve your community and enhance your skills.**

Before you decide to enlist, check out other options that would help you "be all you can be." Travel, education, money for school, job training, and adventure can all be found in other ways. Your local community may even have opportunities that you hadn't considered. Don't let your body become a "weapon of war."

*Cape Codders for Peace & Justice*

For more information about local activities you can join, visit [www.capecodpeaceandjustice.org](http://www.capecodpeaceandjustice.org)



For information on military enlistment or becoming a conscientious objector, contact the *War Resisters League* at 212 228 0450 or [www.warresisters.org](http://www.warresisters.org)

If you are in the military and need help, contact the *GI Hotline* at 800 394 9544 or <http://giriights.objector.org>