

## **Questions you should pose to your recruiter and the answers you should receive**

**Question.** How long is my enlistment commitment actually for?

**Answer.** Your enlistment period will last 8 years. Some portion will be active duty and some portion will be on reserve duty. Reserved duty can be made active.

**Question.** Can the armed forces make me stay longer than what I have contracted for?

**Answer.** Yes, the military has the right to change your contract and extend your service longer than you agreed to.

**Question.** Do I get paid more money for staying longer than my contract stipulates?

**Answer.** No, unless you receive a promotion your pay scale stays the same, but if you are in a combat related job you can receive combat pay.

**Question.** Do I have any say in where I go, and how long I'm there for?

**Answer.** No, the military determines where you go and how long you are there. You do have the right to request transfers to different units, but there is never a guarantee that your request will be granted.

**Question.** How much does a newly enlisted service member get paid per week?

**Answer.** A new service member who is not an officer can be paid between \$13,000 and \$14,500 a year. An average is about \$280.00 a week with an average work-week of 80 hours. (\$3.39 an hour)

**Question.** Am I guaranteed the ability to go to college if I want to?

**Answer.** If you are on active duty you are not guaranteed the ability to go to school when you want to. Your commanding officer must give their permission. You also might be deployed to a combat area for more than 15 months at a time making courses, even online courses, tough to complete.

**Question.** Can I do a job I want to do in this branch, or am I assigned one?

**Answer.** Your job assignment is based on your ASVAB score. If your ASVAB score is too low or you flunk out of your job training you will not get that job and could be reassigned.

**Question.** If I change my mind about being in this branch can I resign?

**Answer.** Only an officer can resign. Enlisted members must serve their time or face harsh penalties. Voluntary discharges can happen, but are rare.

**Question.** What will happen to me if I decide I don't want to be involved in the military after I enlist?

**Answer.** You could put up with it, or risk being court-marshaled, receiving a dishonorable discharge, spending time in a military jail, or getting a demotion and reduction in pay. You may also become ineligible for some civilian jobs if this happens

**Question.** What are the most dangerous military jobs?

**Answer.** In a war zone, there is no job that is safe. Many service members, whose jobs were transportation related, have been killed or injured in Iraq, but infantry related positions are among the most dangerous traditionally.

**Question.** Will the skills I learn in the military be useful in civilian life?

**Answer.** It depends on what your job specialty is. Much of what you will learn to do in the military will only relate to military jobs and not civilian jobs.

**Question.** What are the negative aspects of my training?

**Answer.** Studies have shown that those who are trained to kill and deal with the stress of warfare have the tendency to develop emotional and psychological health problems.

**Question.** What do I do if an officer gives me a command that I believe is illegal?

**Answer.** Military training is designed to mold service members who respond to orders without thinking. Of course, if you believe an order is unlawful you have an obligation to refuse to act upon it. If the lines are blurred, most will just obey. Those who refuse, if the order is illegal, could still face penalties.

**Question.** What is post-traumatic stress disorder?

**Answer.** PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) is a severe mental health affliction that develops when one experiences or witnesses a traumatic event, such as combat or the effects of combat. Flashbacks, nightmares, depression and inability to think straight are some of the symptoms of PTSD.

**Question.** Will I receive any compensation if I am permanently disabled in war?

**Answer.** Yes, you can receive compensation if you are disabled but the payment will be based on your actual disability. The military rating system for measuring disabilities and calculating disability payment has long been thought to be unfair. A person who is blinded my only get a 50% disability rating for instance.

**Question.** Have you ever seen combat and do you think exposure to it is healthy for me?

**Answer.** Any recruiter who tells you that experience combat is healthy must not be aware of the thousands of war veterans who are suffering from PTSD, surviving without arms or legs, or whose quality of life will never be what it was before they witnessed combat.

**Question.** Will I be deployed to the Middle East?

**Answer.** Nearly every job is a “deployable” job. If you enlist in the Reserves or the National Guard there is a very good chance that you will be deployed to the Middle East rather than serving weekend duty stateside. Active duty enlistees should also be prepared to deploy. Forces are stretched thin and therefore new recruits should always be prepared to go to war.