

“Many soldiers believe they are fighting for freedom and democracy, against terrorists who hate our liberty. I think that ‘freedom and democracy’ are just figures of speech contrived by our government to lead young and underprivileged kids to fight a war where no one but the Administration, private contractors and various corporations benefit.”
--Joseph Wood, U.S. Army veteran of Afghanistan and Iraq wars

Do you know what you’re signing up for? A Brief Quiz

1

Do you know how difficult it is to leave the military? *GO TO 18>>>*

2

Have you spoken with any of the many veterans who didn’t like being soldiers? (If not, visit www.ivaw.com or www.couragetoresist.org)

3

If you get a “general” discharge (as 25% do) rather than an “honorable” discharge, do you know which benefits you’ll lose?

4

Are you prepared to fight in any war, in any place, at any time that the government orders you to?

5

Who are you willing to fight and/or kill as the enemy? **A.** Anyone in a military uniform **B.** Civilians **C.** People working at military facilities (like weapons factories, storage sites) **D.** No one

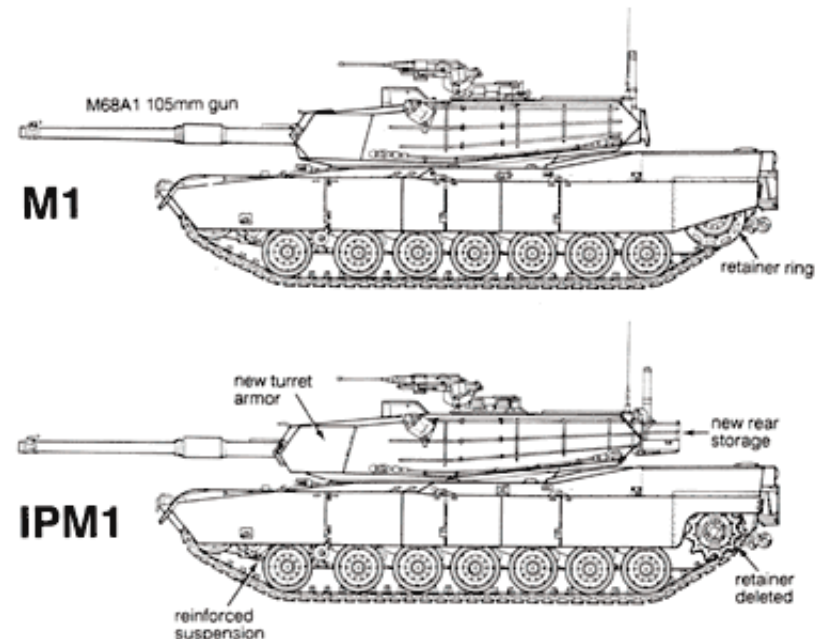
6

Which methods could you personally use in good conscience? **A.** Nuclear weapons **B.** Germ, chemical or biological weapons **C.** Conventional weapons (guns, tanks, non-nuclear bombs) **D.** Torture of prisoners **E.** All of the above

7

Have you thought of other ways you could give something back to your community or serve your country? *GO TO 29>>>*

Don’t Sign Your Life Away



Some Things to Consider Before or After Joining the U.S. Military

compiled by the
heads-up collective

Introduction

Welcome. Hopefully you've picked up this zine because you'd like to know more about the U.S. military. This zine is organized along the lines of a choose-your-own adventure book (the kind you might have read as a kid), so you may find yourself skipping around quite a bit. There will be a large number at the top of each section. Wherever you see "**GO TO**" followed by a number, just skip through the zine until you find that big, bold number.

This zine is a crash course in military life, and life after leaving the military as well as an attempt to get you to re-think enlistment and the military in general. We will also introduce other options outside of military life. The choose-your-own-adventure format attempts to show you how your choices become narrower as you spend more time in the U.S. military. Even the limited rights and freedoms¹ that soldiers do have become extremely hard to exercise. As Christopher Harrison, a former officer in the U.S. Army put it, "once you sign the contract, you don't own yourself anymore."^A When you enlist you become property of the U.S. Military. We don't want you to sign some of your freedom away without knowing what you're getting into. We present a serious warning to enlistment because ultimately we believe that the choosing not to join the military is a more practical choice for you, and other human beings around the world. This is why we spent all the time and energy creating the zine that you're holding.

Hopefully this zine will provide some information and inspiration to those who don't have the time or the means to compile the research (sources are listed at the end of the zine). Even if you're not considering joining the military this zine can still provide helpful information.

Unfortunately we do not have the space to discuss a fuller history of the Iraq war or U.S. foreign policy in general, but those seeking information on these topics can **GO TO 25>>>** for suggestions and further reading, or **GO TO 24>>>** for a brief discussion of the Iraq War.

Don't worry, if you already joined or signed up for DEP (Delayed Entry Program). **You still have options!** For DEP....**GO TO 3 >>>**
If you're already on your way to boot camp....**GO TO 6 >>>**
Otherwise, **GO TO 1 >>>**

1 **Freedom:** "the power or right to act speak or think without hindrance or restraint" according to the Oxford American Dictionary



"Refusing to enlist is more than a career decision, it's a moral and political act, a contribution to the burgeoning international movement."
-- Paul Rockwell

A Final Note

This zine is a continually evolving work in progress and will forever be incomplete. We encourage anyone to e-mail feedback, questions, criticisms or info you think we should add to:

headsupcollective@riseup.net

Disclaimer: This zine is not intended as professional legal advice, merely a heads up. If you are in the military, we recommend that you call the GI Rights Hotline (**1-800-FYI-95GI** or go to **www.girights.org**) or speak to a lawyer before trying anything suggested in here. We made our best effort to validate our sources, but some may change.

--the heads-up collective



1

The Recruiter: A High-Pressure Salesperson in Uniform

The U.S. Army website tells you to, “think of an Army recruiter as your guide to the Army and the best resource to answer questions about joining.”^B In reality, the recruiter might actually be the *worst* resource for this information.

The recruiter is by no means a confidant or adviser. He or she is like any other slick salesperson. Only instead of a car, he or she attempts to sell you on the military. A recruiter must fulfill a monthly quota of new enlistees or face strict consequences: “Recruiters said falling short [of quota] often generates a barrage of angry correspondence, formal reprimands, threats or even demotion.”^C To put it bluntly, the recruiter’s interests (getting you to enlist and meeting the quota) can frequently prevent an honest discussion about military life.

You wouldn’t know it from the recruiter’s sales pitch, but the primary duty of the U.S. military is to go to war: not to play basketball, not to rescue women from floods, and not to stare at cool computer screens. When you enlist this means that you consent to enter a war zone and experience everything that goes along with combat. You may be asked to shoot and kill. You may be killed. This may seem obvious, but sometimes it can get lost in the torrent of false promises from recruiters and military ads.

In addition, those in the military, as well as politicians, will use slogans and one-sided distortions to generate a sense of patriotism. Their language must be vague. Honesty and specificity would ruin the careers of these people. If you’re interested in “serving your country” **GO TO 29>>>>**

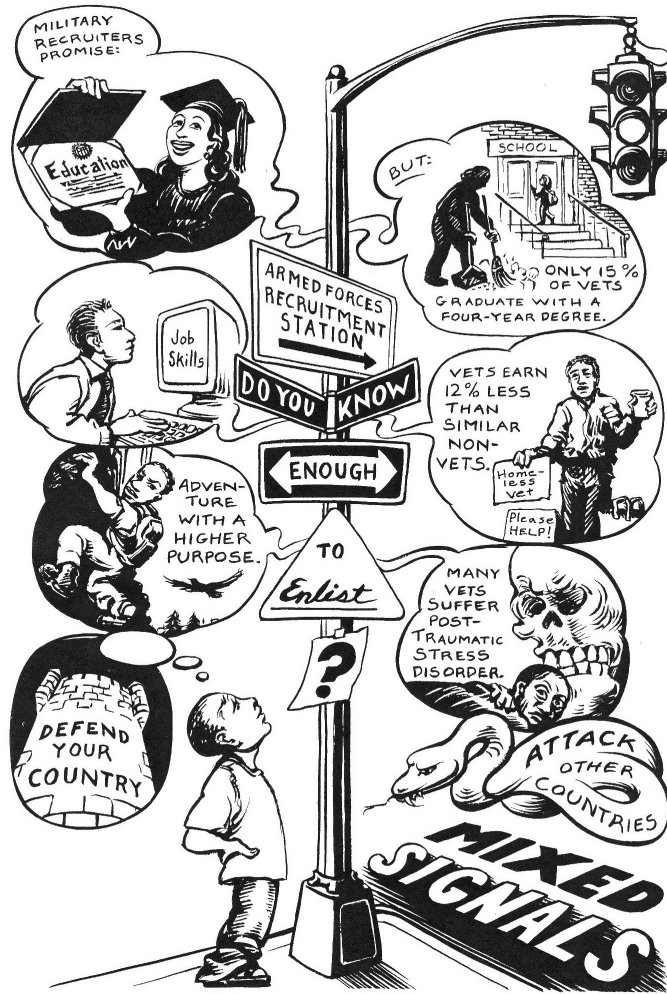
The recruiter’s main objective is to get you to sign **The Contract**. The enlistment contract binds the recruit to obey military orders (for more info **GO TO 2>>>>**). Recruiters use a few stock exaggerations, misrepresentations, and outright lies in an attempt to win you over. Let’s examine them one by one:

1. The recruiter tells you: “You’re not going to Iraq.” There is *no* way that the recruiter can guarantee this. **GO TO 5>>>>**. For

“When you join the military you join to serve the Will of the government. If you join because you want to do what you want to do you are as screwed up as a football bat.” --tdholsey (claimed to be an Iraq war vet) on a YouTube forum

more information on the war in Iraq **GO TO 24>>>**

2. "The military will let you choose your own job" or the recruiter promises a certain job. You should read the contract first! **GO TO 2>>>**
3. "The military prepares you for the working world." -- **GO TO 20>>>**
4. "The military will give you tons of college money." -- **GO TO 4>>>**
5. "When you join the military you're set for life." -- **GO TO 19-21>>>**
6. "The military is the best place to go in order to 'serve your country.'" -- **GO TO 29>>>**



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^Y “GIs -- Know Your Rights.” The GI Rights Hotline. Pamphlet.

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^{BB} Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007. P13.

^{CC} Paterson, Jeff. “A Message to Troops, Would-be Troops, and other Youth.” Pamphlet. 2001.

^{BB} “The New Yorker’s Guide to Military Recruitment in the 5 Boroughs.” By Friends of William Blake. Available from <http://www.counterrecruitmentguide.org/>. P.24

^{CC} “GIs -- Know Your Rights.” The GI Rights Hotline. Pamphlet.

^{DD} Weill-Greenberg, Elizabeth Ed. *10 Excellent Reasons Not to Join the Military*. New York: The New Press, 2006. P.25

^{EE} *Ibid* P.23

^{FF} *Ibid* P.23-24

^{GG} *Ibid* P.27

^{HH} “U.S. Protesters Demand Canadian Protection for War Deserters” CBC News. <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2008/01/25/war-resisters.html>. Accessed 2/1/08.

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Here’s text from an actual enlistment agreement^D:

c. The agreements in this section and attached annex(es) are all the promises made to me by the Government. ANYTHING ELSE ANYONE HAS PROMISED ME IS NOT VALID AND WILL NOT BE HONORED.

Remember those recruiter’s spoken promises? They’re bogus. Now get ready for this line:

b. Laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice to me. Such changes may affect my status, pay, allowances, benefits, and responsibilities as a member of the Armed Forces **REGARDLESS** of the provisions of this enlistment/reenlistment document.

These words mean that while you owe the military everything, it owes you nothing in return. This includes your job preferences. You can state job preferences, and the recruiter can even put something in writing, but ultimately the military will choose your job. The military’s decision is based on its immediate needs and your scores on standardized tests. The above clause also means that the military can change your job or pay at any time without your consent. This clause in the “contract” is really incredible. It’s like working at a company where the boss can decide not to pay you anymore, but you are still legally required to go to work. I’ll come back to this clause later.

a. FOR ALL ENLISTEES: If this is my initial enlistment, I must serve a total of eight (8) years. Any part of that service not served on active duty must be served in a Reserve Component unless I am sooner discharged.

And yes, all new recruits must commit to 8 years. However, this term could be extended, **GO TO 18>>>** if you want to find out why.

First of all, let me state that DEP is NOT a binding contract. This means that you have not yet enlisted in the armed forces and you do *NOT* need to report to boot camp. No matter what a recruiter tells you, you are not officially a part of the military, and no one can throw you in jail for changing your mind while DEP. The recruiter may use these sinister lies because they are desperate to get you to boot camp and meet their quota. Once at boot camp you are officially enlisted and there are fewer ways out. A recruiter may say that you need to report to boot camp in order to formally separate from the military. This is just not true. If you are DEP and change your mind, here's what Citizen Soldier (a group that helps defend soldiers' rights) recommends:

Write a letter to the commander of recruiting in your area, stating that you have decided that you don't want to report for active duty. You should state that your mind is made up, and no further counseling will change it...Be sure to date the letter and indicate your full name, address, Social Security number and your DEP report date. Send it, 'certified mail, return receipt' keeping copies of the letter and receipts for your file.

You should also send copies to your local members of Congress and both US Senators from your state. Mark these envelopes; 'attention; military caseworker.' Finally, it may also be helpful to send copies to your minister, rabbi or priest, as well as to your high school or college guidance counselor and athletic coaches^E

You can also call the GI Rights Hotline, which "is a network of non-profit and non-governmental agencies who provide information to members of the military." **Call 1-800-FYI-95GI or go to www.girights.org. In the Portland area you can also call the local Recruiter Watch Hotline at 503-721-2275.** These services are free and confidential.

The main thing to remember is:

while in DEP you are not on active duty and you don't have to obey any military orders. Never consent to going back to the MEPS [Military Entrance Processing Center, the place where you get a physical and take an oath] with them [the recruiters]

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- ^D "Enlistment/Reenlistment Document, Armed Forces of the United States" DD Form 4/1, Jan 2001
- ^E "The Military Enlistment Contract and You The Facts; Your Rights" Available from <http://www.citizen-soldier.org/>. Accessed 2/15/08
- ^F *Ibid*
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- ^I *Ibid*
- ^J "Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30) Increased Educational Assistance Allowance." United States Department of Veterans Affairs. http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/rates/CH30/ch30rates100107.html. Accessed 2/16/08
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- ^L *Ibid* P.7
- ^M *Ibid* P.7; Ensign, Tod. *America's Army Today: The Challenge of Militarism*. New York: The New Press, 2004. P.22.
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- ^Q "The Private War of Women Soldiers". Salon News. http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/03/07/women_in_military/index1.html. Accessed 2/4/08.
- ^R *Ibid*
- ^S Weill-Greenberg, Elizabeth Ed. *10 Excellent Reasons Not to Join the Military*. New York: The New Press, 2006. P.100-101.
- ^T "The Private War of Women Soldiers". Salon News. http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/03/07/women_in_military/index1.html. Accessed 2/4/08.
- ^U Weill-Greenberg, Elizabeth Ed. *10 Excellent Reasons Not to Join the Military*. New York: The New Press, 2006. P.104



PROTEJA UD. SUS DATOS PERSONALES DE LOS RECLUTADORES MILITARES

Los reclutadores militares pueden molestarle a Ud. porque la administración de su escuela les ha dado su nombre, dirección y número de teléfono. Para evitarlo, hay que asegurar tan pronto posible que la escuela no comparta sus datos personales. ES SU DERECHO LEGAL. LOS DISTRITOS TIENEN QUE CUMPLIR. Algunos distritos tienen su propia forma o se puede escribir una carta o se puede usar ésta. Hace falta una forma para cada alumno. Se recomienda que la forma esté firmada o por los padres o por un guardián legal.

FECHA/ DATE: _____

DEAR ADMINISTRATOR OF _____:
(NOMBRE DE LA ESCUELA/NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL)

We are exercising our right under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, and hereby request that the name, address, and telephone listing of:

(NOMBRE DEL ESTUDIANTE/PRINT NAME OF STUDENT)

who is a current student at your school, not be released to military recruiters without prior written parental consent. We do, however, consent to the disclosure of such information to colleges and universities other than military schools.

NOMBRE DEL PADRE, MADRE O GUARDIÁN/NAME OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

FIRMA DEL PADRE, MADRE O GUARDIÁN/SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

FIRMA DEL ESTUDIANTE/SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

**NOTE TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: Once this request is given to you, it is a serious violation of federal law to disregard it and release the name, address and phone number of this student to any military recruiter without prior written consent. Section 9528(a) of Public Law 107-110 states: (2) CONSENT—A secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student’s name, address, and telephone listing described in paragraph (1) [i.e., the paragraph requiring schools receiving federal aid to release information to military recruiters] not be released without prior written parental consent, and the local educational agency or private school shall notify parents of the option to make a request and shall comply with any request.*

for any reason, whether it’s to ‘straighten out the problem’ or to ‘finalize some paperwork.’ If you stand by your rights they will eventually leave you alone.^F

It’s vital that you refuse to sign anything further. For more info visit www.citizen-soldier.org.

Now that you’ve taken the steps to refuse enlistment, take a look at what you can do next and how you can go even further to oppose the war **GO TO 22-27>>>**

4

Money for College

Recruiters will frequently say, that you will receive “up to” a certain amount of money for college. They advertise the maximum amount of money you can get under the absolute best circumstances. But getting the college money promised by the military is not an easy task. It’s important to review the entire process:

Recruiters may mention the Montgomery GI Bill, which is currently set at a maximum of \$39,636 for college.^G Even the GI Bill is not “money in the bank.” There are plenty of hoops you have to jump through in order to get that money, including paying \$1,200 out of your own pocket in your first year of service just to apply.^H

In addition, you need to be an active-duty member who has completed at least a three-year service agreement and is attending a college full-time^I (that’s going to cost you a lot more than \$39,636 over four years, even at a state university. Check the tuition of your local colleges to verify things. Don’t forget to add in living expenses and the cost of books). If you are a part-time student, the benefits are even lower^J Not every soldier who has spent time in the military is eligible for this money : “if you receive a less-than honorable discharge (as 1 in 4 do) or leave the military early (as 1 in 3 do) the military will keep your \$1,200 deposit and give you nothing.”^K

Recruiters may have also quoted you something like a total of \$71,424 with a bonus from the Army College Fund or \$86,000 from the Navy. However, “fewer than 10% of all recruits earn money from the ACF, which is specifically designed to lure recruits into hard to fill positions.”^L

“Your purpose is to kill...that’s what your purpose is; to take life.” --Sean Huze (Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps) on being a soldier

Consequently the program is not very successful. Of the recruits who apply for the Montgomery GI Bill, 65% receive no money for college, and only 15% ever receive a college degree.^M Pretty sobering.

You should consider going elsewhere for college money. There are many excellent and more reliable sources that don't require you to join the military and give up certain freedoms. These options include need-based grants from colleges, independent scholarships, and Federal grants and loans just to name a few. For information on your many options **GO TO 26>>>>**

Furthermore, if it's the money that's really driving you to join the military you should probably ask yourself some further questions about whether you support the military's missions or what you might be asked to do as a soldier.

"I don't need anymore of this naysaying, I'm off to bootcamp.".... **GO TO 6>>>>**

"I'd like to know a little more about the war I'm getting myself into"..... **GO TO 24>>>>**

"The military isn't for me. I'm not going to sign up.".....**GO TO 22-27>>>>**

5

Stretched Thin: Why You're Likely to be Deployed

Many recruiters promise new enlistees that they will not be deployed to the warzones of Iraq or Afghanistan. The recruiter *cannot* guarantee this. Remember the contract? If not, **GO TO 2>>>>** Military officers and the President decide who gets deployed, not a recruiter. With the military near the end of its pool of soldiers, and straining to keep enlistment steady, you are very likely to be deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan. Here's a snapshot of the situation in the U.S. Army:

The Army's 38 available combat units are deployed, just returning home or already tapped to go to Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere, leaving no fresh troops to replace five extra brigades that President Bush sent to Baghdad this year, according to interviews and military documents reviewed by The Associated Press.^N

Here's another startling fact about the fate of new recruits:

30

Opt-Out Form (to keep the military from getting your personal information)

OPT-OUT FORM

ACT TO PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY FROM MILITARY RECRUITERS

You may be harassed at home by military recruiters because your name, address and phone number will be given to them by your school—unless you tell your school to not give out the information. To exercise your legal right to have this information kept private, you should notify your school office as soon as possible. Some school districts may provide their own forms for this, but they must obey your request no matter how you submit it. You can write your own letter or use the one below. Use a letter or form for each individual student and keep a copy. It is not required by law, but we recommend having a parent or guardian also sign:

DATE: _____

DEAR ADMINISTRATOR OF _____:
(NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL)

We are exercising our right under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, and hereby request that the name, address, and telephone listing of:

(PRINT NAME OF STUDENT)

who is a current student at your school, not be released to military recruiters without prior written parental consent. We do, however, consent to the disclosure of such information to colleges and universities other than military schools.

PRINT NAME OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN ABOVE

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

*NOTE TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: Once this request is given to you, it is a serious violation of federal law to disregard it and release the name, address and phone number of this student to any military recruiter without prior written consent. Section 9528(a) of Public Law 107-110 states: (2) CONSENT—A secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing described in paragraph (1) [i.e., the paragraph requiring schools receiving federal aid to release information to military recruiters] not be released without prior written parental consent, and the local educational agency or private school shall notify parents of the option to make a request and shall comply with any request.

This form was produced by the San Diego Coalition for Peace and Justice, www.sdcpj.org.



"I motioned with my rifle to go to the checkpoint. They [the Iraqi refugees] all understood what that meant, and without any protest they all slowly turned around and walked away. I got no pleasure whatsoever doing this. I felt like the biggest fucking asshole on the planet, and in fact I felt like a Nazi, and for the first time ever, I felt like I was the bad guy." -- Colby Buzzell (U.S. Army Specialist) on his experiences in Iraq

28

Conclusion

You have the ability to make choices. You can live a life that is not subject to the whim of a president or Congress and you have the ability to affect history without being part of a series of corporate wars that benefit only a few.

There are many ways to think. For every society that we live in, there are infinitely more possible arrangements. Changing how we live doesn't start with so-called "movements," or "alliances" or even with rock festivals or clothing styles. It starts with individuals changing the way they live day to day. Criticizing the military or foreign policy has nothing to do with "hating America" or "being with the terrorists." These are dishonest statements and false dilemmas¹ to suppress criticism, even when it is constructive.

1 **False Dilemma:** when someone presents only two choices in a situation when there are actually many more. Example: "You're either with us, or you're with the terrorists."

29

Other Ideas for "Serving Your Country"

We recommend that instead of joining the military, you serve the people of this country directly and without harming the citizens of other countries. Here are a few links and suggestions:

- EMT or Firefighter if you're willing to put your body on the line to save lives
 - Volunteerism: Help people in need of food, shelter, healthcare, or jobs. One option is Food Not Bombs, a group that redistributes food to anyone who wants it. Check out: www.fnb.org
 - Visit www.idealists.org for a listing of non-profit jobs and internships
 - For government sponsored travel and adventure, look into the Peace Corps (www.peacecorps.gov) or Americorps (www.americorps.gov). You can earn college money through Americorps.
 - For Youth of Color check out www.inroads.org for internships
- There are also groups dedicated to helping young people find non-military options:
- Recruiter Watch Portland (503)721-2275 rwpxcoalition@gmail.com
 - Project YANO - P.O. Box 230157, Encinitas, CA 92023 or visit www.projectyano.org.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that half the recruits going through Fort Benning in Georgia will be deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan 30 days after finishing basic training. The rest will likely go during their first enlistment.⁰

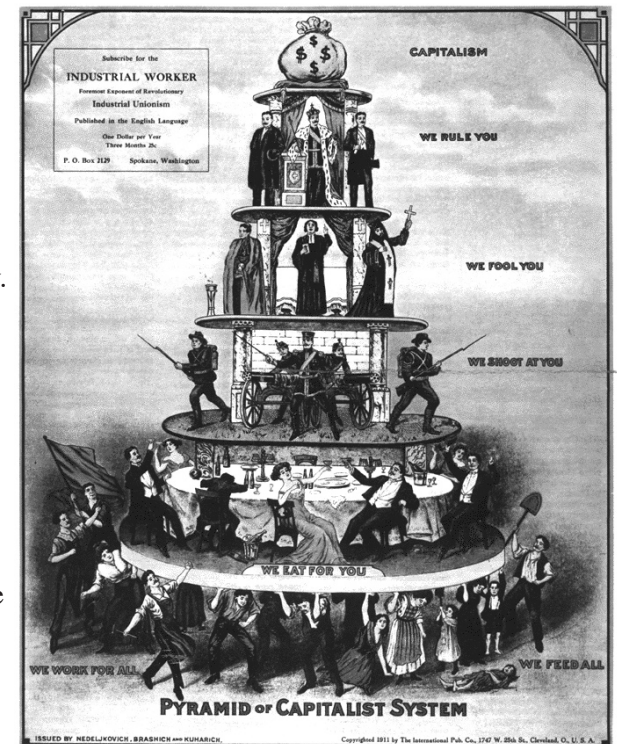
Don't believe recruiters who tell you that you aren't going to war. As a soldier, you are required to fight in any war, at any time the government tells you to.

6 BOOTCAMP!

By now you're already on the bus to boot camp. You may be excited about what it's going to take to become a soldier. However, there's more to bootcamp than physical training and marksmanship....

What is Hierarchy?

Basic training or bootcamp is designed to get a recruit comfortable with military hierarchy. Hierarchy is a system in which some people have more control over decisions than others. You've lived around it your whole life. Hierarchy exists in schools, churches, homes, and especially in the military. Hierarchy justifies itself. So if you ask someone why they are ordering you to do something, they'd probably respond, "because I have a higher rank than you, or because I'm your superior." Sometimes they even claim that they deserve their



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position because they worked harder than you. People in positions of authority have gotten more clever about disguising hierarchy, but certain industries like retail are less clever. Managers may use words like “collaboration” and “team building.” Try to ignore the words, and consider who ends up making the decisions, who has the final say, and who decides whether you get a paycheck? No matter how much your manager, supervisor, team leader, or commanding officer sympathizes with you or tries to be your friend, he or she decides whether you succeed or fail on the job; and he or she may not always have good reasons.

Hierarchy cannot exist without those on top forcing other people to do what they are told. Military life involves extreme coercion, hiding behind the fraudulent labels of “spreading democracy” and “defending your country.” For all the chanting about “freedom,” the military itself is constructed much like a feudal society¹, with two tiers: enlisted men and officers. The military is hardly “An Army of One.”

As Colby Buzzell (an Iraq War vet) wrote, “the Army has a bunch of stupid rules, and your job is to *not* think or question these stupid rules, but to just follow them blindly instead.”^p Bootcamp is designed to make military hierarchy seem acceptable and even necessary to a new recruit. The message is “don’t think for yourself, just do what your officers tell you to.” In the eyes of the military, a soldier who can kill anyone on command, without hesitating or questioning his or her officers is much more effective. **GO TO 7 >>>**

1 Feudal Society: A society in which kings ruled because they were kings and the vast majority of people had no property, no rights, and no power in decision-making.

7

Discrimination: Military-Style

Recruiters may use the line that the military is a place where everyone is treated equally, or a place where you will be rewarded or promoted for the amount of work you do. This is just another deception. The military is at least as discriminatory as the society that surrounds it, if not more so. The only difference is that you should expect more punishment when speaking out in the military against discrimination taking place.

In fact, the military legally discriminates against homosexuality. If a soldier admits that he or she is gay, or has had homosexual sex, he or she will be discharged. Even if you are not gay, don’t expect to be treated

If college is what you feel you need, there are many more ways to get scholarships with fewer strings attached. Some are based on your academic ability, some on your financial need, and some on a combination of both.

The first step is to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. You could qualify for Government grants or low interest loans. Unfortunately, the amount of money set aside for these grants has been declining steadily.

Filling out the FAFSA is often all you need to apply for financial aid to a specific college. Colleges themselves offer grants, many of which are need-based. You should immediately get in touch with the financial aid office of any college you’re interested in applying to. There may also be additional scholarships available depending on your ethnicity, gender, where you live or even what bank you use. A good place to start on the internet is: http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp?cleanup=yes

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**For Extra Credit:
Getting the Military Out of Your School**

Written into the infamous No Child Left Behind Act is a provision which requires high schools to hand over names, addresses and phone numbers of students to military recruiters. This allows recruiters the convenience of harassing students over the phone and through the mail. There is one catch; students or parents can fill out an attached opt-out form and give it to school administrators. **GO TO 30 >>>** for the form

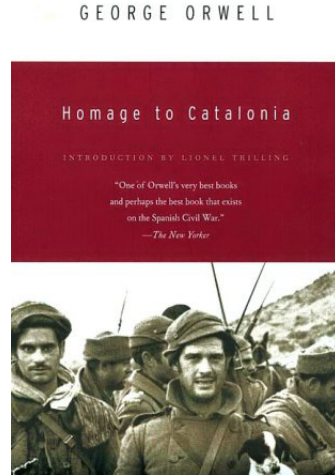
Certain schools have organized counter-recruitment days, where these forms are passed out. The forms are only the first step. If you’re a high school student, there is no reason why you can’t get even more creative with your resistance to the military and the war.

As a student you can legally:

1. Organize promote and participate in organizations and political groups.
2. Circulate newspapers, literature, or political leaflets on school property.
3. Wear political or other types of buttons, badges, or armbands.

For Historical Background:

- *Profit Over People* by Noam Chomsky: a short and direct analysis of the effects of neoliberal economic policy (the Washington Consensus)
- *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn
- *Killing Hope: U.S. Intervention Since World War II* by William Blum -- A survey of U.S. foreign policy by a former government official. You'll probably be surprised by how much the U.S. has interfered with foreign governments.
- *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* by Naomi Klein



For clues about Passionate Revolt

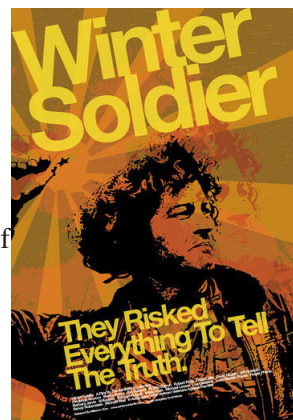
- *What is Anarchism?* by Alexander Berkman
- "Rolling Thunder: An Anarchist Journal of Dangerous Living"
- *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell -- The author of *1984* traveled to Spain to fight against fascists in the Spanish Civil War, and witness firsthand what a classless society could look like.

Blogs of Iraqis Caught in the War:

<http://last-of-iraqis.blogspot.com/>
<http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com/>

And some movies to Watch:

- *The Ground Truth* -- Interviews with veterans of the Iraq war who have changed their minds
- *Winter Soldier* -- This one might be hard to find, but well worth it. The movie is made up of interviews and testimonies of Vietnam vets.
- *Sir, No Sir* - An inspiring documentary about the underground history of G.I. resisters during the Vietnam War.
- *The Take* -- In 2002 Argentina became a site of major political upheaval; not that Americans heard very much about it. This documentary depicts workers who reclaimed their factories and now run them without bosses.



equally. Commanding officers will single out recruits based on race or gender.

If you are a woman, this is especially prevalent and sometimes dangerous. The incidence of sexual assault and rape of women in the military is frighteningly high. It's been documented over and over again:

A 2003 survey of female veterans from Vietnam through the first Gulf War found that 30 percent said they were raped in the military. A 2004 study of veterans from Vietnam and all the wars since, who were seeking help for post-traumatic stress disorder, found that 71 percent of the women said they were sexually assaulted or raped while in the military. And in a third study, conducted in 1992-93 with female veterans of the Gulf War and earlier wars, 90 percent said they had been sexually harassed in the military, which means anything from being pressured for sex to being relentlessly teased and stared at.^Q

Military hierarchy plays an important role in preventing a woman from defending against sexual assault: "Because the military is hierarchical, and because soldiers are trained to obey and never question their superiors, men of rank can assault their juniors with impunity."^R The military offers a near total lack of confidentiality for women accusing another soldier of rape, and women are often indirectly punished for reporting it. When Lt. Jennifer Dyer reported a rape, she was threatened with prosecution for filing a false report.^S Military law and soldier conduct discourage victims from speaking up about rape and sexual assault.

In certain cases, female soldiers have taken extraordinary measures to protect themselves: "Spc. Mickiela Montoya, 21, who was in Iraq with the National Guard in 2005, took to carrying a knife with her at all times. 'The knife wasn't for the Iraqis,' she told me. 'It was for the guys on my own side.'"^T

The military is at least as classist¹ as the rest of society. The same divisions exist between the boss and the workers. The officers are your bosses and more. Not only can they get you fired, they can get you jailed if you step out of line.

1 Classism: The daily discrimination based on income and social rank that nearly everyone endures. Example: The differences in healthcare options for rich and poor.

The military also tolerates racial discrimination. Once an enemy is dehumanized by tapping into racial stereotypes, shooting at them will be that much easier: “Stephen, the former Marine Corporal said that his training on machine guns included a tip to avoid overheating the machinery: squeeze the trigger for as long as it takes to chant, ‘die fucking raghead, die.’”^U Incidents of racism aren’t just limited to Arabs. Non-white soldiers within the military face racism as well. Army Reservist Aiden Delgado recounted one such experience:

we had an incident in our unit with a black specialist. He was a nice guy, really popular in the unit....there was a dispute over him dating this white girl...two white guys took a piece of rope, tied a noose, and put a hangman’s noose on his bed.^V

The action was bad enough, the way it was handled was even worse: “He [the black soldier] found out who it was and went to his black sergeant. They went to the equal opportunity representative. The issue was effectively stifled.”^W

The mishandling of these incidents creates a culture where racism, sexism and homophobia are normalized. Those who face discrimination have few, if any, resources to seek an investigation, much less punishments or policy designed to prevent it from happening.

After completing bootcamp, it becomes much harder and much more dangerous to attempt to leave the military. Once there, you are required to adhere to the Uniform Code of Justice, which means that you must follow orders or face penalties.

1. “Sure, the military’s messed up, but I can always help change it if I stick to my values and work hard.”.....**GO TO 10>>>**
2. “Who cares about this stuff? I came to the military for discipline.”.....**GO TO 8>>>**
3. I changed my mind. How do I get out of boot camp?”.....**GO TO 12>>>**
4. Otherwise....**GO TO 9>>>**

Another website to look at is www.factcheck.org. The site does a good job of researching and verifying the facts surrounding current political debates. The site goes into the facts about global warming, how the Bush administration was planning the Iraq invasion before 9/11, etc. However, this site is pretty partisan and tends to only focus on issues relevant to Democrats and Republicans.

It’s important to question, criticize and reexamine what other people (especially teachers and other authority figures) have told you, especially about the military. When someone makes a broad claim like, “the military is here to protect us from attacks,” ask them to clarify what they mean. Ask for evidence and see if they can come up with anything. Some other possible questions to ask yourself or others:

- Does the military protect everyone or just a select few?
- How much say does the public have about when and where the military goes to war?
- Is military action inviting more violence upon people living in the United States?
- Should soldiers be forced to go to war without their consent?

Here are some suggestions for further reading:

For More information about the Military than I can give you:

- *My War: Killing Time in Iraq* by Colby Buzzell - The author of this book was a soldier in Iraq who became a blogger. A very easy to read book that explains day by day what it’s like to be a soldier in Iraq. However, his writing lacks much of the historical background that you’ll find below.
- *10 Excellent Reasons Not to Join the Military* Edited by Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg. A collection of essays on why you shouldn’t sign up.
- Take a look at <http://www.prole.info/pamphletsrecent.html> and download their pamphlet called “Mutinies: Vietnam.” It describes some of the massive soldier revolt during the Vietnam War and how it ultimately affected the war plan.

For More Information on the Iraq war:

- *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq’s Green Zone* by Rajiv Chandrasekaran
- *Torture and Truth* by Mark Danner
- *The Question of Torture* by Alfred W. McCoy

IFC is working to establish more self-governing zones in Baghdad's mixed Sunni-Shiite districts, and it has a similar autonomous zone in Kirkuk.^{XX}

For an excellent article on the role of the IFC in Iraq visit www.alternet.org/waroniraq/70290/?page=entire.

Iraq is also not without a women's movement:

The Iraqi women's movement...has led the fight in keeping women's rights and freedom on the map. In the midst of a brutal fighting in Baghdad...more than one thousand women and men came out on March 8th, the International Women's Day, to protest against the US government and Islamist criminal forces who want another Afghanistan or Iran in Iraq. 'Barbarism or socialism,' as Rosa Luxemburg once put it, is where Iraq stands right now.^{YY}

The IFC is just one example of how the Iraqi people are freeing themselves. They don't need to hold U.S.-sponsored elections. To say that the Iraqi people are not capable because they are Iraqi and not American is not only condescending, it resembles the rhetoric of European Colonialism. These kinds of patronizing ideas are also sometimes referred to as the "White Man's Burden."³

For further reading **GO TO 25>>>**

³ **White Man's Burden:** One concept, which those in positions of power use to justify acts of colonialism and plunder. White man: "it's our responsibility (or burden) as 'civilized' beings to raise 'savages' up to our level of existence."

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**Even G.I. Joe Says,
"Knowing is half the battle!"**

It is important for you not to take our words at face value, but to conduct your own research into these topics. Everyone's time is limited, but with the internet, finding information can be fairly quick and easy.

All criticisms aside, Wikipedia tends to have articles which will provide a starting point for any search. The Independent Media Center is a place where anyone can "become the media" and post articles. There's one for almost every city. (www.indymedia.org) Be careful, though both wikipedia and Indymedia can contain unsourced nonsense and/or crackpot conspiracy theories.

8

Meet Your New Parents

A former soldier once said that the military is for people who need new parents after graduating from high school. New enlistees frequently say that they want order, direction, or discipline in their lives and so they joined the military. But there are many different methods for achieving direction in life and we believe that no one needs to give up certain freedoms to find that direction.

Those who are joining the military mainly for discipline ought to put this concern in perspective. Just like those who join just for college money, it's important to understand how the military affects people around the world (for further reading on this point **GO TO 25>>>**). There are other more acceptable kinds of programs that can teach discipline and organization without the added expense of harming other people. It would be selfish to put other people's lives in jeopardy just so that you can learn discipline. In addition, the penalties for stepping out of line once enlisted are severe.

Remember that officers exert strict control over recruits, and the ways out are few. Even some of the freedoms that you enjoy as a U.S. citizen will be taken from you by the military. A soldier gives up certain civil rights. These include, but are not limited to:

--**The right to free speech.** In the military you are not allowed to criticize government officials, you are not allowed to protest on-base or in uniform. You are also not allowed to call government officials names like "fascist" or "gangster."

The military now has a new set of regulations for the internet: you are not allowed to post on a blog or be part of an internet discussion group without the consent of your commanding officer, or view websites such as youtube and mspace from military computers.^X

--**The right to form or join a labor union**

--**The right to sue the military for damages^Y**

"I would no more teach children military training than teach them arson, robbery, or assassination."
--Eugene Debs

While in the military you may be ordered to do things that seem morally unacceptable to you, or seem to contradict the military's own values of honor and integrity. These orders could include acts which violate other human beings, such as torture, shooting unarmed civilians, or bombing of residential areas. If you choose to commit these acts, *you* will bear the legal responsibility, not the officer who commanded you to do so.

As a result of this unfair situation, soldiers become casualties of a class war within the military; a war that is not unfamiliar to civilians. The officer is the boss, and the soldier is the employee, except that in a war zone the stakes are always much higher. When military scandals emerge or something goes wrong, low ranking soldiers become scapegoats². Don't let yourself become a fall guy.

A case in point is the military reaction to prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib. Those military prosecution for these crimes only went as high as specialist (the third lowest rank in the Army):

Those who actually authorized the use of dogs, hooding, sleep deprivation, stress positions, and isolation--techniques of torture--avoid accountability for the consequences of their own decisions. During the Abu Ghraib scandal neither Rumsfeld, Miller, nor Gonzales--not one top official or commander stepped forward to share responsibility with the reservists. In essence... American commanders left their soldiers in the lurch."^z

Soldiers should not be free from an ethical responsibility for following orders, but commanders should also be equally responsible for issuing these orders. Unfortunately, the hierarchical structure of the military allows officers to hide behind their soldiers.

“You're not scaring me, let's go to war!”.....**GO TO 13>>>**

“I don't want to get caught in a scandal, but right now I'm caught in the military.”...**GO TO 12>>>**

1 **Abu Ghraib:** A prison in Iraq where U.S. soldiers beat, sexually molested, and spread feces on Iraqi detainees among other kinds of torture.

2 **Scapegoat:** “a person who is blamed for the wrongdoings...of others” ; a whipping boy, a patsy

Islamist militants who want theocratic¹ and authoritarian² rule.” Much to the surprise of most Americans, workers movements, unions, and women's liberation groups were already in existence before the U.S. invasion. Don't believe me? One group worth checking out is the Iraq Freedom Congress (IFC) at www.ifcongress.com/english/. The IFC is made up of a number of unions, socialist groups, and women's groups. Information on the IFC is still scant, as there has been little media coverage. The following are the goals stated in their manifesto:

- 1) End the occupation of Iraq – the US forces must leave Iraq immediately
- 2) End the interference of the Islamic currents from people's lives
- 3) Guarantee the right of the Iraqi people to make an informed and free decision on the future of political system
- 4) Restore civil life to Iraq^{vv}

Mahmood Ketabchi, a member of the IFC, rejects the myth that there are only two sides in the Iraq conflict:

We do not have to choose between the US and Iraqi reactionary forces. That is not the option because both of them have nothing but a bloody and horrific future to offer Iraqi people. Opposition to the US is not a progressive stand per se...That opposition [to the U.S. occupation] does not qualify them [Islamists] as our friends or as people whom we should side with. What matters is the kind of future that this opposition represents and objectives it pursues.^{ww}

The IFC has lofty goals for Iraq, but it isn't all talk:

The IFC's self-governing zone of some 5,000 in Baghdad, established in the district of Husseinia more than a year ago, is an island of coexistence in a city torn by sectarian cleansing, says Adil. Thanks to the Safety Force, the district has become a no-go zone for sectarian militias. “There has been no sectarian killing in Husseinia since September 2006,” Adil boasts. The

1 **Theocracy:** A government entirely based on religious doctrine and law. In a theocracy, religious leaders become the most powerful government officials.

2 **Authoritarian:** A society where a dictator or a handful of people decide what's right and wrong. Examples: Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia

- “We’re fighting to bring freedom and democracy to Iraq” - Democracy literally means “rule by the people.” However, when describing an actual society what counts as “democracy” is actually very broad. In a democratic society the population can exercise meaningful control over the organization of their government and public policy. Think for a moment about the country we live in: do you feel that you have meaningful control over the society? How free are you to choose how and when you work? How about where you live? Even more importantly, who determines if you will be able to afford to eat in the next ten years, or if you get sick whether you will be treated effectively? Ask yourself, “even if the U.S. form of democracy could be exported would we want other countries to follow our lead?” You could go even further and ask: “Is the United States a democracy at all?”

“The people’s right to self-determination is a central principal of democracy.”^{SS} This principal was part of Woodrow Wilson’s own 14 Points and is a pillar of international law. Self-determination means that, “all peoples have the right [to] freely determine their political status,”^{TT} With this definition in mind, imposing “democracy” on a group of people through military force seems like a contradiction. In other words, if the United States were really interested in giving the Iraqi people self-determination, it would pull out all of the troops and allow the Iraqi people the autonomy to independently form their own society.

Another contradiction occurs when a so-called “democratic” state does not extend popular control into economic policy. Here’s just one example of how democracy is *not* being constructed in the Iraqi government: In February, 2007 a “law [drafted by the Bush Administration] called for Iraq’s publicly owned oil reserves, the country’s main source of revenues, to be exempted from democratic control and run instead by a powerful, wealthy oil dictatorship [the Federal Oil and Gas Council].”^{UU} You can read the official draft of the law at <http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=4868>. If the Iraqi people are no longer able to control their natural resources, even through their own representatives, then how can anyone say that the United States is establishing freedom and democracy to the country?

- “The only people fighting against the U.S. occupation of Iraq are

Really, it’s admirable that you want to see change for the military. You’re not alone. There are many people who think that the military will respect their highest moral values or that they can “lead by example.” The U.S. Army even expects its soldiers to value “respect,” “integrity” and “selfless service”^{AA} (except when these values push a soldier to seek change in the military). Almost any institution (including the military) is resistant to change from within, and every institution has built-in punishments for those who try to question its policy or change it. The military seems to be among the most resistant, as it functions within a logic of rigid hierarchy, conformity and secrecy.



Lt. Ehren Watada, the first officer to refuse a deployment to Iraq

Let’s take Lt. Ehren Watada for example. Lt. Watada, convinced that the war in Iraq is illegal, was asked to deploy in 2006. He refused out of his own personal convictions to participate in what he believes to be a criminal activity. But there was no debate between Watada and his commanding officers; he was court-martialed.¹ His first court-martial ended in a mistrial on February 3, 2007. Lt. Watada now stands trial again and may face jail time (for the latest information on Lt. Watada see <http://www.thankyoult.org>). With such harsh discipline and strict penalties for following your conscience, it seems more likely that you’re going to accomplish change from outside the military than from within.

You might say, “but there has to be a military, right?” **GO TO 11>>>**

Otherwise **GO TO 13>>>**

¹ **Court Martial:** a military trial convened by officers and judged by them as well, with a jury hand-picked by the officer bringing the charges.

11

Don't We Need a Military?

We do need a military if our goal is to maintain the status quo. So if you think the world is perfect exactly as it is, read no further.

People are often taught that only a few possible social arrangements exist; in fact, human societies have endured hundreds of changes over thousands of years. If our society were to change radically, a military as we know it would become unnecessary. Some people might try to argue that nation-states (or countries), armies, or laser guided missiles are necessary and inevitable because we are living in the most "advanced" stage of human history. Yet it could turn out that conditions we view today as natural and everlasting, like countries, may turn out to be short-lived fads in the course of human history.

However, we cannot expect the military to decide to lay down arms tomorrow, without significant changes in our society. The military does not run smoothly simply because a few rich men in a room decided it was so, but it remains in place because so many other social institutions (corporations, schools and colleges, the media) depend upon it. It would take a lot more than just petitions, voting or passing some law to end the military. Refusing to be a part of the military is only a starting point, since it would be impossible to separate it from our economic and social structure.

By drawing connections between the military and our economic system, we begin to see a clearer picture of our society. For example, the military has formed a symbiotic relationship¹ with corporations, and this relationship is commonly known as the military industrial complex. Multinational corporations like Halibuton, Blackwater, and Boeing depend on perpetual warfare to reap profits. In short, "wars and disaster responses are so fully privatized, they are themselves the new market."^{BB}

A military cannot survive a full-scale rebellion of its own soldiers. There have been war resisters for as long as there have been wars. Some draft resisters in World War I imagined a world without a military when they used the phrase: "No war, but the class war." By this they meant that they would not support a war of countries versus countries deploying massive militaries, but they would support workers rising up against

1 **Symbiotic relationship:** You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.

U.S. troops returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer 'daunting and growing' psychological problems -- with nearly 40 percent of soldiers, a third of Marines and half of the National Guard members reporting symptoms -- but the military's cadre of mental-health workers is "woefully inadequate" to meet their needs, a Pentagon task force reported yesterday.^{RR}

22

Turning Up the Heat

A number of civilian groups are organizing to support GIs. There are several peaceful networks of activists and others that are more combative. It is possible for soldier and civilian alike to ensure that the war ends, either temporarily or permanently. For soldiers, part of the strategy has to be resistance. The United States cannot continue a war if it can no longer keep its soldiers obedient.

The civilian population can work in concert to support these resisters. Contact people you know who are either in the military or considering it. Let them know that they have so many other options. Please pass around this zine.

The lives of Iraqis and Americans are at stake. Peaceful marches and symbolic actions are not producing any significant results. If we hope to accomplish the goal of ending perpetual warfare, let's turn up the heat.

If you'd like to do some further reading **GO TO 25>>>**

23

A Brief Listing of G.I. Groups

Iraq Veterans Against the War (www.ivaw.org) - You can only join this group if you have been an active duty soldier since September 11th 2001.

Courage to Resist -- www.couragetoresist.org -- A comprehensive database and news archive of Iraq and Afghanistan war resisters.

National Lawyers Guild/Military Law Task Force -- www.nlgmltf.org

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans -- www.nchv.org

Veterans for Peace -- www.veteransforpeace.org

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors -- www.objector.org

Vietnam Veterans Against the War -- www.vvaw.org

keeps national records on homeless veterans -- the VA estimates that nearly 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. And nearly 400,000 experience homelessness over the course of a year. Conservatively, 1 out of every 3 homeless men who is sleeping in a doorway, alley or box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served this country.^{OO}

These days the military advertises itself as a way to gain hi-tech job training but this is not always the case, especially when a soldier does not have full control over his or her job assignment. Many soldiers receive training that does not transfer to civilian life, for example firing stinger missiles or operating an M240 machine gun.

When he was Secretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush, Dick Cheney reportedly said, “The reason to have a military is to be prepared to fight and win wars. That is our basic fundamental mission. The military is not a social welfare agency, it’s not a jobs program.”

21

Post Military: Your Health and Well-Being

Sadly I do not have the space to discuss the persistent problems and poor conditions of the veterans health care system, or the stories of those who don’t receive the healthcare they deserve. This information can be gained from reading most national newspapers.

Suffice it to say, by being in a war zone you run the risk of many future health problems. On the battlefield you may be exposed to depleted uranium, chemical weapons and other dangerous substances which can cause long-term health problems.^{PP}

PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), a psychological problem sometimes caused by experiencing warfare firsthand includes symptoms such as, “nightmares and other sleep problems, trouble concentrating, anger, recklessness, and self-medication with drugs and alcohol.”^{QQ} With so many troops spending time in combat, the problems are inevitable:

their bosses to take control of factories, as well as citizens rebelling against their governments. They recognized that they had more in common with their working-class counterparts in other countries than the commanding officers and politicians who wanted them to go to war. Former Marine Corporal Jeff Paterson expressed this concept when he wrote, “although they did not look much like me, I found I had more in common with the common peoples of the Middle East than I did with those who were ordering me to kill them.”^{CC}

For Further reading **GO TO 25>>>**

12

Risky Business: How to Get out of the Military

You can change your mind about the military at any time, but the hard part is actually getting out. If you’ve decided that you cannot be a soldier anymore one option is to apply for conscientious objector (C.O.) status. A C.O. is someone who is opposed to warfare in general, not a particular war. You will need to prove the sincerity of your beliefs in front of a military court, and you will need to bring witnesses and essays.

As the military has been stretched thin, it’s going to be extremely hard to get approved as a C.O., especially if your change of heart comes very quickly after boot camp. You will need to plan and carefully prepare your case. The GI rights hotline is one of the best places to start if you’re interested in applying as a C.O. **Call 1-800-FYI-95GI or go to www.girights.org. Another place to consult is www.peace-out.org, which gives step-by-step guidance on the C.O. paperwork you need to file.**

In applying for C.O. status you also risk harassment from fellow troops and commanding officers. Former U.S. Army soldier Anita Cole said,

I went through all the hell of C.O. status...the interrogations... a hearing that’s a lot like a court martial, an investigation. I was followed, I was confined, I was harassed... While I was on C.O. status I suddenly got a roommate. And then the roommate got called to my hearing and asked what I discussed on the phone with my family. So I didn’t get a roommate. I got a spy^{DD}

Remember, it’s not in the military’s best interest to let soldiers think for

themselves. Ultimately, it's the military's decision to accept or deny your C.O. request. There are additional options for discharge as well^{CC}:

You may seek discharge from the military at any time. You may be able to get out of the military if:

- Military life or your assignment creates an unusual hardship for your dependents. [A Hardship Discharge]
- You have a persistent medical or psychological problem which makes military service difficult. [Especially if you can prove that you are experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. For more on PTSD **GO TO 21>>>**]
- You are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
- You qualify for another discharge under military regulations

Sometimes Soldiers are punished for flimsy reasons and kept afraid and confused about their options. This method is an effective way to maintain discipline and therefore, it's *never* a good idea to rely on military officials for advice. If you want to seek a discharge contact the GI Rights Hotline. It may also be helpful to meet with a civilian lawyer.

You can also refuse to participate in bootcamp or in any activity following your basic training. Some veterans have suggested that refusing to comply in basic training can get you out of the military (as you have "failed" out of bootcamp). This kind of behavior comes at great risk. You can even be tossed in jail, and you may receive a dishonorable discharge, which can create future problems. But at least you can put your ethics into action and take back some control and leverage in an environment where power is nearly impossible to obtain. You can regain some self-respect after it has been systematically broken down.

13

WAR!

Into the Combat Zone / Out of Your Comfort Zone

"Every time the war machine is kicked into high gear, acknowledgments are made about past 'mistakes': Gulf War Sickness, Agent Orange and napalm in Vietnam, massacres of refugees in Korea, U.S. troops used as nuclear exposure guinea pigs after World War II. And always: 'Trust us, this time it will be different.' *But it never is.*" --Former Marine

Corporal Jeff Paterson

A soldier you may be asked to go on a deployment, and you can't

Terror.^{MM}

Numerous people, most famously John Kerry, have called stop-loss a "backdoor draft," because it keeps soldiers in the military against their will. Several legal challenges have been mounted against Stop-loss, but none have been successful, which means soldiers may be called back even after their enlistment contracts have expired.

Your deployment may end, but the military's effect on your life will not...**GO TO 19-21>>>**

19

And All Those Cushy Benefits?

Some people think that the military has a responsibility to them in terms of financial security, college money and especially healthcare if they are injured. Technically speaking, the military owes a recruit nothing (**GO TO 2>>>**). Anything the military gives a soldier is not contractually required. Some people fight tooth and nail in courts. Some even require congressmen to step in just to get those things that were promised to them. Adele Kubein, who fought for her daughter to receive rehabilitative care for her leg injury and psychological trauma, said of her experience with the military:

If you belong to the National Guard or the Reserves there is no place if you become injured, maimed, or mentally wounded and disabled...they don't tell them that if they are injured they will have to fight every inch in order to make sure they get what they are entitled to.^{NN}

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The Working World After the Military

Transitioning back to the civilian world, especially after being deployed is not easy. Recruiters may describe the military as a ticket out of poverty, but the statistics just don't match up. Many veterans return from war ill-prepared to handle civilian life. The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans reported on the difficult situation of veterans without places to live:

Although accurate numbers are impossible to come by -- no one

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Refusing to Deploy

While Darrell Anderson was lucky (to see why *GO TO 15>>>>*), other soldiers have been punished more harshly for refusing to deploy to Iraq. Augustin Aguayo, a combat medic in the U.S. Army was confined to a military prison in Germany from October 2006 to April 2007 after being convicted of desertion by a court martial. Even though Aguayo was released from prison he has not been discharged and has two felony counts on his record.^{KK}

Camilo Mejia left his post in Iraq so that he would not commit war crimes. He was sentenced to one year in jail and given a bad conduct discharge.^{LL}

Lt. Ehren Watada, the first officer to refuse to deploy to Iraq, is still fighting to avoid a court martial. For more on Lt. Watada *GO TO 10>>>>*

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LIFE AFTER WAR

Stop-Loss: Why you may have trouble leaving the military

Your 8 year tour of duty has come to a close. However, this may not be the end. Remember that little clause? (*GO TO 2>>>>*) In times of “emergency” the government can decide to do as it pleases with its soldiers. Who gets to decide when it’s a time of emergency? Not you! You can blame Congress and the President for that too!

In a time of war, a soldier can be kept in the military indefinitely. Wikipedia says of Stop-loss,

Stop-loss...is the involuntary extension of a servicemember’s enlistment contract in order to retain them beyond the normal end term of service...It was first significantly used just before and during the first Persian Gulf War. Since then, it has been used during American military deployments to Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo during the 1990s and extensively after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the subsequent War on

legally refuse. Someone might tell you that this deployment is to defend democracy or the United States, but this could be a fiction. On your deployment you might expect adequate supplies and medical care, but you won’t necessarily receive them.

In wartime, you may be asked to do things that would surprise you: “From U.S. raids on hamlets in Vietnam, to the French raids in the Casbah in Algeria, to the ongoing door-to-door raids in Iraq, the main features of imperial occupations have never changed.”^{DD}

Let’s say you’re like former U.S. Army Specialist Darrell Anderson:

Anderson was stationed at a checkpoint near a police station in Baghdad when a speeding car swerved in his direction. Anderson said he received orders to shoot. There was a family in the car--two children, a man and his wife.^{EE}

What choice would you make?

1. “Who am I to disobey a direct order? I’d fire on the car”...*GO TO 16>>>>*
2. “No way, I wouldn’t do it”...*GO TO 14 >>>>*

Darrell Anderson,
an Iraq veteran



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I Wouldn’t Do It

Darrell Anderson did in fact refuse to fire on the car. His personal judgement overruled a direct order and his actions had consequences. As Anderson says:

My superior came over and said, ‘What are you doing?’ I said ‘Look, there’s children in the back. It’s a family. I did the right thing. It’s wrong to fire in this situation.’ My superior told me: ‘No, you did the wrong thing. You will fire next time or you will be punished. That’s our orders.’^{FF}

Faced with the threat of punishment, Darrell completed his tour of duty in 2004 and returned to the United States, only to be called back to Iraq. Darrell was stuck in a double-bind. He could not bring himself to return

to Iraq in good conscience. He said, "I can't go back to war. If I return to Iraq, I have no choice but to commit atrocities. And I don't want to kill innocent people."^{GG} However, if he refused to return to war, he would be disobeying orders and have to face punishment.

What would you do from here?

1. You could flee to Canada and attempt to seek asylum.....**GO TO 15>>>**
2. You could turn yourself in to the military.....**GO TO 17>>>**
3. You could go back to Iraq.....**GO TO 13>>>**

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Fleeing to Canada

Darrell Anderson chose to flee to Canada where he sought political asylum. Thus far, the Canadian government has denied these asylum claims. "Geoff Maillard, president of the D.C., chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War, said the refugee board that hears the soldiers' applications has wrongly refused to consider the question of whether the Iraq war is legal — a question central to the soldiers' request for sanctuary."^{HH} As long as asylum petitions are bogged down in a court battle, war resisters in Canada are not safe from arrest or deportation.

In 2006 Darrell agreed to return to the United States and received a "less than honorable" discharge. He was lucky to get out of a court martial. But the decision to desert does not come without a price. A "less than honorable" discharge makes you ineligible for college money from the military, and may be an unsightly blemish on your future resume. In addition, you will lose veterans benefits and access to the VA health system.

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I Would Shoot Them

When you choose to shoot, you bear legal and moral responsibility for your actions, even if you say you were just following orders. Soldiers in Iraq may be caught in a bad situation, but they choose to remain there. Because they are capable of choosing, they need to step up and take responsibility for their actions. Soldiers are not Terminators. They are not machines programmed to kill.

The Nuremberg Trials held individual soldiers responsible for their actions, even if they were compelled by higher-ups. The trials were held after World War II to punish Nazis and their collaborators. Quite a few Nazis on trial used the now famous Nuremberg Defense: "I was only following orders." They claimed that they were not responsible as individuals for the atrocities now known as the Holocaust.

The tribunal rejected the Nuremberg Defense. They decided that an individual soldier must refuse to commit atrocities or else be held responsible for them. As the fourth Nuremberg Principle states, "The fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him."^{II}

Who should take responsibility when atrocities are committed? It's clear that there would be no Holocaust without the individual acts of thousands of soldiers. Each soldier had choices (albeit limited), even while facing severe punishments if they disobeyed. The only way to truly respect each soldier as a human being is to assume that each has the ability to make moral decisions. Both soldiers and their commanding officers are responsible.

As a soldier, commanding officers can order you to commit acts that could later be declared war crimes. If you follow orders you bear moral and legal responsibility (**GO TO 9 >>>**). If you refuse the orders, you can be punished by the military even if you thought the acts were war crimes. Even worse, according to past legal cases, it's up to the military officers, to decide what constitutes a war crime.^{JJ} Soldiers are caught in an awful Catch 22. Resistance or desertion is still an option, but a dangerous one. This is all the more reason to support the courageous examples of the many G.I. resisters.

GO TO 17>>> to hear about more war resisters

For more on G.I. groups **GO TO 23>>>**

If you want to re-think your decision to shoot...**GO TO 13>>>**

If you want to see what life is like after war **GO TO 18>>>**

"This trial [the Nuremberg Trial] is necessary. There is a shared responsibility for such horrible crimes even in an authoritarian state." -- Albert Speer, Hitler's war production minister