



Called to Serve: The World of Military Service Today

Jessica Kennedy

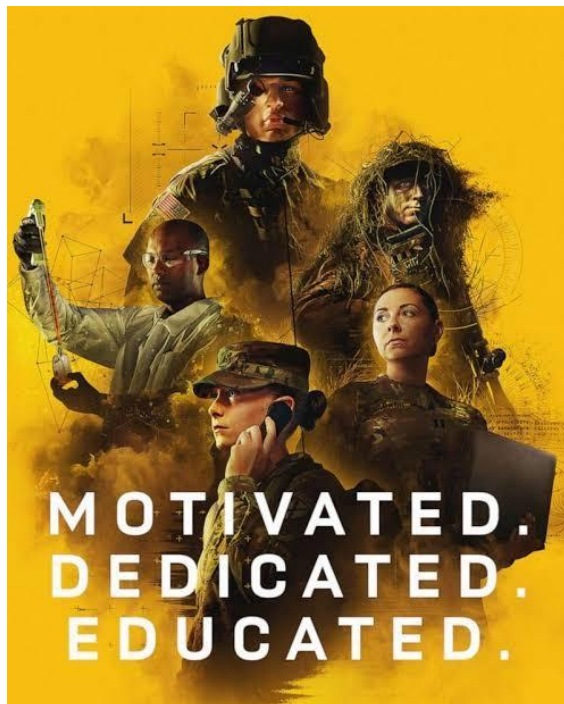
Military recruitment in America is on the rise. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, Army enlistment is currently experiencing a historic increase. In today's world, U.S. Army enlistment is currently experiencing a historic increase, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. The data from the Congressional Research Service indicates this is mainly driven by the expanded age limits and updated marijuana policies. The Army successfully surpassed its recruitment goals this year, signing 61,000 recruits, and since 2024, the US military as a whole has seen its highest recruitment numbers in more than 15 years, according to Sean Parnell, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. In fiscal year 2025, the military's recruiting efforts returned to levels not seen in more than a decade. Currently, the goarmy.com website shows the maximum recruitment age for the U.S. Army is now 42 and recruits are now allowed to join with one marijuana-related conviction. Bringing the age limit back up puts the Army in line with the Air Force and Navy regulations, which both cap enlistment at 41. The Army has widened its recruiting pool to adjust to modern society, allowing more recruits to enlist.



Military analysts recommend if someone is considering joining, there are key requirements, benefits, and steps you should know to prepare for service. After locating a recruitment station, recruits must take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (ASVAB) to determine job selection (Military Occupational Specialty or MOS) and attend MEPS to complete a medical examination and physical fitness test. Military service comes with huge financial and personal benefits. Many MOS roles offer competitive signing bonuses, along with education, healthcare, and compensation benefits. All the benefits and incentives to enlist in the military make service an increasingly competitive career path. Twenty-three-year-old Ishmeal Howard is starting his military journey as he prepares to take the ASVAB to enlist in the Army.

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“The enlistment process is going good for me”, Howard told me in a recent interview. “My father served in the Army, and I always looked up to him, so I decided to join too. I want to be an MP (Military Police) in the Army and go to college”, he says with a smile. “I already have experience doing security work, so I think I’ll be good at it. I’m on social media, and there’s groups online for people who plan to join the military, and we have study groups and give each other tips to pass the tests. Being a part of online study groups is supportive, so you don’t feel alone. “





Howard plans to take his time to study for the ASVAB test and complete the enlistment process, a move that many in the military support due to the weight that the test carries. Researchers at RAND Corporation suggest prioritizing studying for the ASVAB is critical because your score directly dictates your military job eligibility, enlistment bonuses, and training opportunities. Scoring poorly means you are limited to the jobs the military needs to fill, rather than what you actually want to do. It is equivalent to signing a blank check with your career.

As a veteran myself, I understand the importance of taking time to prepare for this lifestyle change. Recruits should take the time to study and not rush the process. Enjoying your time before Boot Camp is vital for your mental well-being, as you are about to enter a highly stressful, restrictive, and isolating environment away from family and friends. Boot Camp requires immense mental endurance and resilience. Stepping in completely burned out or stressed makes the transition much harder. Use this time to physically rest any minor strains or injuries, while spending quality time with loved ones before being geographically separated. Military officials advise recruits to remember to always maintain a light physical training (PT) routine to prepare for physical demands.



[What do I GET when I join the Army? | Army 101 | U.S. Army](#)
[FY25 Sees Best Recruiting Numbers in 15 Years > U.S. Department of War > Defense](#)
[Department News | U.S. Department of War](#)
[The Recruiting Surge Was Engineered. Can It Last in a War with Iran?](#)

6 Lost Vietnam-era US Army Recruitment Ads | 16mm Film Scan



For those who are willing to dedicate themselves to the mission, our military can be a rewarding experience on many levels. From my experience, working towards a mission with fellow soldiers gave us a common purpose. We trusted each other, relied on one another's strengths, and understood that everyone had a role to play. The teamwork we developed helped us accomplish the mission and created bonds that stayed with us long after service. Many veterans advise those considering military service to carefully evaluate their motivations, research their options, and enter with realistic expectations, noting that military service can offer valuable opportunities while also requiring significant commitment and sacrifice.