

ASK QUESTIONS! GET FACTS!

Talking with a military recruiter? Joining up involves an employment contract - before signing anything, read and understand what this commitment means for you. How long will you have to serve? What if you change your mind? What other options do you have to meet your needs? Bring a supportive adult to help get the information you need.

There are many ways to honourably serve Canada! Many careers offer opportunities to serve others - including jobs in developing or war-torn countries. Before you decide, listen to your heart and mind. Visit a guidance or employment counselor, do some research, talk to people you trust. Want to explore some other options? Check out these web sites for ideas:

<http://www.quakerinfo.org/service/index.html>
www.mcc.org/serve
www.vsocan.org
www.pbicanada.org
www.becomingafirefighter.com

NEED MORE HELP?

Below is contact information for a group of people in your area who are concerned about military recruitment. Contact us if you wish to talk over enlistment issues. We will listen and try to help you get the answers you need - not just try to convince you not to join.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR LIFE?



Considering Joining the Military?

"We are not the Public Service of Canada. We are not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people."

~ General Rick Hillier (ret.), Chief of Defence Staff, 2005.

IS MILITARY LIFE RIGHT FOR ME?

Get the facts before enlisting!

Why do I want to join the military?

What am I hoping for? Are those hopes realistic? Are there better ways to meet them? Some people join up in hopes of getting an education or skills training, to serve their country, to get employment and work experience or to escape problems in their current life and home.

What kind of education does the military offer recruits? What's the down side of the military option? Are there other choices for education or service?



Know what you are getting into. The military isn't a "regular job." It's a regimented, sometimes exhausting life where you are expected to do as commanded. Unlike most jobs, this decision potentially impacts your mental health, family, physical health – your life. Once you have signed a military contract, you have made a commitment that might not be simple to leave, so be sure of your choice.

"Our job is to be able to kill people" – can you?

What are your beliefs about killing people (or being killed or permanently maimed)? It's not all that the military involves, but it is an essential requirement – to be able to handle and use weapons in combat. Not just the "bad guys" get killed - civilians and "good guys" are killed in war too. Military service is not a video game – it can be violent and unpredictable work involving deadly situations beyond the training provided. *Sort out your beliefs before signing up.*

Is the military the way you want to "fight oppression"?

Military recruitment advertisers paint a picture of the military life that is dynamic and meaningful – fighting oppression, chaos, and fear – but does it? Have you thought about the ways to change these situations without guns? In 2009/2010, Canada spent \$18.9 billion dollars on the

military. Have you thought about how these funds could be used in other ways – housing, food security, democratic and economic development, emergency assistance, teaching peace in conflict areas? Would you like to be a part of that kind of solution instead?

Do you know the risks of being a soldier?

Mental health issues, substance

abuse – 25 to 30 % of victims of traumatic events develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) leading to other problems 80% of the time - depression, alcohol and drug abuse, anxiety disorders, and sexual dysfunction. PTSD can go on for years, affecting your ability to have good relationships. "Deployment to combat operations and witnessing atrocities were associated with increased prevalence of mental disorders and perceived need for care."



In 2007, 36 Canadian soldiers killed themselves. From 1994-2005, the average was 12-17 per year. This new rate would put military suicides at three times the general population.

(Source: Military suicides up: CBC – April 19, 2008. <http://www.thestar.com/article/416188>)

Spousal and family stress

– Military training and deployment creates unusual and high levels of stress for military personnel and their families. This can lead to abusive situations. Are you willing to take this risk? While there is a policy of "zero tolerance" and some support services in the Canadian Forces, abuse is often hidden or ignored, in part due to stigma and shame.

Suicide – People in the military are more likely to be depressed and unhappy with their lives than the general population. In 2007, 36 soldiers killed themselves. This puts military suicides at 3 times the general population.

Canada is at war and that means the risks are higher than in peacetime. When not at war, military service can be a stressful job – long work hours, duty away from home.