

The Real Insider's Guide to Military Basic Training

**A Recruit's Guide of Important Secrets
and Hints to Successfully Complete
Boot Camp**

Revised Edition

*Written by a recruit for a recruit.
This is the most valuable guide you can
own if you are going to basic training.*

By Peter Thompson, M.Ed.

*The Real Insider's Guide to Military Basic Training:
A Recruit's Guide of Important Secrets and Hints to Successfully
Complete Boot Camp*

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Important Notice: Some ideas expressed in this book are secrets drill sergeants do not want you to know. Several people in the military will not want you reading this guide. In fact, there are dishonorable individuals that have tried to criticize this publication by making false statements about it—especially on the internet. Do not believe the critics or others with hidden motives. Gather as much information as you can about the military, trust your instincts and make your own judgments.

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Acknowledgments

To my best friend and wife,
Lynne.

To Brooke, my daughter.

To all people in the military
protecting our freedom.

Thanks!

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NOTES

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Introduction

Setting the Tone and Special Notes

Do you think the military is a good career choice for you? Do you have the physical and mental fortitude to complete basic training? To be sure, the military is an outstanding challenge and occupational opportunity. However, while most people are successful in the military, it is *not* for everyone. Assuming you are seriously considering enlisting in the armed forces, the fact that you are reading this book is an excellent first step. The more knowledge you have regarding military life, the more informed you are when making the crucial decision to enlist. Knowledge is power, so I implore you to use as many resources as you can before signing your enlistment contract.

Do not rely solely on this book to base your decision. My primary advice to people entertaining the idea of joining the military is to utilize prior service personnel, career counselors, and yes, even recruiters. Unfortunately, there are not many good books available. (I suggest referencing the Appendix of this book for recommendations). Spend the money and time researching the armed services to discover if it is a “good fit” with your personality and interests. I hope that this guide will help the reader understand his/her interests and make the best decision possible.

A good author always knows his audience and writes for a specific type of reader. Therefore, it is important that interested consumers understand the target market for this book. The information contained within the following pages is best suited for young people (17-30 years old) enlisting in the military—primarily in the Marines and Army, but Navy and Airforce personnel can find the information very useful. Most new enlistees are fresh out of high school; thus this guide is tailored accordingly. Additionally, my focus is on those readers enlisting at the lower

pay grades of E-1 to E-4 (Private to Corporal, or Specialist) and below. Although *any* person entering the military will derive some benefit from this guide, officer candidates and college graduates should definitely consult additional resources.

The style of this book is purposefully written in a straightforward manner with just a hint of humor on a few pages. The guide is designed to be brief and easy to read. I am not trying to win a Pulitzer Prize; rather I am sincerely trying to pass on advice which will benefit new enlistees—advice I wish I had when experiencing basic training. As a recruit, time is not on your side and you will appreciate the brevity and simplicity of this handbook. However, be cautioned that some concepts and suggestions are repeated. Rest assured that anything which seems redundant is my way of emphasizing extremely important ideas. The reader will note that the summary at the end of some chapters efficiently underscores and recounts the primary points of that chapter. If you only read the chapter summaries every night before shipping out, you will have secured many suggestions without re-reading the entire guide.

Another point which some people might find unusual is that I mention things which appear to be common sense. Nevertheless, I know from experience that it is not wise to assume all people are aware of what constitutes common sense. Military recruits are a highly diverse set of people with equally diverse educational and intellectual abilities. What may seem evident to some readers is not so apparent to others. For example, some ill-informed recruits believe basic training is like a long camping trip and they have plenty of free time! Many recruits erroneously think everything they receive during training is free, but in fact they are required to pay for their haircuts (a shaved head), toiletries, running shoes, and other items.

If the reader has enlisted already, time is of the essence. Usually, new enlistees will have at least few weeks before ship-

ping out. Start memorizing the parts of this book which are highlighted in the summary sections, start exercising seriously and continue to gather all the information you can about basic training. Underline key parts of this guide and write important notes within its intentionally wide margins. Remember, it is always easier to learn and memorize vital information in a non-stressful environment than it is during the chaotic conditions of training. The stress-induced environment of basic training wreaks havoc with one's ability to learn even simple tasks.

A personal note to the reader: When I entered the military a few years ago, there were no books specifically written about basic training. I relied on information given to me by a friend, my brother Sean (who was prior service) and an Army recruiter with vested interests. Due to the amazing lack of information about the military, I made it a point to take notes during my basic training. My intention to help other recruits by writing a guide actually gave me the drive to make it through the hardest months of my life. Currently, there are still only a few unbiased sources of information expressly regarding basic training. The books which are on the market appear to be good solid books. I will not criticize other authors' work if their purpose to help others is sincere.

However, my guide is a little different from the others because it is framed mostly from the standpoint of a new recruit, not an officer, drill sergeant, or recruiter. This is my second improved edition. In keeping with my mantra, "Written by a recruit for a recruit." I have conducted the most recent research on the latest in military training. Therefore, the reader benefits from having information given by recent military graduates and from an author who wrote about basic training as it was actually unfolding. I know what you will go through during basic because I not only experienced it as a recruit, I documented it when it was still fresh.

As a counselor and a school psychologist, my life is dedicated to the service of helping people realize their potential. To this end, I not only offer this book, but also give an e-mail address so others may correspond with me. Although I make no promises to answer all e-mails, I will honestly attempt to respond to inquiries.

As a precaution against liability, I also have to note that any comment I make is not given as professional advice, but only as my opinion. The readers must assume full responsibility for their actions. Use common sense, do not break any rules, and base your decisions on multiple sources.

If you have questions and want to hear my opinion, please e-mail me at my publisher's webpage www.upublish.com/books/thompson/htm. Again, I may not be able to answer due to the volume of inquiries, but I will try. Good luck and remember that you have already made a very smart move by investing in information.

To Navy, Marine and Air Force Recruits: As noted, Army personnel will derive the most benefit from this book. However, a good portion of the information is general enough to be helpful to any military recruit. For example, the physical conditioning regimen advice, tips regarding avoiding trouble, and understanding the general structure of military training are obviously useful to most enlistees. The aforementioned readers are best served if they read with an eye for broad information.

Generally speaking, the Marines will have to do more in terms of physical conditioning and combat arms training. The Navy and Air Force will focus more on service specific tasks and military discipline codes, and less on physical training than the Army, or Marines. However, the common factor within all military branches is that Initial Entry Training (IET, or basic training) is primarily focused on *indoctrinating* recruits into a radically different lifestyle. Therefore, recruits in other branches of the mili-

tary might not acquire the specific information their Army counterparts do, but they should obtain a good general feel of what to expect during training.

Another point concerns the variations in training cycles. *Every* basic training class is slightly different and you will have a different experience than other recruits. I distinctly remember meeting another platoon of trainees midway through my training cycle. This other group told our platoon about their experiences on the far side of the base. In short, it appeared our neighboring platoon had a somewhat easier and partially different basic training experience. Drill instructors and company commanders have some latitude in how they train their recruits. Training tasks are dependent on the weather, availability of resources, and other variables. It seems that the Department of Defense delegates the general outline for all training cycles, but gives each base freedom on how to meet these broad requirements. Major training requirements for each branch of the military are outlined in the Initial Entry Training (IET) book given to each recruit.

Another factor which makes basic training experiences different is the personality traits and attitudes of individual recruits. Each recruit perceives and experiences his/her environment differently from each other. Some people have a very high tolerance to stress, while others become stressed out quite easily. Additionally, some people learn and comprehend military tasks quicker than others. Not everyone is the gung-ho, high-speed Sergeant Rock type. Individual differences certainly impact how basic training is viewed by various recruits and also accounts for the diversity in training cycles. As elementary as this sounds, recruits with a positive attitude perceive basic training as easier, regardless of their branch of service or personality.

What is basic training?

Basic training, or Initial Entry Training (IET), is a strict and demanding military indoctrination course for new enlistees lasting between 9-12 weeks. Training is extremely restrictive. Recruits put in 16-18 hour days and have little personal time. All new military personnel must go through some form of rigorous formal training. The primary purpose of “basic” is to change a soft civilian into a disciplined soldier. Changing a person’s civilian habits is difficult and takes drastic measures that are highly uncomfortable for the individual.

Sometimes, basic training is combined with Advance Individual Training (AIT). AIT is the specific training a recruit receives which is relevant to his/her military job. If your basic training and AIT are combined (called One Station Unit Training, OSUT) then your total training time at one base is much longer. Generally speaking, combat-type jobs have shorter training terms than technical jobs. For example, an infantry recruit can complete his/her total training in about 14 weeks. In contrast, a helicopter pilot takes approximately a year of training. The length of training is important to keep in mind because training usually entails much more discipline and time than regular active duty service.

Last, it is important to remember that basic training is not like normal military life. Initial training is meant to be stressful, and tough. After you graduate basic, active duty life starts to resemble a rational life with less pressure. Basic training is a special event lasting only a relatively brief time, so do not think your entire military service will be difficult. In other words, the military starts becoming “fun” after basic training.

A word about the Initial Entry Training (IET) book.

The IET book, or similar training book, is given to recruits at the beginning of their basic training cycle. You only get one book, so guard it like your last canteen of water in the desert. If

you lose your assigned IET book, you will hate life during training.

The IET book frankly describes all military tasks you need to complete while in training. Your drill sergeant will make you read and memorize parts of it every day. My advice is to get a copy from your recruiter before you ship out and start memorizing it early. Sometimes recruiters do not have a copy, but you can track one down from a prior service person, the public library, or the internet.

Some readers mistakenly believe my guide is just like the IET book. While some of my information is the same, the IET handbook does not supply a full range of helpful hints or insights like this guide. For example, you won't find little things that will make your life much easier like bringing extra black liquid wax to basic training. Additionally, the IET book will not tell you how to avoid trouble with the drill sergeants, or delineate the psychology behind some military activities. In short, the IET book is immensely valuable. However, my guide should be viewed as a crucial supplement to the IET book. Used together, both books provide a solid means to make basic training easier.

Remember, the two most critical items you need is sound information about basic training and a positive attitude. The more you have of each, the more likely you will succeed. After reading this guide entirely, if you decide the military is right for you, I wish you a sincere GOOD LUCK!

Special Notes: Terms and Disclaimers

For the purpose of clarity and simplicity, this guide utilizes the term "basic training" as being interchangeable with "basic" and "boot camp". Technically speaking, only the Marines have boot camp. Another term which has multiple synonyms is "drill instructor," which is interchangeable with (DI), "drill sergeant," and "sergeant."

An additional side note involves a legal disclaimer—I know this is redundant, but we live in a litigious society. Again, please be advised that this book elaborates only on my opinions. The reader assumes full responsibility for his/her actions and decisions. I do not supply advice as a professional, but rather just to illustrate my ideas regarding my perspective of the military.

The reader should keep in mind that the military and basic training cycles are always changing. Although I honestly try to incorporate the latest military practices within these pages, some changes are impossible to update. For example, the pay scale supplied is continually upgraded every October by the government. Therefore, in 1998 a private made \$900.90 per month, while in 2003 it was \$1150.80. Uniforms, such as the Army's berets and training techniques also change. However, it appears the major training philosophy and structure has been stable for several years. The point here is for recruits to be aware that my guide may not cover everything “new,” but the general concepts are sound.

Finally, there is some concern whether it is a good idea to bring this guide to basic training. My advice is to study this book thoroughly before basic training, *but leave it at home*. Drill sergeants usually do not like these types of books. In fact, people inside the military probably do not want you reading this book. You can share this book with friends, or fellow recruits, but it is not wise to be conspicuous with it. Although I have very high regard for some recruiters and drill instructors, my previous guide has been heavily criticized. Some unscrupulous people (hiding behind fake names) have even tried to discredit this book, but do not believe all the critics and criticisms-- trust your own judgment.

Chapter 1

To Enlist, or Not? A Crucial and Difficult Decision

The following statement may seem obvious, but enlisting in the military should not be taken lightly. Enlisting must be founded upon well thought out reasons and specific goals. After meaningful contemplation, you should be able to reflexively state three reasons why you wish to enlist. Your personal motivations should be explained with the utmost sincerity and with little hesitation. While it is certainly normal to have some doubt regarding enlistment, your doubts should be significantly offset by explicit objectives. If you cannot confidently rattle off your reasons, you should reassess your intentions regarding military service.

The purpose of the previous paragraph is to emphasize the importance of a serious adult decision. The military is a highly regimented, strict and sacrificing lifestyle. Basic training is especially austere and restrictive because it must prepare civilians to live within the military. Despite what you may read, or hear in the popular press, military training is still difficult and unlike anything in the civilian world. It does not matter what type of person you are, you will experience stress and challenges throughout basic. Moreover, you give up many civilian rights once you sign your enlistment contract. For example, unlike military personnel, civilians cannot be “ordered” to do anything by an employer and civilians can easily quit their jobs. Indeed, the military is radically different from life as you know it.

Individuals should never feel compelled to enlist by family members, recruiters, or due to current pressured situations. Your decision to enter military life should be based on a positive foundation. Ideally, new recruits enter the military because they *want to*, not because they feel they *have to* enlist. Again, my intent

is not to scare people who are thinking about a military career. However, several hours of honest self-reflection and research is better than spending years in an occupation which is not for you. While most people find fulfillment in the military, a few individuals live with intense frustration because the service life is a poor fit for them. My advice before enlisting is to think very seriously and do the research to discover if the military is right for you. Read this book entirely before enlisting so you can get a general feel for the military lifestyle and make an informed decision.

Military Benefits: The good and bad

With the latter introduction being the strongest caution I can provide without frightening new recruits, there are many positive reasons I can give for enlisting. In fact, I endorse the military as an outstanding short-term or long-term career choice for most people. I hope that, this section will supply the reader with several solid ideas why they should enlist. Although your best response to a recruiter, or drill sergeant is, “I want to enlist because I want to serve my country,” they know there are other pragmatic reasons for enlistment. Listed next are some (but not all) of the most popular reasons recruits give for enlisting.

Reasons to enlist:

Respected training and job skills. How many good jobs can you name for high school graduates? Flipping hamburgers at a fast food restaurant, cleaning jobs, and low- paying office work are some of the uninspiring jobs awaiting many youths today. You can spend \$20,000-50,000 on a college degree and not be assured of a job when you graduate. On the other hand, you can immediately start a respectable career by enlisting in the military.

Decades ago, America had several industries willing to pay its employees during training. Employers offered sound benefits, some job security, and steady promotions. Unfortunately, the

climate of American businesses has drastically changed and few employers offer the type of paid benefits as the military. Moreover, civilian employers are willing to drop employees at the slightest sign of economic weakness. It appears there is no loyalty or trust between civilian employers and employees. In contrast, the occupational outlook and job security is much better in the military than in the private sector.

The Army has about 250 different types of jobs, called Mission Occupational Specialties (MOS). (See the Appendix for a partial list of military jobs.) Nearly any civilian type of job can be found in the military. From firefighter to trumpet player, the military usually has an equivalent civilian counterpart. Most military jobs are combat arms related (soldiers, artillery, tanks), although support type jobs are plentiful.

The two prominent benefits under this heading are “choice” and “paid training.” It is highly unlikely that people without any experience can choose the job they want and have it provided to them. Second, not only are you free to choose a military job that is of personal interest, the training for your selected job is free. You will receive quality training *and* be paid a full salary while in service. The combination of career choice and being paid is truly an amazing opportunity rarely seen anywhere in the civilian market.

The following example clearly illustrates the military’s benefit. Jack has no experience and only a high school degree. While Jack was a stellar student in high school, making A’s and B’s, he could not secure a job after graduating. Jack has a strong interest in the medical field; specifically he wants to be an operating room technician. Unfortunately, he does not have the \$8,000-10,000 dollars to pay for training at a local community college, so he remains working at a low-paying retail job at the mall. However, Jack could enlist in the military to become a medical technician and get paid over \$1,100.00 per month while training. Addi-

tionally, his housing, clothing and food are paid for in full. After a few years, he could leave the military to take a similar medical civilian job. In short, the military offers Jack a way to meet his goals without skipping a beat, or drowning in a flood of student loans.

Education Benefits

Pursuing a college degree is certainly a worthwhile endeavor. While most people mistakenly believe four-year universities teach job skills, their primary purpose is to stimulate higher order thinking and the ability to reason effectively. The ability to think critically is certainly necessary to expand one's knowledge about the world and to understand complex concepts. However, a college degree does not necessary translate into discrete job skills. In my observation, vocational schools and community colleges teach specific skills, while universities broaden people's general cognitive abilities. When having distinct job skills is married with a university degree, you have an outstanding chance of attaining occupational success. This is not to say you cannot be "enlightened" without a university degree, but higher education does provide a formal framework to this end. Fortunately, the military offers a means by which you can have the best of both worlds. You can learn a solid employment skill, while also securing a college degree.

Educational benefits have been a consistent enlistment enticement since veterans returned home from World War II. The government realizes the benefits of having highly educated personnel. In the government's view, a smarter military is an effective military. While some progressive civilian companies pay for their employees' higher education, such companies are few.

There are many ways to attain a college degree and have the military pay for it. First, if you are already in college, take out government student loans to pay for your school expenses. After

you graduate college with your degree, speak to a recruiter about the military loan repayment program. For every year of military service you give, the military will pay back part of your student loans. For example, when I served a few years ago, the Army paid back about 33% of a person's loans for every year of service. If a soldier had \$15,000 in student loans, the military paid back about \$5000 per year of service. If the soldier served three years, the student loan was paid off in full ($5000 \times 3 \text{ years} = 15,000$). Note, due to the frequent changes in educational awards, the examples given should be viewed only as a general idea of the loan repayment program.

If you have not gone to college, but wish to pursue a degree in the future, inquire about the Montgomery GI Bill and the Army College Fund. The latter funds can supply you with *up to* \$50,000 for future use. Usually, the highest amount of educational funds is only available if you serve a full standard enlistment of four to six years. However, if you sign up for two years (the minimum enlistment contract) you can be eligible for about \$20,000.

The following description is how the system works: While serving in the military, \$100 is deducted from your paycheck. These deductions are usually taken out of your check for about a year, but it could be longer. The deducted money is necessary for you to be eligible to receive a much greater amount which the military gives you at a later date (it is like fee). Even if you put in only \$1,200 for a year, you are still eligible to receive several thousand dollars for college after you leave the service.

The third way the military can pay for your education is by allowing you to attend college classes while in service. The military can pay up to 75% of your school expenses while you serve. Ask your recruiter specifically about the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). This distance-learning program provides a means to attain a college degree

with minimal disruption to your life. DANTES supplies a wide range of courses from high school to college level. Usually classes are “online,” or correspondence type of work. Sometimes, you might be able to attend night classes if your MOS permits. Regardless of the type of course you take, the military usually can pay for it.

Finally, if you are in the Reserves, or National Guard, lucrative benefits similar to the active services exist. In some States, the National Guard will pay a full 100% of school tuition! In my opinion, the National Guard offers exceptional educational assistance.

Large Cash Bonuses

The military offers large cash incentives to tempt many new recruits. If personnel shortages exist in specific fields, then the military will give enlistees “bonus” money for selecting the shortage MOS (job). For example, if there is a personnel shortage in artillery, the Army might offer you a bonus of \$10,000 dollars. The highest bonus I heard of was about \$12,000.

However, there are caveats associated with bonus money. First, you will not receive all the bonus money promised you in a lump sum. Generally, your bonus money will be portioned out to you in small increments every year. To illustrate, let’s say you have a \$2,000 bonus because the army needed tank drivers and you enlisted for this MOS. You might receive \$1,000 of the bonus the first year and the next \$1,000 the following year of service, but you do not get all of the money at once. Additionally, you normally have to enlist for a full term (four, or six years) to be eligible for many bonuses. Last, there is a distinct reason why the military attempts to lure recruits into hard-to-fill jobs—the jobs are usually difficult. Such jobs entail long hours and dangerous work. Always ask your recruiter for all the details about bonuses and what strings are attached to receiving them.

Medical and Retirement Benefits

Although people do not enlist solely for the military's medical or retirement benefits, these two areas are exceedingly significant perks the military offers. With health care costs approaching almost \$600 per month for a family of three, the military offers people a sound way to provide health care for their family. More civilian businesses are passing the cost of healthcare to their employees, but the military is not. The level of professional care provided by military hospitals has impressed me. Additionally, many doctors are trained in highly competitive American medical schools. While it is true patients might have to wait for medical service slightly longer than civilians, it is largely free for soldiers.

Another big benefit concerns retirement. It seems secure retirement is non-existent in the civilian world. However, in the military, a person who serves for 20 years can retire with a stable paycheck every month. For example, if you serve 20 years, you retire with 40% of your pay. This percentage goes up for every year past 20 years. In addition to a consistent paycheck, the retiree retains medical coverage. Smart people who enter the military at 18 and serve a full 20 years can retire at only 38 years old!

Confidence, Leadership and Responsibility

The military expertly trains leaders. It is amazing to watch a 20-year-old person command a squad of men/women and the squad obeys every command given. Leadership and mature responsibility are intangible assets which can last a lifetime. If you learn solid leadership skills, chances are you can capitalize on these important skills within the civilian world. People who have been instilled with the "can do" military spirit usually become successful in their future careers. Do not underestimate the immense power of confidence the military provides its recruits.

World Travel and Excitement

Many recruits enlist because their life of fighting imaginary monsters on their Sony Playstation is boring. The military offers experiences the civilian world cannot. For example, the military is the only place you are sanctioned to plow over trees in a 65 ton Abrams tank, use C-4 plastic explosive to blow up bridges, and fire assault weapons. If you want excitement and adventure, choose the appropriate combat MOS and you will surely find it.

Additionally, if you enlist for more than four years, you will most likely be stationed outside the United States for part of your tour of duty. Opportunities for travel are excellent in the military. My younger brother, who was a combat medic, was stationed in Korea and other parts of the world. His experiences overseas broadened his perspective and enriched his life. Traveling is truly the best type of education a person can receive.

Increased Standard of Living

Do not believe news stories about how military personnel struggle financially, or how many soldiers are on government assistance. The truth is, only a small percentage of military personnel receive assistance because they have foolish spending habits. For example, it is not wise to have six children and two ex-wives on a buck sergeant's salary.

If you manage your money wisely, the military offers the opportunity to live a good life—especially for single personnel. (See pay schedule in the Appendix) To be certain, you will not get rich, but you will acquire job security and decent money. The military provides for big expenses such as food, clothing and housing. If you do not have to pay for insurance, food, or shelter, then you can save this money for other items. The lowest ranking

person (Private E-1) during basic training earns roughly \$1,070 per month (year 2003).

It is an unfortunate fact of life in this country that many new recruits come from impoverished conditions. Living in run-down trailers and trading food stamps is not a good life. Indeed, the military offers a highly respectable means of leaving undesirable conditions.

Physical Conditioning and Challenge

I put this benefit toward the end because I personally believe there are better reasons to enlist than getting into good physical shape. Certainly, basic training will make lazy individuals stronger and more capable, but it will come at a hefty price. Some people who enter the military to get healthy and strong realize they cannot leave once they have attained this goal.

Other people want to prove they have what it takes to make it through basic training. I find it interesting that many people who have thought about the military, but did not join, later regret it. Some individuals who had the chance to serve, but did not, are subtly bothered by chronic unspoken regret. Such people ask themselves, "Could I have met the challenge of basic training? Was I tough enough?" I know these latter statements sound hokey, but I have friends who are troubled by the fact they will never know if they had what it takes.

Duty, Country, Honor, Patriotism

The one reason recruiters and drill sergeants love to hear as to why recruits enlisted is for patriotic reasons. Most recruits do not sign up for this reason, but patriotism becomes a reason during your military service. While many people talk about the words duty, honor, and country, recruits act on them. Patriotic terms take on a much more significant meaning when you proudly wear a United States military uniform. Military patriotism is

something I cannot describe; it must be experienced to fully convey its meaning.

Reasons Not to Enlist and Other Considerations

For all of the previously stated reasons to enlist, remember the venerable adage that nothing worthwhile in life is free. While the military is a superb means to achieve various goals in your life, the government expects much from you. Military jobs, while similar to civilian jobs, have additional responsibilities and restrictions. As I stated earlier, the military is not for everyone. Listed next are some reasons you should reflect on and ask yourself if you can live with them.

Restrictions and Sacrifice

I initiate this section with what I believe is the most important consideration regarding military life. Most recruits do not fully grasp what the term “strict” really means. In the military, you are *told* what to do, not asked. Especially during basic training, you are told when to wake up, what to eat and what to do. If you cannot take orders well, do not join the service.

Many times, recruits will be told to do things they do not like, but they *must* obey. Even after basic training, you are always under the strict supervision of a higher ranking person. You can be the most intelligent and most athletic person in your entire platoon, but still you must obey orders from someone with the IQ of a houseplant if that person has a higher rank than you. To be fair, chances are that your platoon leader and company commander are well educated and will usually treat you with respect. Also, you cannot be ordered to do something which is illegal. Still, most people will find themselves being told to complete highly undesirable tasks, or suffer consequences worse than merely being fired from a job.

The military restricts your freedoms not only by its rank and order system; it enforces military rules via severe consequences. Let us say you are late for morning assembly two times this past month. Although you may have only been one minute late to formation, your drill sergeant thinks the proper punishment is for you to clean all the latrines (bathrooms) in your barracks. Additionally, your sergeant orders you to clean toilets for an entire month. If you refuse to clean the toilets for the assigned month, you can be given even more harsh duties and a reduction of pay. You may even be ordered to work night shifts, or be confined to quarters. Unlike a civilian job where one would simply tell the boss he/she is crazy and quit the job, you cannot quit the military. If you attempt to leave the military without authorization, or disobey orders, you can go to military prison!

There are many military rules which are in stark contrast to the civilian world. For example, you must wear your uniform and hair a specific way. You must meet very strict physical fitness standards. There are things you cannot state publicly, like speaking out against the president. Soldiers must obey military protocols like saluting and standing at attention. You must be ready for surprise inspections at your barracks. You can be ordered not to go to certain places, even on your free time. The bottom line is that once you enlist, you do not have the same rights as a civilian. All military personnel are governed by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Although military law is different than civilian law, soldiers can be tried for violations of the law in both civil and military courts. The danger with being tried in two court systems is that a person can actually be punished twice for one infraction.

The sacrifice portion under this heading also entails being separated from friends and family. Many times, your military orders assign you to a place where you cannot see loved ones. You may find yourself on two week-long assignments in remote areas