

SIGNED UP FOR THE MILITARY?

If You Change Your Mind, You May Not Have to Go

Getting out of the Delayed Entry Program is easy.

What is the Delayed Entry Program?

Most people who enlist are signed up into the Delayed Entry Program (DEP), which is also called the Future Soldiers Training Program by the Army, for up to a year before they report for active duty training. Sign now, pay later. It's a popular way to sell cars, stereos and military enlistment. The DEP is particularly attractive to high school seniors who are unsure about what to do after graduation. A lot can happen in a year (especially for teenagers!), and many young people change their minds about what they want to do with their lives.

How does someone get out of the Delayed Entry Program?

While DEP recruits have incurred a legal obligation to the military, getting out of the DEP is simple: write a letter requesting separation that fully explains why the recruit is unable or unwilling to serve. If there is more than one reason, explain them all. Don't say anything to the recruiter until after this letter is written and sent.

What kinds of reasons are acceptable?

While the military defines specific separation categories, as long as the recruit states clearly that he or she is no longer interested in serving in the military, almost any reason is acceptable. Despite occasional threats of involuntary activation from recruiters, the military currently releases all DEP recruits who request a separation.

The military's list of discharge categories includes: conscientious objection (a belief that it is wrong to take part in war); pursuit of higher education or vocational training; civilian job opportunity; erroneous enlistment or recruiting error; failure to graduate high school; family issues (marriage, children, hardship or dependency); homosexual conduct; medical or psychological

disqualifications; personal problems; failure to report for active duty; and a catch-all "other."

Where is the separation request sent?

The recruiter does not have the authority to grant separations and will try to re-sell the military to the recruit. Therefore, the letter requesting separation should be addressed to "Commander" at the recruiting station where the recruit signed up. You can look up the address of the recruiting station in the phone book (under U.S. Government) or look on the enlistment agreement. Keep a copy of the letter.

What happens after the letter is sent?

The military will review the letter and process the request. The recruit might be asked to appear at the recruiting station for a brief interview but this is not necessary, and, in fact, is not recommended. The recruiter may aggressively try to change your mind and if it doesn't work, may then try to trick you into reporting to a military base or facility. Once you have sent your separation request letter, there is no need for further contact with the recruiter or recruiting station. If the military turns down the initial request or tells you you must report to a military base or facility to get discharged, DO NOT GO. Instead, contact the GI Rights Hotline, 877.447.4487. When the request has been processed, the military issues a void enlistment or uncharacterized separation that will not affect the recruit's record or career.

Where can I get help or more information?

It is helpful to talk to a GI rights counselor about your letter before sending it and to verify that you are, in fact, in the DEP and not some other enlisted status. To reach the nearest free counseling service, call the GI Rights Hotline.

For more details, visit the GI Rights Hotline Web site, www.girightshotline.org, or call 877-447-4487.