

## A Recruiter's Perspective

Here's what U.S. Army recruiters say about the pressures that they face -- from confidential e-mail messages to "NewsChannel 5 Investigates" and from blog postings:

"I think the public needs to know what is done to these great soldiers each and everyday. I am a recruiter assigned to [deleted for recruiter's protection]. I know what goes on every day. I personally have been threatened because I did not make my quota. The fact is that less than 3 in 10 are qualified to join. Unless some rules are bent or broken, we would never get them in -- and if we don't get them in, our career is ruined! No matter how honorably you served when you were in the mainstream Army, no matter what medals you were awarded, when you get snatched by Recruiting Command you are a nobody, and you are treated as such. Time with your family is taken away, weekends taken away, negative evaluation reports -- all because people don't want to join the Army."

"Most recruiters are forced to do the thankless ... job it is. They don't want to be there. The job is horrible, and there is nothing you can do about it. Recruiters get threatened all the time with their jobs if they don't get people in -- every single month, late hours, and six, sometimes seven days a week. Before they were recruiters, they served their country in Iraq and many other places keeping your ass safe and free."

"Recruiting in today's circumstances is by far the toughest job the Army or any other branch has to offer. In this time of war which people tend to be afraid of, as well as the increasing number of high school drop outs and the number of potential recruits with a disqualifying criminal background, it has become near impossible to find qualified soldiers for today's military. The finger should not be pointed at these recruiters. It should be focused on the people in charge, pressuring these soldiers to act in desperation and to go against their moral and ethical beliefs. In all the cases you showed, the recruiter was hesitant to and seemed to not want to go the dishonest route, but something still forced them to add in at the last minute the possibility of cheating the system. Why is that? I know from experience that a recruiter is under a huge amount of stress and pressure from the upper ranks within the chain of command. The recruiters are punished and looked down upon if the monthly quotas are not met. Recruiters are forced to work long hours -- six to seven days a week -- from as early as seven o'clock in the morning, sometimes not getting home to after 10 p.m. Time spent with family and loved ones is almost non-existent, and many recruiters would rather be deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan than to have to work under their current conditions. If the monthly quotas are not met, recruiters are often ordered to attend corrective training that usually takes place early in the morning or long after the work day should have ended. These dishonest acts are actually acts of desperation, recruiter trying to improve the individual quality of life and maybe help them get a break."

"Most recruiters like myself are forced to come out here and perform this duty. This is not our normal, everyday job in the military. We have to come out here and do this job -- or get out. Some of us out here have a difficult time finding individuals to join. Most of us don't possess the skills to be in sales. That's why we joined the military. In normal cases, one would just switch jobs. But in the military, you do it or face the negative wrath of the Recruiting Command. In some places, recruiters are forced to work 12 to 14 hour days, six days a week. The only way they can get time off is to put people in the Army. This however isn't always a guarantee. Most of us out here would

rather do multiple tours in Iraq than to be out here recruiting. The treatment of soldiers is ridiculous. The stress they place us under is crazy. My career has been threatened repeatedly. I been called every name in the book. The recruiting command is like the Mafia. Once they get their hands on you, they feel they can treat you any way they wish. The power they possess over one's military career is enough to make some people fold and do the questionable. They tell you to recruit with integrity, but when you're not able to find a fully medically and morally qualified person to join, you're the biggest piece of crap there is. And for doing the right thing your duty day is extended, your weekend is taken away to get corrective training."

From JACK ARMY blog:

"For failing to make mission (this means that my recruiting station did not enlist our mission - the number of enlistments assigned to my station for a given month), I was degraded and ridiculed instead of being trained, mentored, coached, lead to success. Yet I continued to believe. I continued to put in 60 - 70+ hours per week trying to find ways to get my detailed recruiters to achieve success, only to suffer a repeat of past degradations and ridicule. Sound like a professional organization to you? The icing on the cake? Well, if you've been reading JACK ARMY for this past year, you've probably figured out that something drastic happened that caused USAREC [U.S. Army Recruiting Command] to cut me loose from the fold. Not only was I cut loose, but I was degraded yet again in the form of a General Letter of Reprimand and a Relief for Cause NCOER. I've not mentioned it on this blog until now because it is degrading and embarrassing (and yes, I'll likely relate the details leading to my relief and GLOR). Mostly so because I believed so fervently that MY command (USAREC) wouldn't allow such things to happen if only they knew. I couldn't bring myself to think that senior non-commissioned officers could be anything less than professional. Over the course of the months from November 2004 to about the same time in 2005, I realized that I was a fool. Not only did senior NCO's lose their professionalism, so did many officers in USAREC at the time. And my faith in USAREC was proved to be foolish and misplaced. So, do I recommend recruiting duty to young sergeants and staff sergeants in the US Army? What do you think?"

From "Adventures of a Detailed Recruiter" blog:

"As I was riding home from work a white Tahoe with huge tires flew out of a side street. It barely stopped before it became a wall into which my motorcycle would thrown me. As I passed it I thought for a second 'Man, I wish that the hood had just juttet out enough that I could have nailed it.' I've gone over the hood of a car before. It hurts but as long as there is nothing in front of you when you land, you'll be able to walk away with a few broken bones. Nothing terrible. Had that horrible thing happened, I'd have probably been jacked up enough to get a day or two in the hospital, maybe some surgery to fix a bone or something. In short, I'd have gotten some time away from recruiting. No, I'm not thinking of killing myself (no, you can't have my stereo), and I pushed that thought out of my mind as soon as I realized I'd thought it, but it was there for the fleetingest of moments."

From SoldierFirst blog:

"What I have learned is that in this business, nothing is ever enough, and you are only as good as the day you are on. When you make mission, its good for a few hours. If you fail to make mission, well that lasts for months. It is just simply too much for me to try and comprehend. I know that sooner or later I will look back and be proud of what I have done thus far. But for now, I can only wish that my life had gone in a different direction."