

# PRESBYTERIANS AND MILITARY SERVICE



## Enlistment—Q and A

### What if I decide to enlist in the armed forces?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) teaches that one way Christians can be faithful is through service in the armed forces.

Important points if you are considering enlisting:

- Joining the military is a minimum eight-year commitment, including time spent in the reserves.
- Talk with your family, pastor, and church community if you are considering military service. Discuss the factors that led you to think about enlisting—patriotism, a desire to serve your country, a sense of responsibility, or whatever they may be. Explore any financial and social pressures that may be influencing your decision. In talking, you may clarify your thinking.
- Talk carefully with recruiters from each of the services. Examine the options they provide and choose the one that meets your skills, interests and needs.
- Talk with other individuals who have served in the armed forces, especially those who have served in the branch that interests you.
- Be sure to get every promise of training confirmed in writing, in language you can understand, and have the recruiter sign the papers. Take a witness with you.
- Take all materials home with you and review them carefully. If you are unsure about anything on the materials, contact the G.I. Rights Hotline (800) 379-2679.
- Understand what you are signing, before signing anything.
- If you are or will be a college student, examine the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program carefully before enrolling. Be aware of the expectations.

- Note that the enlistment form states that military laws and policies may change which may impact aspects of your agreement. These changes could result in your enlistment being extended.
- Inform your pastor and the session about your decision.

### What church support will I find once I have enlisted?

The PC(USA) helps recruit, train, and support chaplains who provide worship and pastoral care for members of the armed forces. Seek out a chaplain upon arrival at the place you are stationed. Inform him or her that you are a Christian and ask for a schedule of worship and other church-related activities. The church also teaches that members should support those in the armed forces with prayers and regular communication. Use this time to communicate with your church community about specific prayer requests you may have.

Helpful Contact:

**Presbyterian Council for  
Chaplains and Military Personnel**

Tel: (202) 244-4177

E-mail: [info@pccmp.org](mailto:info@pccmp.org)

[www.pccmp.org](http://www.pccmp.org)

### **PC(USA) POLICY**

200TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (1988)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

“Military forces have served to defend the nation and to preserve the safety, harmony, freedom, and peace of its citizens. There is a long Presbyterian tradition of individuals serving in the armed forces.”

- Minutes, 1988, p. 447

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

[www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)

#### **Stated Clerk**

Office of General Assembly

Room 4406

100 Witherspoon Street

Louisville, KY 40202

Tel: (888) 728-7228, ext. 5424

#### **Presbyterian Peacemaking Program**

100 Witherspoon Street

Louisville, KY 40202

Tel: (888) 728-7228, ext. 8700

[www.pcusa.org/peacemaking](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking)

#### **PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL FOR CHAPLAINS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL**

4124 Van Ness Street, NW

Washington, DC 20016-2120

Tel: (202) 244-4177

E-mail: [info@pccmp.org](mailto:info@pccmp.org)

[www.pccmp.org](http://www.pccmp.org)

#### **SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM**

[www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)

### **CENTER ON CONSCIENCE & WAR**

1830 Connecticut Avenue NW

Washington DC 20009

Tel: (800) 379-2679

E-mail: [ccw@centeronconscience.org](mailto:ccw@centeronconscience.org)

[www.centeronconscience.org](http://www.centeronconscience.org)

### **CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS**

405 14th St. #205

Oakland, CA 94612

Tel: (510) 465-1617

E-mail: [info@objector.org](mailto:info@objector.org)

1515 Cherry St.

Philadelphia, PA 19102

Tel: (215) 563-8787

E-mail: [info@objector.org](mailto:info@objector.org)

[www.objector.org](http://www.objector.org)

### **AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE**

Youth and Militarism—

Conscientious Objection

[www.afsc.org/youthmil/conscientious-objection/default.htm](http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/conscientious-objection/default.htm)

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#### **Presbyterians and Military Service Series**

- Enlistment—Q and A
- The Draft—Q and A
- Conscientious Objection—Q and A
- Selective Conscientious Objection and Just War Principles—Q and A
- Resources on Military Service, the Draft and Conscientious Objection

Series available at

[www.pcusa.org/oga/conscientious-objection.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/oga/conscientious-objection.htm)

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