

November 20, 2018

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chair, Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chair, Armed Services  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member, Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member, Armed Services  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Inhofe and Thornberry, and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

The undersigned military and veterans service organizations, representing millions of current and former service members and their families and survivors, writes to bring to your attention the websites *Army.Com*, *Air-Force.com*, *ArmyEnlist.com*, *NavyEnlist.com*, *AirForceEnlist.com*, *MarinesEnlist.com*, *NationalGuardEnlist.com*, *AirGuardEnlist.com*, and *CoastGuardEnlist.com*. The Federal Trade Commission recently shut down these websites, after finding they “*targeted military recruits and induced them to submit their information by disguising their websites and advertisements as official [US military] recruiting channels and representing that the information would be used solely for [US military] recruiting purposes.*”<sup>1</sup>

As you know, the U.S. Army failed to make its recruitment mission this year.<sup>2</sup> These pernicious websites interfered with the Armed Forces’ capacity to recruit high-quality women and men to our nation’s All-Volunteer Force, thereby undermining military personnel readiness and, ultimately, the national security. They also denied potential enlistees the opportunity to proudly wear their nation’s uniform.

Indeed, the Commission found that *Army.com* specifically told military recruits that the US Army did not need volunteers: “*Please be aware that our military is currently downsizing. Army.com wants you to know that there are more ways for you to serve your country than just military service. If you had a college education you could contribute through engineering, science, law, health care, and more.*” Because this is the exact opposite of the truth – given that the US Army is currently facing a critical shortage of volunteers – the websites’ actions are particularly damaging to military readiness.

The attached screenshots of the websites support the Commission’s findings. Patriotic young Americans visited these websites, trying to enlist in the military to serve their country, but their contact information never was given to the Armed Forces. Instead, their attempts to volunteer with the Armed Forces were re-routed to bad actor colleges that bombarded them with sales pitches to enroll in these “schools” rather than serve in the military. Moreover, potential military

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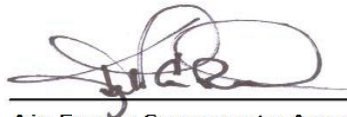
<sup>1</sup> Complaint, *United States v. Sunkey Publishing*, available at [https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/cases/sunkey\\_filed\\_complaint.pdf](https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/cases/sunkey_filed_complaint.pdf) at 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Russel Read, “Why the US military is on the brink of a recruitment crisis,” (Feb. 16, 2018), <https://wjla.com/news/nation-world/why-the-us-military-is-on-the-brink-of-a-recruitment-crisis>.

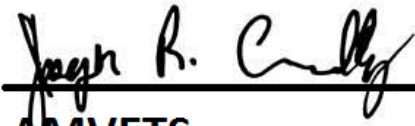
recruits were “*provided the false impression that the military endorsed those schools,*” as the Commission found.<sup>3</sup>

We respectfully urge you and the Members of the Armed Services Committees to direct the Department of Defense, in coordination with the Federal Trade Commission and other federal agencies, to ensure the Services’ military recruitment operations are protected from fraudulent college lead generators.<sup>4</sup> We also suggest you include this matter in upcoming hearings when the Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs present their FY 2020 Budget Request.

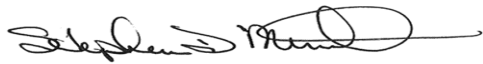
Sincerely,



Air Force Sergeants Association



AMVETS



Army Aviation Association of America



Association of the United States Army



Association of the United States Navy



Blue Star Families

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>4</sup> For background on lead generator websites and how they work, see “FTC Staff Perspective on Lead Generation: Follow the Lead,” (Sept. 15, 2016), available at <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/blogs/business-blog/2016/09/ftc-staff-perspective-lead-generation>. As you may recall, [www.GIBill.Com](http://www.GIBill.Com), another lead generator for bad actor colleges, was shut down by law enforcement agencies in 2012. See US Department of Veterans Affairs press release, “VA To Take GI Bill.Com Domain,” (2012), available at <https://www.military.com/education/gi-bill/va-given-rights-to-gibilldotcom.html>.



Code of Support Foundation



Fleet Reserve Association



High Ground Veterans Advocacy



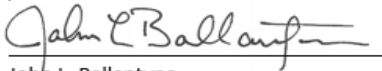
**Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans  
of America**




Ivy League Veterans Council



Jewish War Veterans of the USA



John L. Ballantyne  
Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer  
Military Child Education Coalition



Military Officers Association of America



Military Order of the Purple Heart

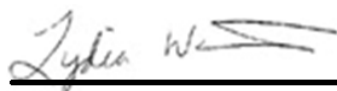


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Non Commissioned Officers Assn.  
of the United States of America



Paralyzed Veterans of America



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Service Women's Action Network



Student Veterans of America



Swords to Plowshares



The Mission Continues



The Retired Enlisted Association



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Tragedy Assistance Program for  
Survivors



U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association & Enlisted Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Art L. ...", set against a light beige rectangular background.

Veterans for Common Sense

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "c sword".

Veterans Education Success

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard F. Neilman".

Vietnam Veterans of America

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https://www.benefits.va.gov/... Search results - lana@veter... QuinStreet Report 7-19-201... help@veteranseducationsuc... (259) - lct146@georgetow... Getting Overpayments of Ve... Home - Army Enlist

INTERNET ARCHIVE Wayback Machine http://www.armyenlist.com:80/ GO FEB MAR AUG 180 captures 17 Dec 2009 - 7 Aug 2018 2016 2018 2019

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## How To Join The U.S. Army

If you are interested in a career in the U.S. Army and becoming an important part of defending our Nations security and interests abroad the Army offers a series of benefits ranging from competitive pay and education assistance to insurance and retirement benefits. Learn the skills you need to succeed while making a difference. Follow the steps below to learn more about enlisting in the U.S. Army!

> Contact a Recruiter <

Search the site ...



### Active Duty

- Can I Join
- 7 Steps to Join
- Active Duty Requirements
- Active Duty vs. Reserve Duty



### Reserves

- Army Reserves
- Benefits
- Requirements
- Basic Training



### Prior Service

- Blue to Green
- Prior Service Enlistment Bonuses
- Prior Service FAQ



### ROTC

- Army JROTC
- Army ROTC
- Scholarships
- ASVAB

### Active Duty

- ASVAB Basics
- Active Duty Requirements
- 7 Steps to Join the Army
- Basic Training
- Delayed Entry Program
- Military Occupation Specialties (MOS)

### Reserve

- Army Reserves
- Benefits
- Requirements

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https://www.benefits.va... Search results - lana@v... QuinStreet Report 7-19-201... help@veteranseducatio... (259) - lct146@georgetow... Getting Overpayments... How To Join The Navy... CYCLEBAR Lake Norma... +

INTERNET ARCHIVE Wayback Machine http://www.navyenlist.com/ GO OCT MAR AUG 67 captures 7 Feb 2011 - 7 Sep 2018 2016 2018 2019

## How To Join The Navy

Joining the United States Navy is a great way to launch or advance your career. From the extensive job opportunities and unrivaled experience, to the exceptional benefits and generous educational assistance programs, America's Navy can help you establish your future as a professional. And it's one place where you can be assured that what you do makes a difference in the world. Every day.

> Contact a Recruiter <

Below are the **5 steps** to joining the Navy:

### Speak to a Recruiter

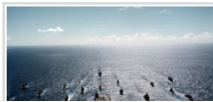
When you are interested in more information in regards to joining the Navy your local recruiter will be able to answer any questions you may have. Whether it is requirements to join, pay scale, benefits, or education your local recruiter will be able give you the answers.



READ MORE >

### Talk With Family and Friends

With any big decision in life it is a good idea to lean on your loved ones for advice and direction. Make sure to talk with them about the Navy, its advantages, and why joining the Navy will be the best opportunity for you.



### Home

- Speak to a Recruiter
- Talk With Family and Friends
- Submit Your Application
- Get Processed
- Start Training
- Contact a Recruiter
- Get Information About Joining
- Careers In The Navy
- Navies of the World

Jumpstart your education!  
Find school programs near you.

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INTERNET ARCHIVE WaybackMachine http://army.com/ 1,111 captures 2 May 1998 - 5 Mar 2018

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Learn About Joining the Army and Educational Opportunities

**Be More.**  
join or reenlist today.

First Name:   
Last Name:   
Phone Number:

Next >

By entering my information and clicking "Next >" I consent to being contacted via phone or text at the phone number above about military and education information. I understand that these calls may be generated using an automated technology.

**ASVAB Question of the Week: February 21, 2018**  
ASVAB

Here is our ASVAB practice question for this week! Check the comments below for the answer!

**ASVAB Question of the Week**

The *drive size* of a socket is determined by the size of the opening that attaches to the

Find your REAL soulmate

I am at:   
Man   
Seeking at:   
Woman

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https://www.benefits.va.gov/... Search results - lana@veter... QuinStreet Report 7-19-201... help@veteranseducationsuc... (259) - lct46@georgetown.e... Getting Overpayments of Ve... Air-Force.com | Learn more...

INTERNET ARCHIVE WaybackMachine http://air-force.com/80/ 48 captures 23 Sep 2008 - 27 Feb 2018

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Coast Guard Marine Corps National Guard Navy

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**Stay Up with the US Air Force**

First Name \*   
Last Name \*   
Email Address \*   
Military Status \*

What newsletters do you want?

**Can I join the US Air Force?**

(U.S. Air Force photo/AMC Photo)

**Basic Eligibility Requirements:**

**Age and Parental Permission**  
You must be at least 18 (17 with your parents permission) but have not reached your 28th birthday (with no prior service)

**Citizenship**  
You must be a born, naturalized, or otherwise legal citizen of the United States.

**Education**  
You must have either a high school diploma OR a GED plus 15 college credits.

**Disqualifiers**  
Drug use, alcohol abuse, other substance abuse, as well as law violations or convictions will prevent your enlistment.

**Height and Weight Standards**