

# USAREC TRAINING CIRCULAR 5-03.2 INFLUENCING AND INTERVIEWING



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# ***SUMMARY of CHANGE***

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Influencing and Interviewing

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- Clarifying Privacy Act requirements while conducting prequalification (throughout)

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# Influencing and Interviewing

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## **PREFACE**

The United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) publication, USAREC Training Circular (UTC) 5-03.2 (Influencing and Interviewing), expands on the fundamental concepts and requirements in USAREC Manuals 3-0, 3-30, 3-31, and 3-32. USAREC has the mission to find and recruit qualified people to join the United States Army. Recruiters provide insight into the world of the Army through the Army Interview.

## **PURPOSE**

This Training Circular describes the fundamental information to conduct effective Army Interviews, keeping the best interests of the interviewee and the Army in mind.

## **SCOPE**

This UTC supports the “how to perform” the critical task “Conduct the Army Interview” for all recruiters and telling the Army Story in support of recruiting operations. USAREC Manual 3-31 (Recruiting Station Operations), provides additional insight to understand operations at the recruiting station level. Specific performance steps for this critical task, and all other critical tasks, are accessible through the Central Army Registry (CAR) at <https://rdl.train.army.mil/>.

## **APPLICABILITY**

This manual applies to all members of USAREC, including enlisted (prior and non-prior service), chaplain, healthcare, and Special Operations Recruiting Battalion (SORB) recruiters. This UTC supports all individual steps relating to this critical task.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

The proponent for this publication is the Doctrine Division, G-3/5/7, Headquarters, United States Army Recruiting Command. Send comments and recommendations on Department of the Army (DA) Form 2028, Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms (Jun 2018), to HQ USAREC, ATTN: Doctrine Division, 1307 Third Avenue, Fort Knox, KY 40121, or by email to [usarmy.knox.usarec.list.doctrine@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.knox.usarec.list.doctrine@army.mil).

# INTRODUCTION

The Army Interview is the most important critical task that a recruiter performs. Mastering the skills necessary for its execution and comprehensive knowledge of its components results in success. Pivotal to a successful interview is a recruiter's ability to leverage facts, evidence, and emotion as influence. The intent of each chapter is to demonstrate the considerations necessary within influencing and interviewing to result in a commitment to join the United States Army.

USAREC Training Circular (UTC) 5-03.2 consists of eight chapters:

**Chapter 1** discusses the role of a recruiter as a leader, counselor, and mentor.

**Chapter 2** covers the fundamentals of the Army Interview and explains the four technical skills associated with it: preparation, questioning, product knowledge, and establishing trust and credibility.

**Chapter 3** discusses the steps of the Army Interview: establish rapport, tell your personal Army Story, tell The Army Story, prequalification, identify and establish goals, present facts, generate and compare alternatives, decision-making process, work through obstacles, engender the commitment, and follow up.

**Chapter 4** expands upon the concepts of dominant buying motives, goals, and passions.

**Chapter 5** covers storytelling and provides guidance for sharing your personal Army Story and The Army Story.

**Chapter 6** discusses the process for overcoming objections and obstacles. It details the steps and provides several examples.

**Chapter 7** covers the identification of the problem and connection to a solution.

**Chapter 8** covers commitment and closing techniques. It provides timing, preparation, and a comprehensive list of proven closes.

## Chapter 1

# The Recruiter: The Face of Our Army

## INTRODUCTION

1-1. Army recruiters and their families live next door to other Americans. They visit the homes of leads, prospects, applicants, and the friends and families of prospects and applicants. They are a regular presence in nearly every high school in America. In most communities—urban, suburban, and rural—the recruiter is the face of the Army.

## THE RECRUITER AS A LEADER

1-2. The U.S. Army defines leadership as the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization. Army leadership is based on a set of core values, including loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. The Army expects its leaders to embody these values and demonstrate competence, character, and commitment.

1-3. Army recruiters who exhibit strong leadership qualities serve as role models and display skills and character developed through Army service. It is impossible to overstate the importance of trust. Recruiting requires consistent use of integrity and respect to build and maintain trust with prospects and their influencers.

1-4. Effective leaders are persuasive communicators who positively influence prospects' perceptions and decisions regarding enlistment. Army recruiters motivate and inspire others by highlighting the opportunities for personal and professional development within the Army. Recruiters with strong leadership qualities offer guidance and support throughout the recruiting process by helping others navigate and understand the commitments and expectations of Army life.

1-5. Army recruiters use leadership throughout the process of influencing and interviewing in a variety of ways, including:

## SHOWCASING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1-6. Recruiters highlight leadership development by sharing stories and testimonials from Soldiers who have developed significant leadership skills throughout their service. This demonstrates the Army's commitment to leadership development, inspiring prospects who aspire to be leaders. As an example, a recruiter explains the various leadership roles and paths they took within the Army, outlining the responsibilities and privileges associated with each. This underscores the potential for career advancement and leadership opportunities within the Army, appealing to the prospects' ambitions.

## EMBODYING THE ARMY VALUES

1-7. Recruiters consistently exhibit the Army's core values in interactions with others, reinforcing the ideals of those values. This provides tangible and intangible examples of the Army Values in action, building credibility and trust with prospects.

## ACTING AS A MENTOR

1-8. Recruiters act as mentors to prospects, offering advice, guidance, and support as they consider enlistment. This fosters a supportive relationship with prospects, highlighting the mentorship and leadership culture within the Army.

## USING PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

1-9. Recruiters employ persuasive communication techniques rooted in leadership principles to engage and influence prospects. This enhances a recruiter's ability to effectively convey the benefits, options, programs, and incentives (BOPs) associated with enlistment and address prospects' concerns and objections.

### Vignette

**Sergeant Amy:** “When I first joined the Army, I was searching for a sense of purpose and direction. Throughout my journey, I discovered that the Army not only provided me with clarity but also invested in my growth as a leader. One vivid example of this was during my deployment to Afghanistan. While overseas, I was tasked with leading a convoy through hostile territory, where quick thinking and effective communication were paramount. Despite facing intense pressure, I maintained composure and guided my team safely through the mission, demonstrating leadership under pressure. This experience taught me invaluable lessons in decision-making and adaptability, skills that I continue to utilize today.

Through dedicated mentorship and participation in various leadership development training courses, I acquired the skills necessary to lead diverse teams in different environments and situations. Now, as a recruiter, I employ these leadership skills daily in guiding prospective recruits through their decision-making process. I understand the importance of clear communication and empathy, ensuring that each individual feels supported and informed as they consider joining the Army. By sharing my experiences and offering mentorship, I aim to inspire the next generation of leaders and help them realize their potential within the Army. If you’re looking to enhance your leadership abilities, take on greater responsibility, and experience personal growth, the United States Army offers unparalleled opportunities for development and advancement.”

1-10. Effective use of leadership in Army recruiting requires authenticity, empathy, and a deep understanding of the Army Values and the aspirations and concerns of prospects. Successful recruiters engage prospects with genuine stories and examples of leadership, offer mentorship and guidance, and embody the values and qualities of an Army leader to inspire and persuade prospects to commit to enlistment.

## THE RECRUITER AS A COUNSELOR AND MENTOR

1-11. Leaders in the Army counsel Soldiers and Civilians. Recruiters provide a form of counseling to leads, prospects, and applicants for the Army. Recruiters lead prospects through the decision-making process by using the same techniques they used with subordinates in their previous military occupational specialty (MOS).

1-12. Mentoring is a powerful tool for personal and professional development and plays a role in leading others to join the Army. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22 (Army Leadership and the Profession) defines mentorship as “the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect.” Recruiters are role models and mentors to many of America’s citizens who are seeking to develop a plan for their careers. It is important to understand that the mentored choose the mentors, not the other way around. Therefore, recruiters who constantly develop themselves as a leader and master the art and science of counseling establish themselves as valid mentors to those seeking guidance about Army service.

## THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN RECRUITING

1-13. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and deal skillfully with one's own emotions and the emotions of others (as by regulating one's emotions or by showing empathy and good judgment in social interactions).

1-14. Empathy refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of others. It involves recognizing the emotions of others, understanding their perspective, and responding with compassion and support. Empathy is crucial for building trust, fostering teamwork, and maintaining positive relationships within the Army and with the civilian population.

1-15. Recruiters practice genuine empathy and are careful not to use it in a manipulative manner. Authentic empathy enhances the recruiter-prospect relationship. This contributes to a positive experience and helps prospects feel confident and supported in their decision to join the U.S. Army. Demonstrating empathy requires practice and a sincere commitment to understanding and supporting others.

## SUMMARY

1-16. Recruiters play a critical role as leaders, counselors, and mentors. Recruiters actively listen and provide guidance to assist prospects in making informed decisions about their future in the Army. This mentorship extends through the recruiting process and supports Soldiers throughout their Army career.

1-17. Empathy plays a crucial role in establishing connections. It has emerged as a fundamental aspect of successful recruiting. Recruiters forge genuine connections by understanding and validating the concerns, aspirations, and challenges faced by potential recruits. Empathy establishes trust and encourages open, honest communication.

## Chapter 2

# The Fundamentals of the Army Interview

### INTRODUCTION

2-1. The Army Interview is the most critical task a recruiter undertakes. Its success directly contributes to filling the ranks of America’s Army. Thus, mastery of influencing and interviewing is essential.

2-2. The recruiter is a representative of the Army and takes on the roles of a Soldier, leader, mentor, and counselor. This wide range of roles is possible due to the adaptability and versatility of the recruiter.

2-3. During the Army Interview, the recruiter shifts seamlessly between these roles based on the situation and the needs of the potential recruit. This flexibility ensures the recruiter effectively addresses various concerns or problems as they arise.

2-4. The ability to conduct an effective Army Interview and transition between various roles is not a natural skill, but one that develops over time. It demands consistent practice and repetition.

2-5. A comprehensive understanding of the components of the Army Interview and the technical skills necessary for its successful delivery is paramount. This understanding equips recruiters to guide prospects through the process effectively.

2-6. The Army Interview is not an isolated task. It is the pivotal stage of a longer process during which a prospect becomes an applicant. It is the result of extensive work in areas such as lead generation, prospecting, and follow-up. This signifies that the Army Interview is the culmination of the recruiter’s efforts and determines overall success.

**Table 2-1. The Technical Skills of the Army Interview**

PARA	COMPONENT	SUMMARY
2-9	Preparation	Evaluate, Organize, Strategize
2-28	Questioning	Description, Purpose, Approach
2-32	Product Knowledge	Benefits, Options, Incentives, Programs
2-38	Establishing Trust and Credibility	Foundation of the Army Interview

### THE NATURE OF THE ARMY INTERVIEW DEFINED

2-7. The Army Interview represents a specialized form of verbal interaction designed for specific purposes. The interview is not a casual conversation or ordinary discussion. During the interview, the recruiter establishes an atmosphere of understanding and open communication, free from judgment or criticism.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE ARMY INTERVIEW

2-8. The primary goal of the Army Interview is to secure a commitment from the prospect to join the Army. Alongside this primary purpose, the interview aims to gather and provide essential information, assess individual qualifications, and aid prospects in shaping their career goals. Furthermore, it strengthens the prospect’s dedication and loyalty to an organization in which they can take pride—the U.S. Army.

### PREPARATION

2-9. Preparation plays a pivotal role in successful counseling sessions during the Army recruiting process. Being well-prepared and organized not only reinforces your confidence as an Army professional but also sets the stage for productive interactions. See Appendix A for an example pre-interview checklist. Before each interview, a successful recruiter always takes the following steps:

### Blueprint information review

- Examine the blueprint information, as defined in UTC 5-03.1 (Prospecting, Processing, and Analysis), gathered during prospecting and interactions with the prospect. Additionally, consider insights received from third parties such as friends, parents, school officials, or Future Soldiers. This information serves as a valuable foundation for the upcoming interview.

### Importance of information review

- Reviewing previously gathered information before the interview ensures a clear understanding of the prospect's background, needs, interests, and goals. This knowledge is instrumental in establishing trust and credibility and guiding the prospect through the process effectively.

### Use of information

- Use previously gathered information to identify potential obstacles, understand the prospect's needs and interests, and present Army opportunities that will best help them achieve their goals. This information forms the basis for determining the best course of action (COA) during the interview. For example, if a prospect wants to become an accountant, the recruiter researches the accounting program at local colleges. Then, the recruiter identifies appropriate Army BOPs that align with the prospect's goal.

## PRESENT A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

2-10. An Army recruiter's appearance and conduct are vital to establishing credibility. The recruiter is the foremost authority on Army matters when conversing with prospects, and their professionalism reflects this.

- **Appearance matters:** A recruiter's appearance is the first impression of professionalism. Attire, hygiene, and overall conduct represents the recruiter and the entire Army.
- **The first Soldier encounter:** Keep in mind that for many prospects, the interaction with a recruiter is the prospect's very first encounter with a Soldier. Given the high expectations the American people hold for the Army, it is essential to exceed those expectations.
- **Environment:** Ensure the recruiting station and government-owned vehicle are impeccably neat and clean. The condition of the office, equipment, and furniture sets the tone of the Army Interview. The principle is simple: first impressions are lasting impressions.

## SELECT AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION

2-11. While an Army Interview can take place in various settings, choosing the right location is crucial for a productive discussion. When selecting a location, consider the following:

- **Minimize distractions:** Select a location that minimizes interruptions and distractions, ensuring an environment conducive to open communication.
- **Prospect's comfort zone:** Consider the prospect's comfort when selecting a location. Whether at the recruiting station, the prospect's home, or another venue, respecting the prospect's choice fosters openness and honesty.
- **Caution on closed-door discussions:** Adhere to Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1304.33, Protecting Against Inappropriate Relations During Recruiting and Entry Level Training, Enclosure 3 (Procedures), guidelines that recommend keeping doors open during discussions with recruits and trainees. Exceptions may apply when certain conditions necessitate closed-door discussions, but such sessions should be brief and follow established guidelines.

2-12. An example of an ideal location outside of the office is a library. A library is a public space (providing comfort) that is quiet and spacious (minimizing distractions).

## SCHEDULE ADEQUATE TIME

2-13. When scheduling appointments, allocate sufficient time for a comprehensive Army Interview. It is important to note that every interview differs based on the prospect's interests. It is a best practice to allow at least two hours to conduct an Army Interview. Some interviews are accomplished in less time while others require more.

2-14. It is important to clearly communicate the expected duration of the interview to the prospect for planning purposes. Respecting the prospect's time and providing realistic expectations is essential. Note: Keep in mind that some prospects need flexibility in scheduling due to personal commitments and obligations. Respecting this flexibility builds trust and credibility.

2-15. Arrive on time or slightly ahead of the agreed-upon scheduled start. Punctuality reflects professionalism and respect for the prospect's valuable time.

### **INVOLVE INFLUENCERS**

2-16. Understanding who influences the prospect's decision-making process is critical. Involve these influencers in the interview, as outlined in the blueprinting process, whenever possible. Recruiters prepare to address influencers before, during, and after the Army Interview to further clarify information and discuss concerns.

2-17. If a prospect is married, requires parental consent, or relies on others' advice, schedule the appointment to include these influencers. This proactive approach identifies obstacles earlier in the process, allowing more opportunities to alleviate concerns during the conversation and overcome objections when engendering the commitment.

2-18. Involving influencers facilitates the decision-making process and underscores the Army's commitment to transparency. Keep in mind that influencers also serve as referral sources and including them in decisions increases the potential of receiving a referral.

### **ORGANIZATION**

2-19. Organization is essential when conducting interviews. While preparing, thoroughly review all available blueprint information, identify key topics to explore, and gather relevant evidence related to the prospect's interests and known factors.

2-20. Gather evidence pertinent to the blueprint information—articles, college brochures, local news stories, summaries of global events—to support the discussion. Determine if the appointment resulted from an Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Career Exploration Program (ASVAB CEP) referral or if the prospect is interested in specific Army programs or training opportunities.

2-21. Recognize potential obstacles, including past negative military experiences by a family member, concerns expressed during initial contact, or significant others who have reservations. Develop strategies to address these challenges proactively.

2-22. Strong preparatory organization makes a recruiter flexible to adapt to the prospect's unique needs and circumstances. Focus on achieving the desired outcome while remaining open to unexpected developments.

### **APPROACH AS STRATEGIC COUNSELING**

2-23. It is important to be deliberate when planning the approach to the Army Interview. Develop proficiency in assessing the situation and understanding the prospect's personality. Initiate the interview using a technique that best elicits goals and aspirations, then transition into a combined approach to solidify COAs and secure the commitment to join the Army. For more information on the approaches to counseling see Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 6-22.1 (Providing Feedback: Counseling—Coaching—Mentoring), 2-40 (Plan the Counseling Strategy).

2-24. Assess the situation and the prospect's demeanor to appropriately tailor the approach. For instance, beginning with a nondirective approach may encourage input that reveals the prospect's goals and aspirations.

2-25. Progress toward commitment using a combined approach that helps solidify action plans and engenders a commitment to Army service. When scheduling applicants for processing, the recruiter directs the timeline. Therefore, the directive approach becomes relevant.

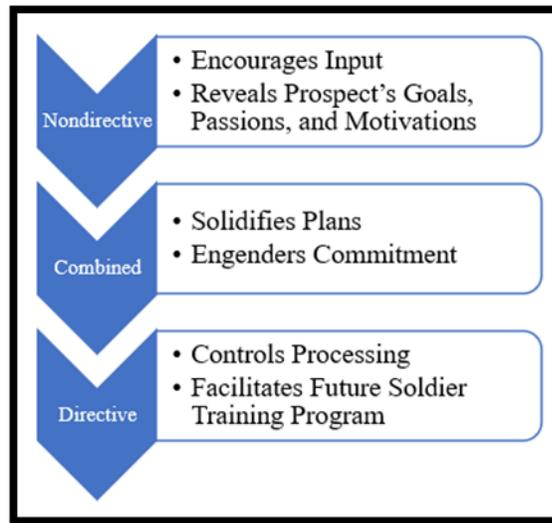


Figure 2-1 Strategic Counseling Flow

### CREATE A COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE

2-26. Fostering a sense of comfort and relaxation is essential during the interview. Whether at the recruiting station or another location, ensure the environment promotes ease and professionalism.

2-27. When the interview occurs at the recruiting station, make provisions for refreshments such as bottled water, coffee, or soft drinks, and ensure ample seating for all participants. Attention to detail contributes to establishing an atmosphere of professionalism and credibility from the outset.

### QUESTIONING

2-28. Questioning is a skill that not only builds trust but also paves the way for deeper understanding, better decision-making, and stronger relationships. To effectively question, a recruiter must understand the role of questions and implement several enhancements.

#### THE ROLE OF QUESTIONS

2-29. Questions are extremely versatile. Understanding the role of questions during different points of the interview helps the recruiter formulate queries that achieve a specific result. Questions achieve the following:

- **Gather information:** The primary role of questions is to gather information. In the context of the Army Interview, questions uncover factors necessary for commitment and entrance into Army service.
- **Assess fit and suitability:** Recruiters gauge a prospect's fit for the Army in terms of values, discipline, physical capabilities, and aptitude. They also determine the prospect's suitability for specific roles or units within the Army.
- **Build rapport:** Employing active listening while asking questions builds rapport with a prospect by demonstrating attentiveness. Rapport is enhanced through the appropriate use of follow-on questions.
- **Clarify misunderstandings:** Questions asked during the Army Interview create an opportunity to provide clarity. Many prospects have misconceptions or concerns about Army service. Asking and answering questions ensures mutual understanding.
- **Enhance guidance and counseling:** Recruiters play the role of mentors and counselors. Through questions, they identify areas where the prospect needs additional guidance or support in reference to the decision to join or preparation for Army life.

- **Solicit feedback:** Questions provide an opportunity for feedback. By asking the prospect to clarify or expand on previous answers or experiences, recruiters ensure a thorough understanding and make better assessments.
- **Evaluate motivation:** There are many reasons why prospects join the Army. Questions assess the depth and authenticity of a prospect's motivation and predict a prospect's level of commitment to joining the Army.
- **Identify challenges:** Questions uncover obstacles or objections the prospect faces in joining or succeeding in the Army. This includes challenges related to physical health, past legal issues, personal commitments, or other concerns.
- **Identify knowledge gaps:** The Army Interview is an opportunity to educate the prospect about the Army and its values, expectations, opportunities, and challenges. Questions identify areas where the prospect needs more information.
- **Aid in conflict resolution:** Questions identify the root cause of a conflict or disagreement. Understanding the root cause facilitates compromises and solutions that satisfy all parties involved. This is useful when identifying smokescreens and overcoming objections.
- **Spark curiosity:** Questions provoke interest and spark curiosity during the Army Interview, encouraging prospects to explore their desires and interests. By using open-ended, future-oriented, personalized questions, recruiters foster engagement, build connections, and showcase the possibilities of Army service.
- **Promote critical thinking:** Well-crafted questions challenge prospects to think deeply, analyze situations, and develop solutions. They can help a prospect move beyond superficial understanding to a more profound grasp of a subject.
- **Encourage self-reflection:** Personal growth often starts with questions. Asking oneself about life's purpose, personal values, or future goals leads to greater self-awareness and growth.
- **Build relationships:** Questions show interest and curiosity in others, helping to build rapport and trust. They deepen interpersonal connections and foster mutual understanding.
- **Empower others:** By asking questions instead of giving direct orders or advice, recruiters empower prospects to identify their own solutions, boosting confidence and ownership of outcomes.

## QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

2-30. The quality of information obtained when asking questions is enhanced by how the questions are asked. This is particularly impactful in a structured setting like the Army Interview. Figure 2-2, below, provides a framework for questioning techniques.

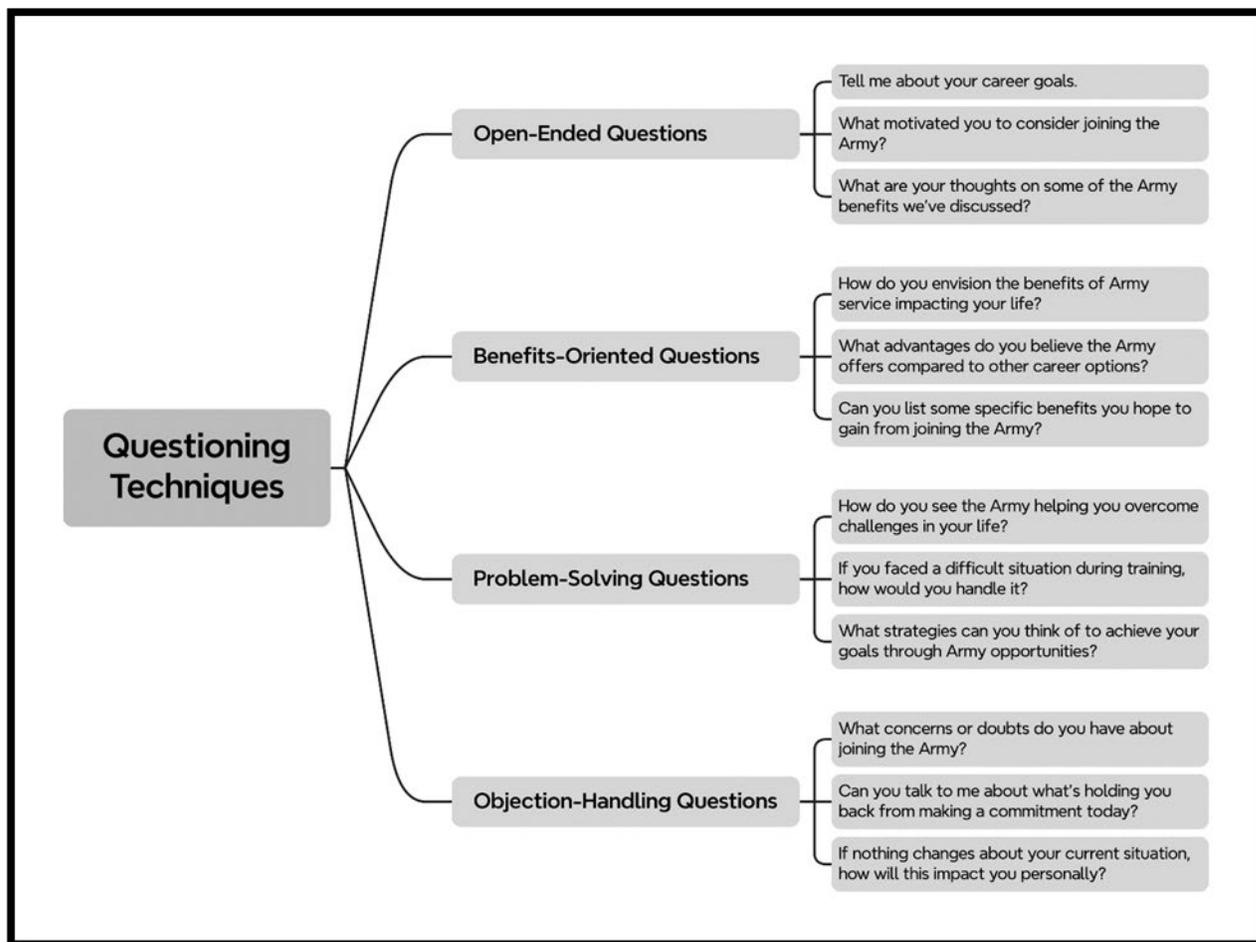


Figure 2-2. Questioning Techniques Mind-Map

2-31. Recruiters apply the following techniques when asking questions:

- Start with the “Big Five”: The “Big Five”—otherwise known as “The Five Ws”—establish the groundwork for a discussion.
  - **Who?** This establishes the individuals or groups involved.
  - **What?** This determines the action or subject.
  - **When?** This identifies the timing or sequence.
  - **Where?** This locates the setting or environment.
  - **Why?** This seeks out reasons, causes, or motivations.
- **Open-ended questions:** Open-ended questions elicit more than just a “yes” or “no” answer. They allow the prospect to express themselves and provide detailed answers. Example: “What are some things you enjoy doing?” instead of “Do you have any hobbies?”
- **Clear and concise wording:** Use questions that are clear and free of Army jargon or complex terminology. This ensures the prospect understands the question and enables them to provide a relevant answer.
- **Neutral tone:** Successful recruiters phrase questions with a neutral tone. They avoid leading or biased wording. This promotes honest and unbiased responses. For instance, instead of asking, “You do know the Army is tough, right?”, ask, “How do you perceive the challenges in the Army?”
- **Follow-on and probing questions:** When a response is unclear or warrants further exploration, recruiters ask follow-on questions to dive deeper. Example: “What makes you feel that way?” or “Can you tell me more about that?”

- **Question pacing:** It is important to avoid bombarding the prospect with multiple questions at once. This is overwhelming and leads to incomplete answers.
- **Maintain respect and sensitivity:** Some questions delve into personal or potentially sensitive areas. It is essential to approach these topics with care, ensuring the prospect feels respected and safe.
- **Body language and non-verbal cues:** The effect of a question relies on more than just the words used. Positive cues include maintaining eye contact, open posture, and the avoidance of aggressive or confrontational body language. This makes the prospect more comfortable and forthcoming. It is similarly important to observe the prospect's body language and cues during questioning.
- **Feedback and confirmation:** After receiving an answer, it is helpful to summarize or paraphrase the response to ensure understanding. This is accomplished by saying things like, "So, what you're saying is..." or "If I understood correctly, you feel that..."
- **Practice active listening:** To craft relevant and impactful questions, it is important to fully understand what the prospect is saying. Active listening involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering.
- **Avoid leading questions:** Effective questions do not lead the prospect toward a particular answer. For example, ask "How did you feel about the workshop?" rather than "You liked the workshop, didn't you?"
- **Be genuine:** Recruiters ask questions out of genuine curiosity, not because of any sense of obligation. Authenticity encourages open and honest responses.
- **Limit the use of "why":** While "why" can be powerful, overusing it sometimes comes off as accusatory or makes prospects defensive. Instead of "Why did you do that?", ask "What led you to make that decision?"
- **Encourage elaboration:** Phrases like "Can you tell me more about that?" or "What do you mean by..." help delve deeper into a topic by encouraging a prospect to expand on their reply.
- **Study effective interviewers:** It is beneficial to watch or listen to skilled interviewers—journalists, public speakers, podcasters, or investigators. Observing their techniques, the flow of their conversations, and how they handle challenging subjects helps a recruiter develop their skills.
- **Practice regularly:** Like any skill, open-ended questioning improves with practice. It is important to engage in genuine conversations, attend workshops, and practice in role-play scenarios.
- **Stay patient:** When a recruiter is patient, they allow the prospect ample time to think and answer. Do not rush prospects or finish their sentences. Sometimes the most insightful responses come after a pause.
- **Clarify and summarize:** Periodically clarifying a point or summarizing the conversation ensures the recruiter and the prospect are on the same page.
- **Use of scenario-based questions:** Scenario-based questions allow a prospect to visualize themselves using Army benefits, options, programs, and incentives (BOPI). When asking hypothetical or scenario-based questions, recruiters set the context clearly and encourage the prospect to ask clarifying questions. This allows a recruiter to highlight how Army opportunities discussed impact the prospect's path to achieving their goals. See the below vignette for an example of the scenario-based question.

### Vignette

**Recruiter:** “Imagine this scenario, John. You’ve completed your Army training, and you’re now serving in your first unit. You’re part of a close-knit team, tackling challenges and gaining the skills and experience that we’ve discussed. How do you think this will impact your life?”

**Prospect:** “That sounds like it would help me out a lot, but I’m not sure if I’m fully prepared for it.”

**Recruiter:** “I understand your concerns, John. Let’s explore this scenario further. Picture the sense of accomplishment and pride you’d feel every day, knowing you’re contributing to something bigger than yourself. Now, what steps do you think you’d need to take to overcome any challenges you encounter along the way?”

**Prospect:** “Well, I guess I’d need to stay dedicated, learn continuously, and rely on my team for support.”

**Recruiter:** “Exactly, John. That determination and teamwork are at the core of the Army Values. By committing to this journey, you’re not just shaping your future; you’re becoming part of a team that’s always ready to face any challenge. How does that make you feel about taking the next step?”

**Prospect:** “It sounds like an incredible opportunity. I think I’m ready to explore this further and learn how to join.”

**Recruiter:** John, are you ready to join the active duty Army?

## PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

2-32. It is important to know what the Army and Army Reserve offer. Think of it like knowing everything about a video game before its purchase. Its features, how to play it, and the gain from playing will be known in advance. In the same way, when people are thinking about joining the Army, they need to know what they are signing up for. This helps them make good choices, and it helps the Army keep its members happy and informed. For detailed information on BOPs, reference Army Regulation (AR) 601-210 (Regular Army and Reserve Components Enlistment Program), USAREC Regulation (UR) 601-210 (Enlistment and Accessions Processing), and the following websites:

- Health Insurance: <https://www.tricare.mil/>
- Dental Insurance: <https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental>
- Life Insurance: <https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/sgli/>
- Pay and Allowances: <https://www.dfas.mil/MilitaryMembers/>
- VA Benefits (Education and Home Loan): <https://www.VA.gov/service-member-benefits>

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**Note:** Always refer to up-to-date USAREC Messages, Ops flashes, and policies to ensure information is current and correct

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## BENEFITS

2-33. Army benefits are guaranteed types of non-monetary compensation or services provided to improve the quality of life of every Soldier in conjunction with their salaries and wages. Examples of benefits are:

- Health, Dental, and Life Insurance
- Post 9/11 GI Bill
- Montgomery GI Bill
- Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve
- Vacation with Pay

## OPTIONS

2-34. Army enlistment options are agreements added to the enlistment contract guaranteeing terms of service, specialized training, or duty location. Examples of options are:

- Option 3: Training of Choice
- Option 4: U.S. Army Airborne
- Option 19: Station of Choice
- Option 40: U.S. Army Airborne Ranger

## PROGRAMS

2-35. Army enlistment programs are pathways to service guaranteed in a contract. Examples of programs are:

- Standard Training Program
- Alternate Training Program (Split Option)
- Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP)
- Officer Candidate School (OCS)—also considered an option
- Warrant Officer Flight Training (WOFT)—also considered an option
- Army Civilian Acquired Skills Program (ACASP)
- Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC)

## INCENTIVES

2-36. Army incentives are monetary offerings, or the availability of an option designed to motivate the selection of a specific career field or MOS, enlistment contract length, or training ship date. Examples of incentives are:

- Quick Ship Bonus
- Seasonal Bonus
- Loan Repayment Program
- Student Loan Repayment Program
- The attachment of an option to an MOS (i.e. 92G Option 40)

2-37. Knowledge of BOPIs the Army and Army Reserve offer yield the following:

- **Increased recruiting:** Detailed knowledge allows recruiters to provide accurate and comprehensive information to prospects. This ensures that prospects understand what they are signing up for, what they will receive, and what expectations will be placed upon them.
- **Increased retention:** When current soldiers are aware of all that is available to them, they are more likely to feel valued and remain in the service. This is crucial for maintaining a strong, experienced, and motivated force.

- **Informed decision-making:** Those considering joining the Army make informed decisions about their careers based on the BOPIs available to them. This is true whether they are considering the active-duty Army, which offers full-time employment, or the Army Reserve, which provides a way to serve while pursuing civilian careers or education.
- **Increased trust and credibility:** Army representatives, especially recruiters, who have a comprehensive understanding of Army programs, build trust with potential recruits, their families, and the general public. Demonstrating deep knowledge and answering questions with confidence and accuracy fosters credibility.
- **Improved personal and professional development:** The Army offers a multitude of training, educational benefits, and professional development opportunities. Soldiers and potential recruits who are well-informed take full advantage of these to further personal and professional growth.
- **Expanded promotion of the Army's image:** Understanding the full scope of Army BOPIs helps in promoting a positive and accurate image of the Army. Highlighting this counters misconceptions and negative stereotypes.
- **Improved customization of career path:** Each Soldier or potential recruit has unique aspirations and circumstances. Knowledge of both active-duty Army and Army Reserve pathways allows prospects to tailor the Army experience in a way that aligns with their personal and professional goals.

## ESTABLISHING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

2-38. Trust is a cornerstone in any relationship, whether it is between friends or family or in a professional setting. Effective communication opens the door to understanding, empathy, and creating a deeper connection. When a recruiter is viewed as trustworthy or believable, they have established credibility. This strengthens interview dynamics and allows the recruiter and prospect to work in tandem, tackling challenges together. Trust and credibility achieve the following:

- **Deepens understanding:** Recruiters show a genuine want to understand a prospect's perspective or feelings by asking meaningful questions. Listening to the responses to questions and formulating new questions enhances the understanding. This provides a clear picture of where the recruiter is coming from and demonstrates to the prospect that they are valued and heard.
- **Encourages open communication:** Trust encourages openness. Prospects are more likely to share honestly and fully when their thoughts and opinions are received without judgment.
- **Builds a solid foundation for relationships:** Trust is the bedrock of strong relationships. Personal or professional relationships grow and solidify through effective communication.
- **Facilitates problem-solving:** In many situations, especially in conflicts, the root of the problem is not immediately clear. Questioning uncovers underlying concerns or misunderstandings, making it easier to address and resolve them. Trust and credibility increase a prospect's receptiveness when a recruiter presents solutions.
- **Promotes learning and growth:** A recruiter who has earned a prospect's trust is able to challenge the prospect to reflect on their beliefs, assumptions, and actions. For example, a credible recruiter is able to affect the assumption that the Army is a "last resort." This leads to a prospect's personal and professional growth.

## SUMMARY

2-39. The Army Interview stands as the linchpin of recruitment efforts, pivotal for shaping the future of America's Army. Recruiters adeptly navigate roles as Soldiers, leaders, mentors, and counselors, adapting seamlessly to meet the diverse needs of prospects. Mastery of influencing and interviewing, underscored by components like Preparation, Questioning, Product Knowledge, and Trust and Credibility, ensures effective engagement. With a focus on securing commitment, gathering vital information, and shaping career aspirations, the interview process not only fills ranks but also cultivates loyalty to the U.S. Army. Through meticulous preparation, strategic questioning, and comprehensive product knowledge, recruiters establish trust and credibility, fostering open communication and promoting growth. Ultimately, the Army Interview emerges as a strategic cornerstone, essential for recruiting success and sustaining the strength and integrity of the Army.

## Chapter 3

# Steps of the Army Interview

### INTRODUCTION

3-1. The Army Interview is a nonlinear process. The sequence of steps discussed later in this chapter provide a foundational structure that changes over time as a recruiter develops from new recruiter to seasoned counselor. A successful recruiter relies on training, experience, intuition, and the fundamentals of effective communication throughout the interview. They adapt, adjust, and stay on course despite obstacles. Awareness of the prospect or situation enables a recruiter to adjust during the interview by returning to a previous topic or jumping ahead. While remaining fluid, it is important to remain focused on the prospect's problem statement and goals. By paying close attention to what is occurring during the interview, a recruiter helps the prospect identify their goals and then formulate a plan to achieve them. Table 3-1 provides a summary of the steps of the Army Interview.

**Table 3-1. Summary of the Army Interview**

<b>SUMMARY OF THE ARMY INTERVIEW</b>		
<b>PARA</b>	<b>TASK / STEP</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>
3-2	Establish Rapport and Build Trust and Credibility	Opening, Introduction, Reason
3-7	Tell "Your Personal" Story	Captivating, Relevancy, Positive Resolution
3-9	Tell The Army Story	Values, Ethos, Creed, History
3-10	Prequalification	The Privacy Act of 1974 and APPELMDT
3-17	Identify and Establish Goals	Recap, Short- and Long-Term Goals
3-24	Presenting Facts	SOLDIER, Prospect's Current Plan
3-32	Generate and Compare Alternatives	Current COA, RA COA, AR COA
3-36	Decision-Making Process	Recommend, Advise, Decide
3-37	Working through Obstacles	Identify, Smokescreen, Overcome
3-41	Engender the Commitment and Execute the Decision	Ask, Next Steps, Referral
3-44	Follow-up	Re-engage, Next Steps, Referral

### ESTABLISH RAPPORT AND BUILD TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

3-2. **Opening and introduction.** In most cases, the recruiter already spoke with the prospect either by telephone, face-to-face, or via virtual means. During the interview, a recruiter continues to build upon the initial trust and credibility established during the previous contact. Even when interviewing a walk-in, it is important to take the time to build trust and credibility. A prospect who walks through the door of the station is not necessarily 100% ready to join the Army. Most prospects feel uneasy during their first interview. They experience fear, doubt, intimidation, distrust, and anxiety as they face the unknown. A successful recruiter assumes these feelings exist and takes deliberate action to put prospects at ease and make them feel comfortable.

3-3. A best practice for putting a prospect at ease is to break the ice with honesty and directness. It is all right to say something like, "John, I know you may feel a little apprehensive about talking to me today. The first time I spoke with my Army recruiter, I did not know what to expect either. Just remember, I am here to help you. If you have any questions about what we talk about today, feel free to ask them at any time, okay?" Alternatively, the recruiter might say, "John, in case you were wondering, you cannot join the Army today.

3-4. However, if you decide to join, I will do my best to make that happen, is that okay?” The prospect’s agreement with the ice-breaking statement sets the tone for further agreement during the interview. This is known as getting the first “yes.” Obtaining the first “yes” early in the conversation sets a positive tone and makes the prospect more receptive. It is beneficial to inform prospects up front that the fear and concern they are experiencing is normal. Breaking the ice helps the prospect overcome their anxiety and begins to remove any psychological barriers that may obstruct the two-way communication channel.

3-5. **State the reason for the interview.** The Army Interview begins as the recruiter states the purpose of the meeting and establishes the role of the prospect during the interview. For example, a recruiter might say, “Juan, the reason we are here is to develop a plan to help you accomplish your goals. We will work together to determine what is best for you. I will share a variety of ways you can achieve your goals. How do think this will benefit you?” Another way to say this is, “Juan, we are here to further discuss the goals we spoke about during our phone call. You mentioned obstacles you are facing that I would like to address. I will share some potential solutions to overcome those challenges and meet your goals. How would solving your problems make you feel?” It is important the prospect knows the interview is about them. Also, the recruiter ensures that the prospect knows they will be asked, at the end of the interview, to execute the best decision to accomplish their goals. This decision includes joining the Army.

3-6. **Ask the prospect what they know about the Army.** Knowing what a prospect thinks about the Army enables a recruiter to shape their personal Army Story and the Army Story. First, a recruiter asks the prospect what they know about the Army. Then, they relate personal experiences that either reinforce the prospect’s opinion or clarify misconceptions.

## TELL “YOUR PERSONAL” STORY

3-7. While each story is personal, those told with honesty and conviction are most impactful. A personal story is the recruiter’s opportunity to present details about their experiences. When a recruiter shares first, it encourages the prospect to disclose and participate. Telling a personal Army Story up front eases the establishment of trust and credibility. This occurs because the recruiter provides evidence of Army solutions in practice through a personal lens. Creating a connection built on trust and transparency enhances rapport.

3-8. It is critical that a personal Army Story not be a regurgitation of a recruiter’s Soldier Talent Profile (STP) or board biography. Although a personal Army Story commonly shares the recruiter’s experience of joining the Army, it is not a requirement. Any story involving the recruiter and an experience in the Army is effective so long as it is relevant to the prospect. Telling a story that a recruiter is proud of or that carries strong emotion is more impactful than a list of promotions, awards, campaigns, and assignment locations. It is okay to share victories and achievements, again, as long as they are relevant to the prospect. The objective of a personal Army Story is to enable prospects to picture themselves in the Army through the recruiter. A well-crafted story opens a window to life in the Army. A personal Army Story is most effective when well-rehearsed and supported by some form of evidence, such as pictures, award certificates, ribbons, or personal scrapbooks. For example, a recruiter with photos of their family, home, or travel experiences can reference them during their story. See Appendix B for an example personal Army Story and Appendix C for a demonstration of its application in the interview process.

## TELL THE ARMY STORY

3-9. Recruiters then shift the focus to The Army Story. This helps the prospect see the Army through history’s eyes. Sharing key events in Army history that are relevant to the prospect and their motivations creates inspiration. While telling The Army Story, recruiters share the Army Values, the Soldier’s Creed, and the Warrior Ethos. This enables a prospect to visualize what it means to be a Soldier. A common strategy is to use Army videos and multimedia presentations to bring the Army Story to life, but there is no better way of presenting The Army Story than through storytelling. See Appendix B for an example of The Army Story and Appendix C for a demonstration of its application in the interview process.

## PREQUALIFICATION

3-10. Ideally, the recruiter conducted an initial prequalification of the prospect when the appointment was made, including fulfilling the AR 25-22 requirement to brief individuals considered members of the public

about the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C.A. 522a). The Privacy Act establishes a code of fair information practices that governs the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of information about individuals stored in systems of records by federal agencies, and it is a component of legal protections for personally identifiable and protected health information. To further determine the eligibility the prospect, the recruiter first states (or restates) the protections of the Privacy Act and then asks a more thorough series of questions. The list of questions in the next paragraph is not comprehensive but serves as a foundation to determine and/or verify the baseline qualifications of a prospect. This list grows and evolves over time with a recruiter's experience.

3-11. Only prospects who meet the qualifications outlined in AR 601-210 and the other relevant messages, publications, and regulations are eligible to join the Army. Recruiters play a key role early in the process by gathering most of the required qualification information during the body of the interview. As a general guideline, the recruiter determines the prospect's qualifications before developing a plan of action. This ensures the prospect only receives relevant options and information. It is every recruiter's responsibility to stay abreast of all changes and updates to enlistment standards.

3-12. **Determining eligibility.** Army BOPs are contingent on a prospect's eligibility to join. Use the acronym **APPLEMDT** as a guide:

**A** = age

**P** = physical

**P** = prior service

**L** = law violations

**E** = education

**M** = marital status

**D** = dependents

**T** = testing

3-13. This helps uncover most disqualifications. Failure to uncover information that makes the prospect unqualified for an option or entrance to the Army may result in losing the prospect and tarnishing trust and credibility with the prospect and the community.

3-14. When determining eligibility, it is important to ask the right questions and use source documents to validate each area. Be prepared to capture images of the documents to upload into the applicant's record when they agree to process. The following examples represent the minimum information needed to prequalify a lead or prospect:

### Age

- "What is your date of birth?"
- "Where were you born?"
- "What is your SSN?"

Birth certificates and social security cards validate the above information.

- "Are you a U.S. citizen?"
- "Are you a permanent resident?"

An I-551 (Permanent Resident) card validates permanent residency.

### Physical

- "When is the last time you were under the care of a physician or spoke with a doctor?"
- "When is the last time you visited the emergency room or urgent care?"
- "Are you currently on any medications?"
- "Have you ever been on any medications?"

- “Please tell me about all the illnesses you’ve ever had.”
- “When was the last time you used marijuana or any other drugs?”
- “How tall are you and how much do you weigh?”
- “Do you have any tattoos or piercings?”

### **Prior Service**

- “Are you now or have you ever been a member of or processed for any branch of the Armed Forces, to include the National Guard or Reserve?”
- “Have you ever been a member of any youth organization such as ROTC, JROTC, Naval Sea Cadets, Air Force Civil Air Patrol, National Defense Cadets Corp, or the Boy Scouts (or Girl Scouts)? If so, what awards did you receive?”

DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) is one official example that validates prior service. See AR 601-210 for additional acceptable source documents.

### **Law Violations**

- “Please list all your law violations, to include traffic tickets. This list must include all violations from any law enforcement agency, including military police. I need to know about anything that happened when you were a juvenile as well. I also require the disposition of these cases, even expunged or sealed records.”

Disposition refers to the status of a case and includes but is not limited to guilty, not guilty, expunged, sealed, or nolo contendere (no contest).

### **Education**

Skip questions when the answers are already known and confirmed or when the question is not relevant to the lead or prospect.

- “Did you graduate from high school or college?”
- “Is the school public, private, online, or a charter?”
- “What grade are you in?”
- “What school did you attend?”
- “How many college credits did you earn?”

Official transcripts and diplomas validate education.

### **Marital Status**

- “Have you ever been married?”
- “Are you planning to get married or divorced?”
- “Is your spouse in the military now?”

Marriage licenses and certificates validate marital status.

### **Dependents**

- “Is anyone morally or legally dependent on you for support?”
- “Does anyone depend on you for financial support?”

Birth certificates or court documentation validates dependency.

### **Testing**

- “Have you ever taken the ASVAB?”
- “What was your score and when did you take it?”
- “Have you ever taken a prescreening for the ASVAB with a military recruiter?”

3-15. If the prospect does not know about the ASVAB, explain that it measures trainability and helps determine which career path is best and sets them up for success.

3-16. If the prospect has never taken the ASVAB, took it more than two years ago, or if the test is invalid, have them take the pre-screening test. See UTC 5-03.1 (Prospecting, Processing, and Analysis) for more about the ASVAB. It is a best practice to do a little more research to develop Army and Army Reserve plans for the prospect while they are taking the test.

## **IDENTIFY AND ESTABLISH GOALS**

3-17. **Goal setting.** The next step in establishing the prospect's plan is to identify the desired outcome. The recruiter's goal is to gain a commitment from the prospect to join the Army; however, the recruiter cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that they are there for the prospect, to outline how joining the Army will help the prospect achieve personal goals and aspirations. Recruiters take on the role of counselor, mentor, and coach during the initial part of the Army Interview. They lead the prospect through the mental process of identifying needs, wants, and desires.

3-18. Active listening and understanding the prospect helps the recruiter recognize what the prospect's goals and motives may be. In many cases, prospects have a lengthy "laundry list" they are trying to fulfill. Recruiters draw information from prospects using skilled questioning and active listening to correctly identify the goals that can be fulfilled through joining the Army. Questions to help generate goal-oriented thoughts include:

- "Where do you see yourself five years from now?"
- "Now that you are a senior in high school, what kind of plans have you made?"
- "What kind of career move are you looking for?"
- "How do you see the Army benefiting you in the future?"

3-19. Thorough questioning creates an atmosphere of open communication when presenting the unique benefits the Army offers. A prospect who plans to attend the local community college because their friends will be attending or to meet their parent's expectations has only provided surface-level reasoning. Well-developed follow-on questions provide the means to grasp a complete understanding of the prospect's desires.

- "What do you want to do, Kyle?"
- "What is important to you?"
- "What is your passion in life?"

3-20. **Problems.** The prospect may not have put much thought into the goal-setting process prior to meeting a recruiter. It is highly likely, however, that a prospect has spent a great deal of time considering their problems. Prospects able to independently solve problems are less likely to seek resources by meeting with an Army recruiter. Prospects that meet with an Army recruiter typically have a problem they are unable to solve. Uncovering a prospect's problem allows a recruiter to aid in establishing goals and providing solutions. Questions to help uncover a prospect's problem(s) include:

- "Why haven't you been able to accomplish your goal(s) yet?"
- "What is stopping you from doing that (the prospect's stated objective)?"

3-21. Problems typically do not get better without action over time. Highlighting this concern allows a recruiter to create a sense of urgency when engaging with a prospect.

- "I'm glad we met today! Now we can take steps to solve this issue."
- "If nothing changes in the next five years, how would that make you feel?"

3-22. **Recap the prospect's goals.** Once a prospect's short-term goals are established, it is important for a recruiter to provide a recap. This ensures the recruiter has an accurate understanding of the goals and provides an opportunity for the prospect to adjust. During a goal recap, the recruiter uses the answers to the following questions:

- "What do you want to do?"
- "Why do you want to do that?"
- "Why else do you want to do that?"

- “When do you want to do that?”
- “Where do you want to be when you are doing that?”
- “What’s stopping you from doing that?”

As an example, the prospect’s responses might look like:

- “I want to be a teacher.” This is a short-term goal.
- “I had an amazing teacher that changed my life.”
- “I love helping people.”
- “As soon as possible.”
- “Here in my hometown.”
- “I need to get a degree first.” This is a milestone on the way to the short-term goal that could also be considered a short-term goal.

3-23. **Identify the prospect’s long-term goals.** Once it is clear both the recruiter and the prospect have a clear understanding of the short-term goals, it is important to look forward. Establishing long-term goals provides a way to expose a prospect to a wider range of benefits offered by the Army. Establishing a prospect’s long-term goal(s) might look like the following:

- “So, let’s fast forward to when you’ve become a teacher here in your hometown. What’s the next big thing?”
- “Where do you see yourself ten years from now?”
- “Describe your dream life, help me picture it.”

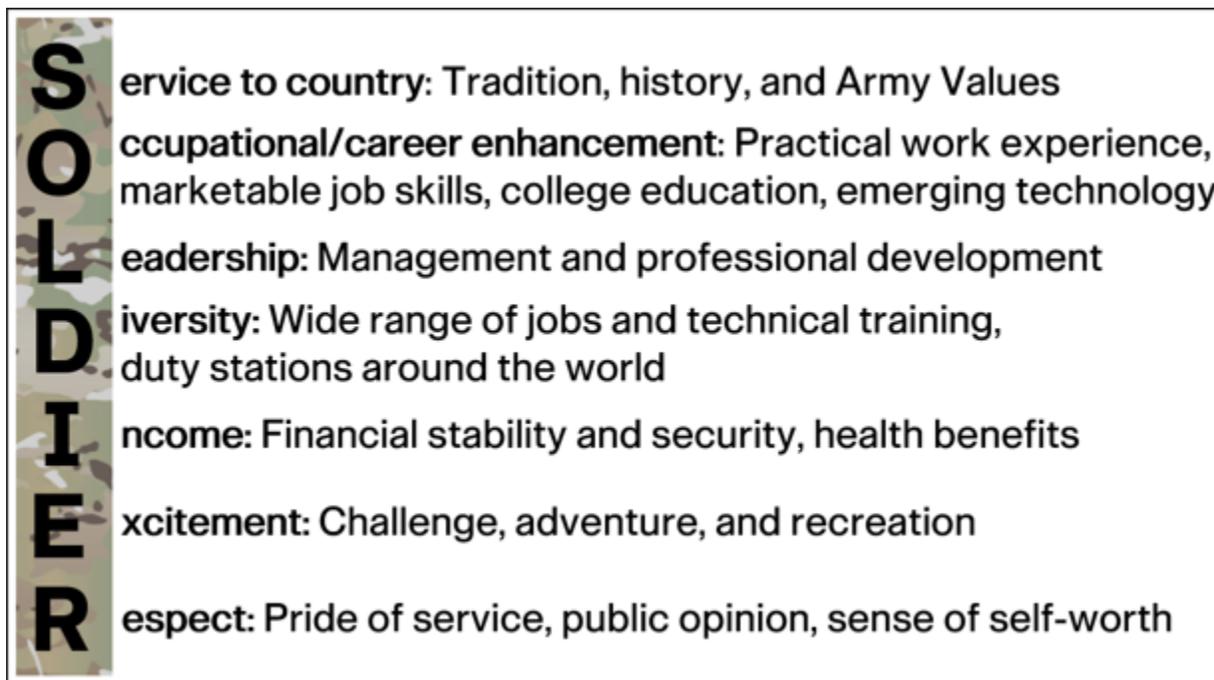
## PRESENTING FACTS

3-24. **Facts and assumptions.** A fact is a piece of information about circumstances that exist or events that have occurred. An assumption is a statement that is believed to be true and from which conclusions are drawn.

3-25. It is vital that recruiters base their counsel and career guidance on facts, not assumptions. Uncovering facts about a prospect is a tedious and time-consuming process. Clarifying questions aid in the elimination of assumptions and provide additional facts. Recruiters create gaps in knowledge by failing to ask enough questions. It is human nature to fill gaps with assumptions to complete information. Effective recruiters do not take shortcuts during this process.

3-26. **Present facts using the acrostic SOLDIER.** It is a best practice to be conscious of the methods used to cover your prospect’s goals. Successful recruiters are careful to avoid bombarding prospects with questions or acting the role of an interrogator. They take their time and make sure to cover all the prospect’s goals and motives. This action effectively removes most potential obstacles down the road. Recruiters cover the following areas when discussing Army opportunities to present facts and address the prospect’s goals:

- S=Service to country: Tradition, history, and Army Values
- O=Occupational/career enhancement: Practical work experience, marketable job skills, college education, emerging technology
- L=Leadership: Management and professional development
- D=Diversity: Wide range of jobs and technical training, duty stations around the world
- I=Income: Financial stability and security, health benefits
- E=Excitement: Challenge, adventure, and recreation
- R=Respect: Pride of service, public opinion, sense of self-worth.



**Figure 3-1. The SOLDIER acronym**

3-27. The target demographic makes decisions based primarily on their values, beliefs, and having a sense of purpose. Service to country, leadership, and respect directly correlate with providing purpose and it is beneficial to establish this connection.

3-28. Note: It is a best practice to share SOLDIER with a prospect without using the word “acrostic.” Acrostic is not a common word and defining SOLDIER as one often serves to confuse the prospect.

3-29. By now, the recruiter has a basic understanding of the prospect’s goals and their plan to achieve those goals. This information helps the recruiter present alternative courses of action that include joining the Army to achieve those goals. One way of doing this is to identify and present weaknesses in the prospect’s current plan, while being careful not to offend the prospect. Recruiters who have established trust and credibility have an easier time showing a prospect a better plan.

3-30. Active listening and open two-way communication are the foundations of the interview. It is important for a recruiter’s personal biases to take a backseat. A recruiter must remain objective during the counseling session. It is a best practice to look beyond the face value of any statement and try to understand what the prospect is saying and feeling. It is critical to consider both the prospect’s words and how those words are said. Recruiters work with the facts presented and continue to expand the prospect’s responses by asking follow-on questions.

3-31. Misunderstanding a prospect’s motivation leads to developing a course of action (COA) that does not help them achieve their goals. The only way one can effectively lead and guide a prospect is to identify their true passion. For instance, if they say they want to attend the local technical college, a recruiter may start to outline a plan that involves the Post 9/11 GI Bill. When the recruiter asks additional follow-on questions, the prospect reveals their ultimate goal is to own a business. Armed with all the information about a prospect’s goals, aspirations, and true passion, a recruiter generates a plan consisting of options and alternatives specifically tailored for the prospect. The plan developed for a prospect identifies the Army as the primary means to reach their goals.

## GENERATE AND COMPARE ALTERNATIVES

3-32. **Create alternatives.** After establishing the prospect's goals and understanding how they plan to achieve them, recruiters develop and present alternative means. These methods involve joining the Army or Army Reserve. This process involves generating at least three COAs that help the prospect achieve their goals and then comparing them to determine the best path. The first COA is the prospect's current plan. Select a name that helps the prospect understand the process like "COA 1" or "Current Path." The next two COAs include the features and benefits that achieve the same goals but include joining the Army or Army Reserve. It is okay to present either the active-duty Army or Army Reserve first so long as they are presented in their entirety. Do not switch back and forth between the two while presenting as it creates confusion during the selection process. An example of this process might look like the following:

- Present COA 1: "Current Path."
- Identify weaknesses in the plan.
- Present COA 2: "Active Duty Path."
- Identify active duty BOPs specifically tailored to the prospect's short- and long-term goals that provide a solution to the prospect's problem.
- Discuss the prospect's opinion of this path.
- Present COA 3: "Army Reserve Path."
- Identify Army Reserve BOPs specifically tailored to the prospect's short- and long-term goals that provide a solution to the prospect's problem.
- Discuss the prospect's opinion of this path.
- Ask the prospect to select a COA.
- Ask the prospect why they selected that COA.

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**Note:** Chaplain, healthcare, and SORB recruiters only present two COAs: the prospect's current plan and the proposed option.

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3-33. Every person has different goals. Recruiters assist in generating specific COAs tailored to the prospect. It is important to tap into the prospect's true passion and communicate the proposed alternatives as a life plan, not just a career plan.

3-34. When developing a COA, it is important to engage the prospect's emotional side. This causes a prospect to be enthusiastic, motivated, and involved. Have an in-depth understanding of all potential BOPs and present them as a viable and relevant COA. Keep a prospect's eligibility in mind when mentioning specific incentives such as a seasonal bonus or a specific MOS. Offering an opportunity only to take it away later erodes trust and credibility. Include intangible benefits (leadership skills, self-discipline, and self-awareness) when developing COAs. Recruiters convey the character traits of loyalty, duty, respect, service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. They demonstrate how these traits affect the prospect's future endeavors. Joining the Army is not always the only alternative. Recruiters prepare to address all alternatives that fall outside of the Army such as college enrollment or local job placement centers. No matter what, always honestly address the prospect's goals.

3-35. **Analyze alternatives.** Presenting multiple courses of actions can overwhelm a prospect. Recruiters assist the prospect in weighing their choices and help them see the best path. Providing alternatives using real-time data greatly enhances the prospect's decision. Ask the prospect to choose their best COA and explain how they arrived at that conclusion. Once the prospect has a good understanding of how the Army assists them in achieving their goals, the next step is to ask the prospect to join the Army or Army Reserve.

## DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

3-36. **The decision-making process.** Next, recruiters guide prospects through the decision-making process. Point out alternatives the prospect can choose to reach their career goals. Suggest, recommend, and advise the prospect about each COA available and then ask for a decision. The wording must be direct enough to ensure there is no question in the prospect's mind that the recruiter is expecting them to make a decision. "Leah, which one of these courses of action do you feel will best support your goals?" Once a prospect selects

the Army as the best COA, the next step is to ask them to join. However, at this point, their choice for the best COA may not be the Army.

## WORKING THROUGH OBSTACLES AND OBJECTIONS

3-37. Obstacles and objections can appear at any time during the interview, but they most often appear when the prospect must make a decision. It is important to deal with obstacles immediately as they arise. As the prospect is likely making their first significant life decision, challenges are expected. Successful recruiters understand that it is difficult to make life-changing decisions. Every recruiter at one point sat in the same seat and made the same decision. Reassure the prospect that they have successfully made many decisions before and the decision they are about to make is in their best interest.

3-38. Even if a recruiter has just given the best interview of their life and successfully mapped out the prospect's future, there may still be obstacles or objections to overcome before a prospect agrees to join (See Chapter 6 for detailed information on obstacles). View obstacles or objections as a request for more information and an opportunity to dive into areas that concern the prospect. Information helps dispel misgivings that hinder a prospect's ability to make the decision to join.

3-39. It is important for recruiters to familiarize themselves with common objections across the Army and within their area of operations. For example, the objections that are common to high schoolers will be different than those of college students. Alternatively, it might be common for high school graduates in the area to work at a specific factory. Knowing what benefits the factory offers prepares the recruiter to overcome this career path. It is up to the recruiter to identify trends and be prepared to address them.

3-40. By offering insight through experience and providing prospects with choices that solve their problem, a recruiter continues to build trust and credibility. Whether addressing emotional needs or material facts, it is important to help prospects weigh the pros and cons and compare alternatives.

## ENGENDER THE COMMITMENT AND EXECUTE THE DECISION

3-41. After handling all obstacles and objections, the recruiter asks for the commitment by asking the prospect to join the Army or Army Reserve. There are a variety of closing questions used to ask for the commitment (see Chapter 8 for detailed information on closings). It is important to choose one that best fits the nature of the interview. For example, "Annie, don't you agree that experiencing the challenges of basic training and getting in shape is a small price to pay to realize your dreams? When is a good day for you to take your physical and join the Army Reserve —Tuesday or Thursday?"

When the prospect has agreed to join the Army or Army Reserve and thus become an applicant, the next steps are discussed. Recruiters explain the ASVAB, the application, the physical exam, the enlistment process, and the Future Soldier Training Program (FSTP). With the implementation of MHS GENESIS, it is more important than ever to explain the reality of the processing timeline up front to set expectations and mitigate future obstacles.

3-42. The last step in every interaction a recruiter has with anyone is to ask for a referral. It is most effective to ask for a referral with an open-ended question like "Who do you know that may benefit from the things we discussed today?" It is critical to ask for a referral. The prospect now has a thorough understanding of Army BOPs and can become a valuable community partner (CP), even if they did not or do not join.

3-43. Occasionally a recruiter overcomes every obstacle and objection, and the prospect still decides not to join or is determined to be unqualified. It is important to be supportive and respectful when this occurs. Often, the prospect can agree that the Army is a solid alternative. Recruiters provide these prospects with a copy of the COAs discussed during the interview so the prospect can look at them again and share them with their family and friends.

## FOLLOW-UP

3-44. The prospect's commitment to join the Army is not the end of the recruiter's interaction with the prospect (now applicant). The commitment launches the implementation of the selected COA, continues with accession into the Army or Army Reserve, and carries on indefinitely as a source of referrals.

3-45. If the prospect does not commit, leave the communication door open and ask to check with them periodically to see how they are doing. Once the pressure is off, they are more likely to be receptive to a follow-up plan. Keeping in touch reinforces the prospect's trust in the recruiter and keeps the Army COA at the forefront should their plans change. Not every interview results in an immediate commitment to join, but timely follow-up and proper reinforcement make it more likely the prospect joins later. Knowing when, how, and where to follow up after the conduct of the Army Interview is almost as important as the interview itself. For more information on follow-up and timelines, refer to UTC 5-03.1 (Prospecting, Processing, and Analysis). Figure 3-2, below, shows a decision flow example for following up post interview.

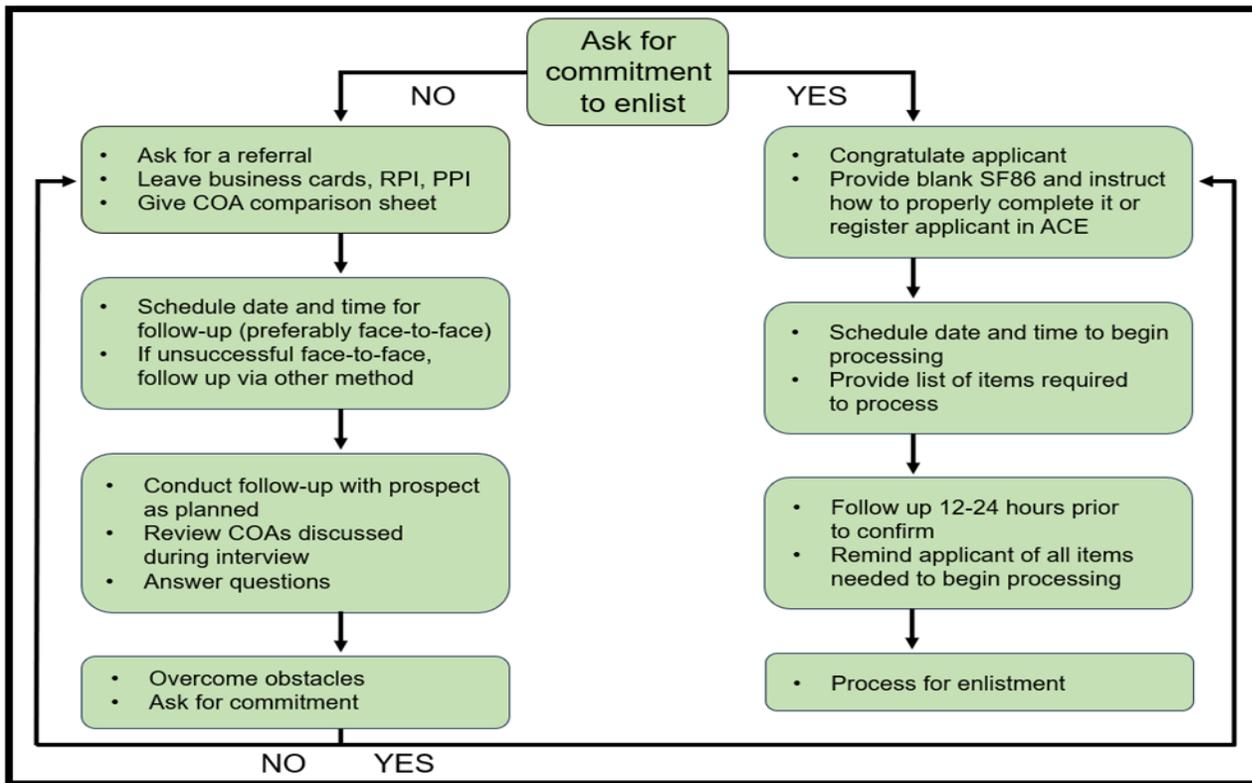


Figure 3-2. Post Interview Decision Flow

**SUMMARY**

3-46. The Army Interview is a dynamic process evolving with the recruiter's experience, relying on effective communication fundamentals and adaptability to the prospect's needs. Beginning with rapport-building and clarifying the purpose, recruiters create a comfortable environment to explore the prospect's goals and concerns. Sharing personal and Army stories establishes credibility and inspiration. Prequalification ensures eligibility, while goal identification aligns the prospect's aspirations with Army opportunities. Presenting facts and generating alternatives tailored to the prospect's needs foster informed decision-making. The recruiter guides the prospect through overcoming obstacles and objections, leading to commitment and execution of the chosen path, whether joining the Army or Army Reserve. Follow-up ensures continued support and engagement, reinforcing trust and the potential for future enlistment. Through these steps, the recruiter not only fills ranks but also empowers the prospect to achieve their goals within the Army framework.

## Chapter 4

# Motivations, Goals, and Passions

### INTRODUCTION

4-1. A prospect's motivations, goals, and passions interconnect in many ways but serve distinct roles, especially in the context of decision-making and motivation. Army BOPs that align with a prospect's motivations, goals, and passions, or some combination of the three provide an opportunity for purposeful service. In particular, understanding the prospect's Dominant Buying Motive (DBM) is essential. Recruiters identify and address the DBM, goals, and passions to engage and enroll the best candidates effectively. Similarly, potential recruits weigh these factors when considering a commitment to military service. The key is ensuring the Army's needs and the prospect's aspirations align for a successful partnership.

### DOMINANT BUYING MOTIVE (DBM)

4-2. DBM refers to the primary reason or incentive like necessity, desire, status, or value that drives a decision. In a broader context like recruiting, it is the compelling "why" behind a decision. The DBM is used extensively in sales and marketing to understand and address the core motivations of potential customers. For example, one person's DBM for career satisfaction may be professional growth. Understanding this is crucial to identify what BOPs a recruiter presents in the Army interview. A DBM is either emotional, logical, or both.

4-3. It is important for a recruiter to identify a prospect's DBM. A prospect raising immediate concerns or questions, having emotional reactions or strong feelings about specific aspects of Army life or service, or making repeated mention or emphasis on aspects of Army service is indicative of a DBM.

4-4. Recruiters tailor conversations to address and emphasize elements related to a prospect's DBM. For example, if the DBM is education benefits, the recruiter explains the GI Bill, tuition assistance, and other educational opportunities. Using stories or testimonies that resonate with the prospect's DBM makes the opportunity more relatable. Recruiters counter objections by returning focus to the prospect's DBM.

### GOALS

4-5. Goals refer to specific and often measurable outcomes or objectives that individuals or organizations aspire to achieve over a certain period. Goals are used in personal and professional settings to set targets and drive behavior. For instance, a person might have a goal to save a certain amount of money over a set period in order to make a specific purchase. Goals are more tangible and specific than passions. Goals can be short-term or long-term, but they always have a clear endpoint or criteria for achievement.

4-6. It is important for a recruiter to identify a prospect's goals. A prospect exposes their goals when making statements about future aspirations, such as wanting to attend college, achieve a specific rank, or learn a particular skill. Additionally, mention of timelines, such as wanting to serve for a certain number of years, achieve something by a specific age, or make concrete plans for post-Army life or career progression within the Army are indicative of a prospect's goals.

4-7. Recruiters highlight how the Army helps prospects achieve their goals by detailing specific paths or programs. They offer mentorship or connect prospects with current or former Soldiers who had similar goals and achieved them through Army service. Recruiters discuss timelines and realistic expectations to ensure prospects understand how their goals align with potential commitments and Army pathways.

### PASSIONS

4-8. Passions are intense, driving feelings or enthusiasms toward specific activities, subjects, or causes. They are deeply personal and often evoke a strong emotional response. These commonly align with a prospect's relationships, recreation, or occupation. Some examples are:

- People: Family, friends, camaraderie, team

- Recreation: Hobbies, interests, activities
- Occupation: Career growth, leadership development, achieving success

4-9. People realize passions through personal development and career planning. For instance, someone passionate about the environment might seek careers in conservation or environmental advocacy. Passions are intrinsic and emotional. Passions are typically long-standing and may not necessarily have a specific endpoint like goals. They can influence a prospect's values, choices, and overall direction in life.

4-10. Figure 4-1 describes the differences and similarities between DBM, goals, and passions. The overlapping area labeled "Purpose" suggests a prospect's central purpose is found where their driving motivations, personal goals, and passions intersect, implying a comprehensive model for understanding human motivation and direction.

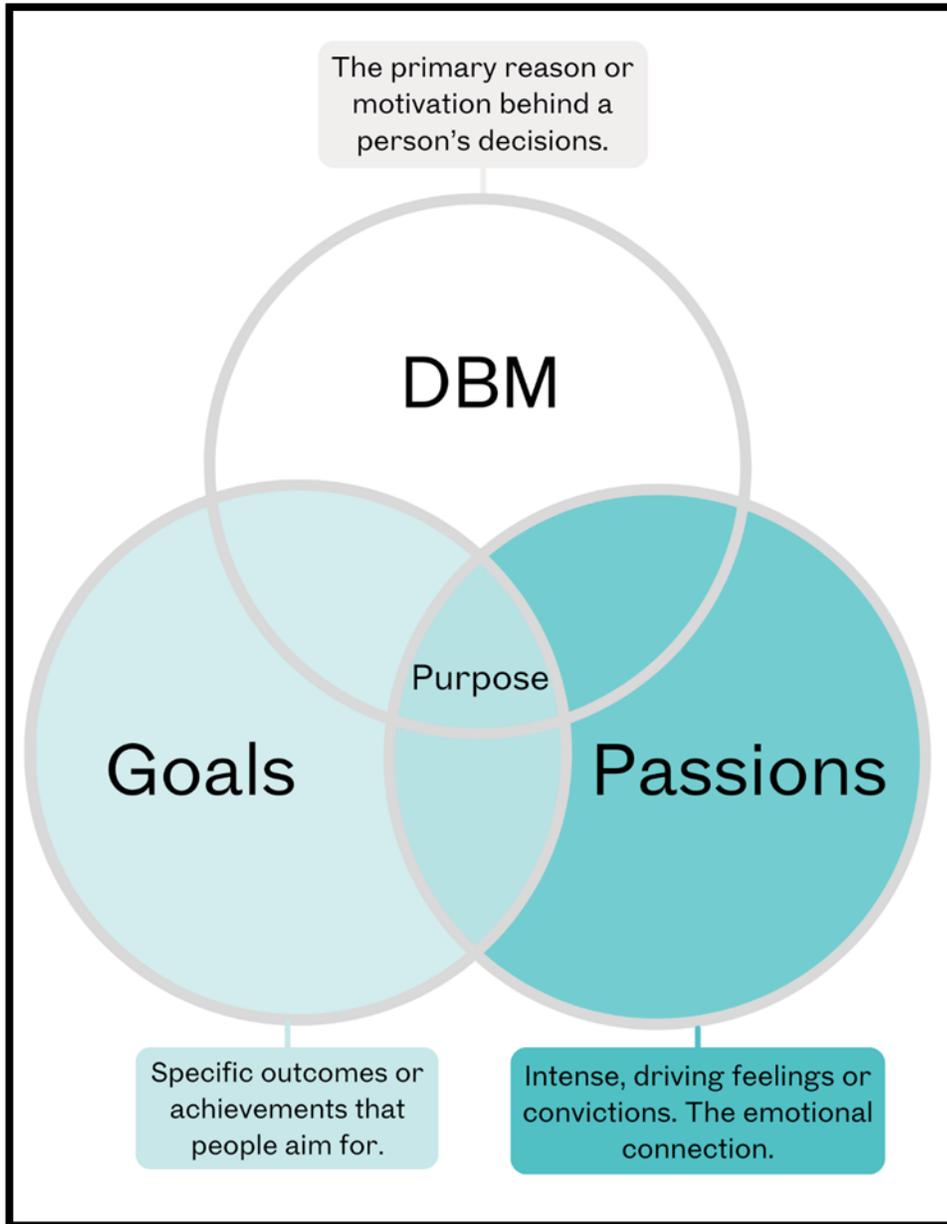
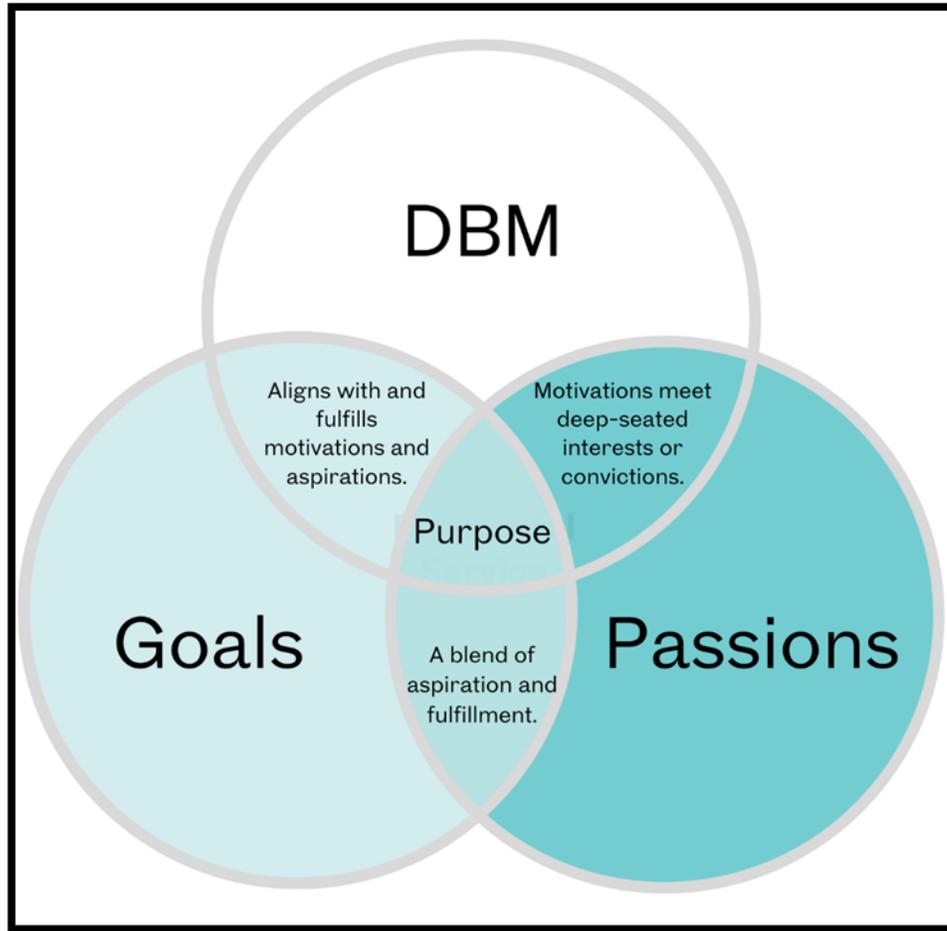


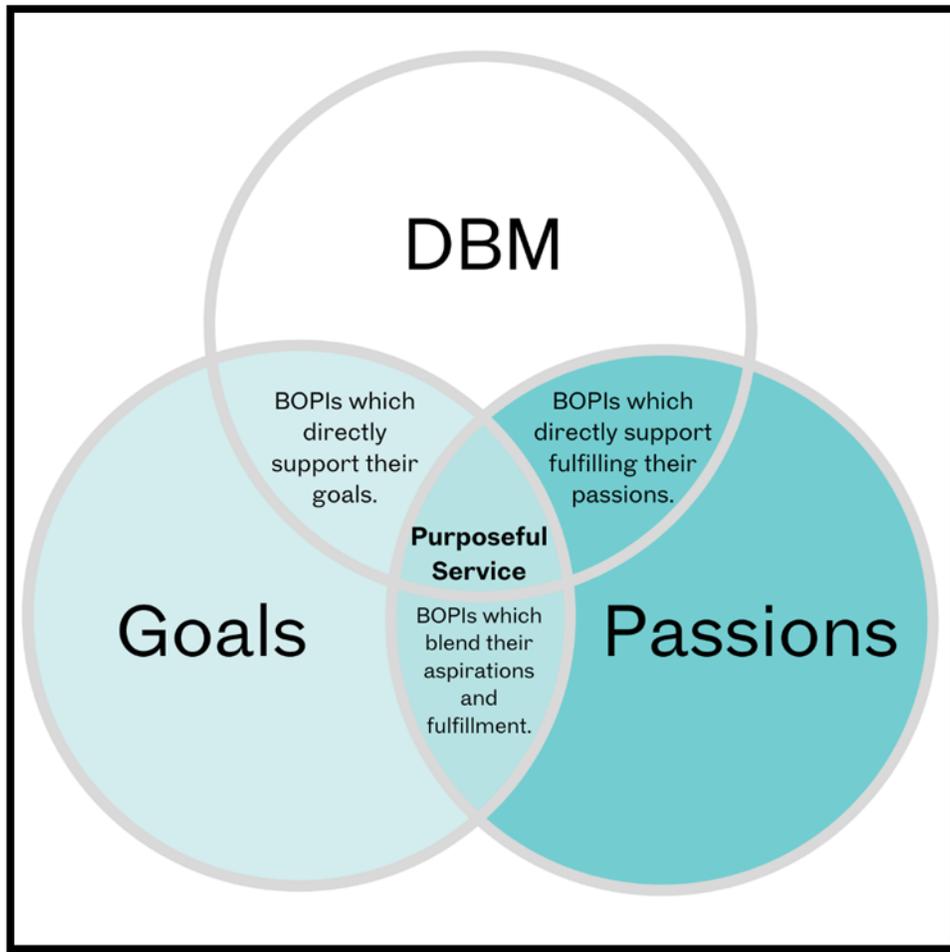
Figure 4-1. The Definitions of DBM, Goals, and Passions

4-11. When goals and passions align, it reflects a pursuit that is both satisfying and meaningful to a prospect. See Figure 4-2. In the overlap between a DBM and goals, a prospect makes decisions that help them achieve their goals. When a DBM intersects with passions, a prospect makes decisions they are emotionally connected to, which brings them joy. At the center, where DBM, goals, and passions meet, is “Purpose.” This is where commitments are made with a clear sense of direction, combining practical needs, personal achievements, and emotional desires. Understanding this connection helps explain why prospects make the choices they do, driven by a mix of necessity, aspiration, and emotion.



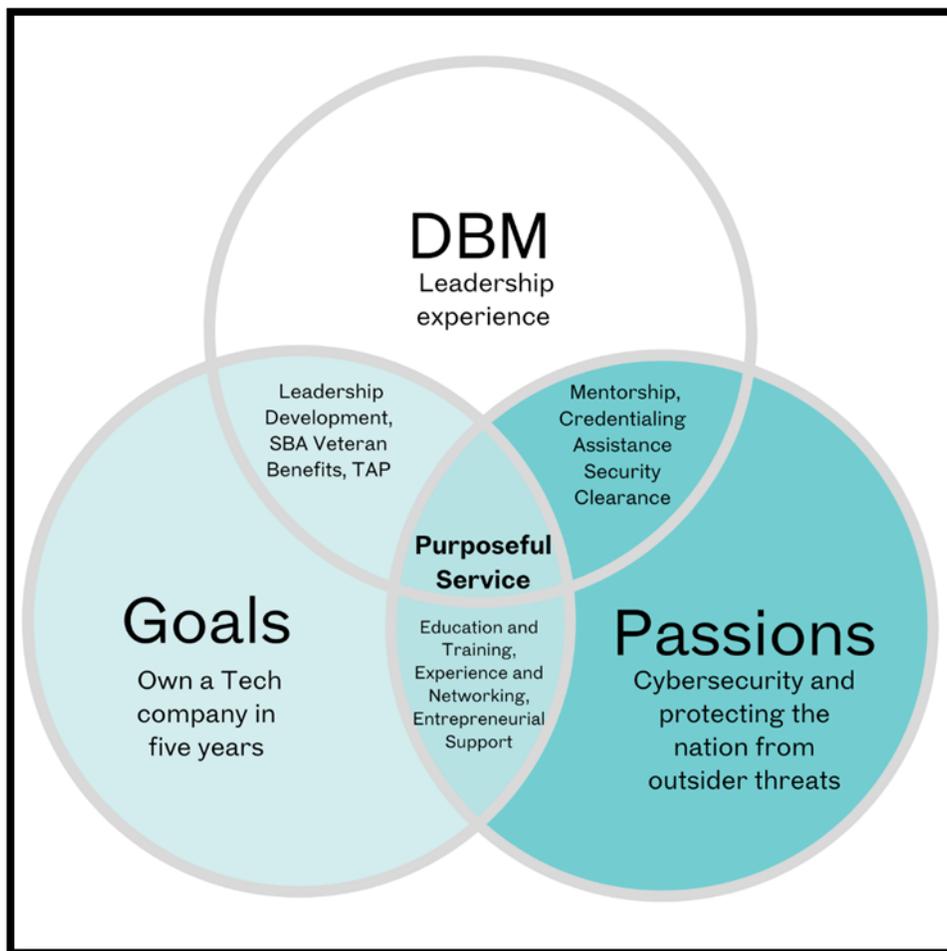
**Figure 4-2. The Shared Objectives of DBM, Goals, and Passions**

4-12. Army BOPIs like bonuses, tuition assistance, and specialized training address the challenges a prospect may face, enabling them to achieve their goals and support their passions. See Figure 4-3. BOPIs support goals by providing a clear path to personal and professional development. BOPIs aligned with a prospect’s passions are most likely to contribute to a COA that is gratifying to the prospect. At the center of it all, where all elements come together, lies the concept of “Purposeful Service.” The Army’s offerings not only meet practical needs but also empower a prospect to pursue their aspirations and fully engage with their service. This creates a compelling and powerful message for those considering enlistment.



**Figure 4-3. The Application of BOPs to Shared Objectives**

4-13. In the scenario detailed in Figure 4-4, a prospect's DBM is the desire to gain experience leading, their goal is to own a tech company in five years and their passions are cybersecurity and protecting the nation from outsider threats. The following BOPs apply: Where DBM and goals intersect, the Army provides leadership development programs and facilitates eligibility for SBA (Small Business Association) veteran-owned business benefits. This shows how service can directly support personal entrepreneurial ambitions. The intersection of DBM and passions is filled with BOPs like mentorship programs and assistance in obtaining security clearances, which cater to the prospect's enthusiasm for cybersecurity and national protection. The overlap between goals and passions reflects the Army's educational and training opportunities, which are designed not only to help Soldiers achieve their personal goals but also to engage deeply with their passions.



**Figure 4-4. The Selections of BOPs**

4-14. The Army positions itself as a bridge for a prospect to both advance their career ambitions and indulge in their personal interests through hands-on experience in fields such as technology and defense. At the core, where DBM, goals, and passions converge, is “Purposeful Service.” This represents the Army’s commitment to providing a holistic experience that fosters leadership growth, supports individual ambitions for entrepreneurship, and nurtures the prospect’s passion for cybersecurity and national service. The Army ensures this prospect’s service is purpose-driven, leveraging their desire for leadership, facilitating their entrepreneurial goals through comprehensive support programs like the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and fostering a deep engagement with their passion for securing the nation. Through this intentional design, the prospect sees a clear path where their service aligns with their personal development and passions, culminating in a meaningful and fulfilling career in the Army.

**SUMMARY**

4-15. While there is overlap between the concepts of DBM, goals, and passions, they differ in their focus and application. A DBM is the immediate motive behind a decision, goals provide direction and measurable targets, and passions reflect deep-seated interests or enthusiasms that can guide life choices and long-term pursuits.

## Chapter 5

# Storytelling

### INTRODUCTION

5-1. Storytelling is an intrinsic part of human communication that explains a concept, reflects on a personal experience, retells a historical event, or makes an argument. It is a powerful tool that transcends time and connects people on a deeper emotional level. Recruiters that harness the art of storytelling ignite imagination, foster empathy, and inspire the audience—the prospect—to envision themselves as part of the Army.

### STRUCTURE AND NARRATIVE ARC

5-2. A well-crafted story follows a defined structure. The structure of a story refers to its organization and arrangement of events. The narrative arc encompasses the overall trajectory and development of the story, including the emotional progression. It takes the prospect on a journey, captivating attention and guiding through a series of events that lead to a satisfying resolution. The narrative arc consists of several components:

- **Setup:** The setup introduces the setting, characters, and basic situation. It includes an inciting incident or hook that grabs the audience's attention and sets the story in motion.
- **Confrontation or rising action:** During the rising action, the story develops through a series of complications and challenges. This is where the main character faces obstacles and conflicts that need to be overcome. It builds up to the climax of the story.
- **Overcoming the challenge:** Next, the story builds anticipation and maintains engagement as it highlights the skills and resources used to overcome the challenge. The narrative creates a sense of excitement and possibility, motivating the audience to continue following the story.
- **Resolution:** The climax of the narrative arc demonstrates the impact and presents a satisfying conclusion. This is an opportunity to showcase success stories, achievements, or transformative experiences.

### GOALS

5-3. Successful recruiters craft stories that mirror the prospect's DBM, goals, and passions. They demonstrate how the prospect can reach these objectives with evidence and testimonies. When telling a story, recruiters remain authentic and tap into emotion.

- **Authenticity:** Stories and content that convey authenticity directly support the two foundations of Army recruiting: trust and credibility. Audiences respond favorably to content they deem authentic as opposed to disingenuous sales pitches.
- **Tapping Into Emotion:** Storytelling has the unique ability to evoke emotions, making it an effective means of connecting with the target audience. Many prospects use emotion over logic when making decisions. Recruiters forge an emotional bond with the prospect by crafting narratives that elicit excitement, pride, and inspiration. It is important that the tone and content of a story remain positive, or the story resolves with a positive outcome.
- **Opportunity:** It is important to highlight the Army as an organization that provides opportunities based on merit, potential, and performance. When applicable, tell stories that illustrate the wide range of opportunities within the Army. This creates a broader range of authentic connections and widens the potential audience.

### YOUR PERSONAL ARMY STORY: THE ARMY'S INFLUENCE ON YOU

5-4. Successful recruiters are aware of the best times to share a personal story and keep the prospect's goals and motivations in mind. The timing of introducing a personal story is equally as important as the story itself. Recruiters determine when a personal story is appropriate and use it to help drive the Army Interview forward. The story needs to have a purpose and must be relatable to the prospect.

5-5. A recruiter's personal story should not include reciting an entire list of achievements and awards. Seasoned recruiters are careful to not use a biography to craft their stories. Telling the story of one particular achievement or award that is relevant to the prospect carries the best impact. A personal story is often different every time it is told, as it adjusts to the specific audience with which it is shared. A key factor to a good personal story is that it is entirely true. There is not one specific story to tell, and a recruiter typically has several different stories that inspire and motivate others. Each of these show the prospect how the recruiter or others were able to overcome adversity and rise to the occasion. It is important that the story being told is familiar or even rehearsed to have the desired impact. An example personal Army story is found in Appendix B.

5-6. Examples topics of personal stories include:

- Why the recruiter joined the Army
- Why the recruiter continued serving in the Army
- A family tradition of service
- A Future Soldier's weight-loss journey
- First- or second-generation immigrant path to service
- Other personal experiences in the Army (relatable to the prospect or applicant)
- Furthering personal and professional education
- Humanitarian efforts

5-7. It is critical that recruiters gauge the effectiveness of a personal Army story. This is accomplished by crafting questions that probe the listener's reactions, thoughts, and feelings about the story. Example questions used after telling a personal Army story might look like:

- "What are some parts of my story that you felt connected to?"
- "Which parts of my story feel relevant to your own goals and passions?"
- "What would you have done differently in this situation?"

5-8. The answers to these questions help to determine if a shared understanding was reached, an emotional response was elicited, or the prospect is ready to make a decision.

## SHARING "THE ARMY STORY"

5-9. The current generation prioritizes working for a company that aligns with their values. The Army story is where the recruiter illustrates the Army's value through historical references. A skilled recruiter uses the Army story to align the Army Values with the prospect's values. During this part of the Army Interview, recruiters ask prospects what they know about the Army. Typically, the prospect knows very little or has information that is incomplete or inaccurate. Recruiters tailor the Army story to the prospect and what is known about their motivations, goals, and passions. This makes it relevant and engaging. Sharing the Army story is a compelling endeavor. It requires a thoughtful approach to effectively convey the experiences, values, and sacrifices of those who serve in the Army. This can be done by capturing the essence of the Army's rich history. It is important to emphasize pivotal moments, heroic acts, and the evolution of its mission over time. An example of the Army story is found in Appendix B.

5-10. There are several vignettes used during the three phases of Basic Combat Training that cover historical figures and events. They are used to provide context or shape a recruiter's telling of the Army Story during the interview. They are available at [https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/:f/s/usarec-doctrine/ErruDIToqK1NkShvgL-PrcwBAVcqV0rrui4u0\\_tGJ4ryWA?e=aZe7ug](https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/:f/s/usarec-doctrine/ErruDIToqK1NkShvgL-PrcwBAVcqV0rrui4u0_tGJ4ryWA?e=aZe7ug).

## SUMMARY

5-11. Effective storytelling intertwines emotions and authenticity to create a compelling narrative. Sharing personal experiences, such as the recruiter's Army story, allows for a genuine connection with the audience. Incorporating a well-defined structure and narrative arc provides a framework that enhances engagement. By infusing emotion, maintaining authenticity, and adhering to a thoughtful narrative structure, storytellers craft tales that resonate deeply and leave a lasting impact on those who listen.

## Chapter 6

# Objections and Obstacles

### INTRODUCTION

6-1. It is important that recruiters master the skill of navigating conversations during the Army Interview. Mastery requires the ability to identify and tackle potential objections and obstacles that a prospect presents, enabling a more efficient and transparent conversation. This chapter focuses on honing these skills while discussing how to identify objections and obstacles and employ techniques to overcome them.

6-2. It is crucial to understand the context of obstacles and objections. Getting to the “why” is key to overcoming the objection or obstacle. Every prospect is different and presents a variety of misconceptions about the Army, concerns about fitness, or worries about lifestyle changes. Successful recruiters tailor approaches to provide necessary information and reassurance when recognizing potential obstacles and objections early in the conversation.

6-3. **Objections.** Objections are specific concerns or disagreements voiced by leads or prospects during a conversation. These are **direct expressions** of resistance or point of contention. The objection is the “no.”

6-4. **Obstacles.** Obstacles are challenges or concerns that prospects may face in the decision-making process. These barriers can be related to personal fears, misconceptions, or uncertainties. Obstacles **are not always openly expressed**. Encountering an objection leads to an opportunity to reveal and address an obstacle. Recognizing and addressing obstacles early in conversation alleviates friction and earns the prospect’s confidence during the decision-making process. A scenario working from objection to obstacle could look like the following:

**Recruiter:** “Are you ready to join the Army Reserve?”

**Prospect:** “I don’t think so.” (objection).

**Recruiter:** “Well, obviously you have a reason for saying that. Do you mind if I ask what it is?”

**Prospect:** “I don’t have enough saved up to cover my bills, and I can’t afford to leave work.” (obstacle)

6-5. At this point, the recruiter has been presented with an obstacle that needs to be removed in order to continue. Connecting through a shared experience as well as providing facts and evidence—like the fact that Soldiers receive pay while in training and can even receive a basic allowance for housing (BAH)—addresses the obstacle and contributes to the recruiter’s ability to overcome the objection.

6-6. Think of an obstacle as something standing in the way. Once the obstacle is moved off the path, the trip can continue. This is unlike an objection, which is essentially a refusal to continue. Once a recruiter is presented with an objection, asking additional questions often reveals the true obstacle. A revealed obstacle can then be removed (addressed) by presenting facts, evidence, and a shared experience. Objections are typically explicit and enable immediate responses, whereas obstacles are implicit and require proactive efforts to identify and address. Effective recruiters possess vital skills in understanding and effectively addressing both obstacles and objections.

### PREDICTING OBSTACLES AND OBJECTIONS

6-7. Keen observation and active listening skills contribute to a recruiter’s ability to identify potential obstacles. Recruiters closely focus on verbal cues such as questions or concerns raised by the prospect. Additionally, nonverbal cues like body language and facial expressions provide valuable insights into a prospect’s reservations.

Table 6-1. Nonverbal Cues

EMOTION	NONVERBAL CUES
Interest, Friendliness, Openness	Leaning toward the recipient may be considered as expressing interest or being aggressive. It is important for the recruiter to interpret this action correctly.
Self-Confidence	Standing tall, leaning back with hands behind the head, and maintaining steady eye contact.
Anxiety	Sitting on the edge of the chair with arms uncrossed and hands open. Restless legs or fidgeting.
Boredom	Drumming on the table, doodling, clicking a ballpoint pen, or resting the head in the palm of the hand.
Defensiveness	Pushing deeply into a chair, glaring, or making sarcastic comments as well as crossing or folding arms in front of the chest.
Frustration	Rubbing eyes, pulling on an ear, taking short breaths, wringing the hands, or frequently changing total body position.

6-8. Concerns about deployment, misconceptions about Army life, the inability to connect the Army to goals, or doubts about meeting certain qualifications commonly act as obstacles. Recruiters approach these obstacles with empathy and understanding. They provide accurate information and address concerns in a transparent manner.

6-9. Seasoned recruiters adapt communication styles on the fly when recognizing obstacles. They overcome misconceptions and help prospects make informed decisions about joining the Army by tailoring explanations and providing real-life examples.

Table 6-2. Summary of Obstacles and Corresponding Strategies

Obstacle	Corresponding Response
Misconceptions about the Army	Provide accurate information and clarify misconceptions.
Concerns about deployment	Explain the deployment process and the support provided.
Doubts about meeting physical demands of the Army	Provide information about training programs and resources for improvement.
Lifestyle adjustments	Share stories of successful transitions and adaptability.
Family concerns	Offer information about resources for family support and address their concerns.

## CATEGORIZING OBSTACLES

6-10. As objections represent a direct and voiced resistance or contention, it is important that recruiters understand how to engage them. Further questioning often reveals obstacles that typically fall into three categories: value, stall, and decision maker. Although some obstacles fall into two or even all three categories, there is usually a primary category. Knowing which category an obstacle falls into aids the recruiter in eventually overcoming the objection. Each category requires a different approach.

## VALUE

6-11. The prospect does not understand the value or there is a discrepancy in understanding the value. The prospect values something else higher than what the Army offers.

**Prospect:** “I feel like I would not be able to do the things I like if I join the Army.”

6-12. In this scenario, the prospect values personal freedom over what Army service provides. This signals to the recruiter that there was a failure to convey how the Army fulfills the prospect’s needs. The recruiter revisits specific information presented earlier. This information focuses on how the Army solves the prospect’s problem as defined by the problem statement. The recruiter guides the prospect through the solution (see chapter 5 for more information on problems and solutions) while also highlighting the value of Army service.

**Recruiter:** “Henry, how much longer are you willing to stay in your current situation, knowing you won’t be able to achieve (goal)?”

6-13. This question elicits an emotional response from the prospect, enabling the recruiter to reason with them. This demonstrates that the value of solving their problem and achieving their goal is worth the compromise of Army service. Depending on the prospect’s response, the recruiter needs to dive deeper into the solution or can move forward with a logical response to address the Army’s available BOPIs.

## STALL

6-14. The prospect is hesitant to commit due to fear of making the decision to join the Army.

**Prospect:** “I’m worried that my significant other will leave me if I go.”

6-15. In this scenario, the prospect is worried about a relationship changing if they join the Army. A successful recruiter helps a prospect make decisions when they are afraid of making a mistake. The recruiter explains that refusing to decide is still a decision and how the decision impacts the prospect’s goals.

**Recruiter:** “Ben, would you say that your significant other loves you and wants what’s best for you?”

**Prospect:** “Well, yeah.”

**Recruiter:** “Would you agree that they would support you in pursuing (goal), that’ll make you better and happier?”

**Prospect:** “Sure they would.”

**Recruiter:** “Would you agree that the Army provides you with the best resources to achieve (goal)?”

6-16. Asking a series of questions with favorable responses empowers the prospect to conclude that the Army is the best decision for them. With that agreement, you move toward an appropriate close. See Chapter 8 for more detailed information on closing.

## DECISION MAKER

6-17. The prospect is not willing to make the decision without the support of an influencer(s).

**Prospect:** “I need to speak with my dad before making the decision.”

6-18. In this scenario, the recruiter reminds the prospect of positions where the prospect has made decisions before. The recruiter asks questions that uncover more about the prospect’s problem, how making the decision would change the prospect’s situation, and how it would make their influencer feel.

**Recruiter:** “Max, I understand your dad’s support is critical. Would you agree that all of the benefits we discussed today align with your goals?”

**Prospect:** “I think so.”

**Recruiter:** “If you went home today and could show your dad that you made a decision to pursue this goal like you pursued playing on the football team, would you agree that your dad would be supportive?”

6-19. While remaining empathetic, the recruiter reminds the prospect of instances when they achieved success by following through with a major decision. The recruiter also takes into consideration the influencer’s feelings and the positive emotions that will result from seeing the prospect succeed.

## STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING OBSTACLES AND OBJECTIONS

6-20. Overcoming obstacles and objections requires finesse and empathy, making it an art. Employing overarching strategies that subtly shift perspectives is remarkably effective in addressing concerns directly.

6-21. **Reframe perspectives.** One powerful approach involves reframing potential obstacles and objections as opportunities for growth and development. This strategy injects positive insight and allows a prospect to move past a negative bias. A prospect’s negative perception could be a result of an experience or anxiety of the unknown. The recruiter helps the prospect envision the positive outcome of these concerns.

6-22. **Elicit positive imagery.** Vivid mental pictures are a powerful tool. Recruiters evoke positive emotions and associations by using descriptive language to depict successful experiences within the Army. This serves to alleviate concerns and sparks a sense of aspiration and excitement.

6-23. **Use social proof.** Sharing success stories or anecdotes of Soldiers who overcame similar concerns and achieved immense success in their military careers is a highly effective persuasion technique. Recruiters demonstrate the ability to overcome obstacles and objections with determination and support by presenting real-life examples.

6-24. **Understand an applicant’s core motivations and desires.** Strategic questioning subtly investigates underlying drivers. Recruiters ask open-ended questions about an applicant’s long-term goals and aspirations to uncover intrinsic motivations. Immediate concerns like money often mask these motivations.

6-25. **Understand the opportunity cost.** Opportunity cost represents the potential benefits a prospect misses out on when choosing one alternative over another. Knowing what benefits the prospect stands to lose by electing not to join the Army provides the recruiter with leverage when overcoming an obstacle or objection.

6-26. Recruiters dissolve obstacles and objections in a natural and supportive manner by incorporating these strategies into conversations. It is important to focus on offering a balanced perspective that recognizes the challenges while highlighting the potential for growth and accomplishment rather than dismissing concerns.

6-27. Recruiters foster a sense of empowerment and confidence in applicants by subtly weaving strategic questioning elements into interactions. This focuses on creating an environment where the prospect imagines themselves as a successful Soldier, ready to conquer any challenges they encounter.

## STEPS FOR OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

6-28. At this point, the recruiter has demonstrated an understanding of objections and how to diffuse them well before the conclusion of the Army Interview. The prospect may pose an objection at any time during the interview which requires immediate response. While the below process of overcoming objections is effective in most instances, an emotionally intelligent recruiter takes care to preserve the relationship they are building with the prospect. Not all steps are appropriate in every situation.

**Table 6-3. The Steps to Overcoming an Objection**

STEP	TITLE	COMPONENTS
STEP 1	Receive the Objection	Receive the objection, express empathy, ask a clarifying question
STEP 2	Repeat the Obstacle	Paraphrase, ensure understanding
STEP 3	Check for Smokescreen	Remove the obstacle, ask for a commitment
STEP 4	Show Emotion	Express empathy, shared experience, positive outcome
STEP 5	Use Logic	Restate relevant BOPI, connect to prospect’s DBM, goals, and passions, opportunity cost, ask for the commitment

**STEP ONE. RECEIVE THE OBJECTION.**

6-29. The components of this step are receive the objection, express empathy, and ask a clarifying question.

**Prospect:** “It all sounds good, but I cannot leave for that long.” (objection)

**Recruiter:** “Obviously, Owen, you have a good reason for saying that. Do you mind if I ask what it is?”

**Prospect:** “Well, I don’t want to be separated from my wife for that long of a time during training.” (obstacle)

An alternative is:

**Prospect:** “It all sounds good, but I cannot leave for that long.”

**Recruiter:** “I understand leaving can be difficult. What about the timeline is concerning you?”

6-30. In this step, expressing empathy continues to build connection with the prospect. Asking a clarifying question exposes the obstacle.

**STEP TWO. REPEAT THE OBSTACLE AS A QUESTION.**

6-31. The components of this step are paraphrase and ensure understanding.

**Recruiter:** “So, Ray, I understand that you are saying you do not want to separate from your spouse during training. Is that correct?”

**Prospect:** “Yes.”

6-32. Repeating the obstacle to the prospect accomplishes several things. It makes the prospect think about and then say the obstacle out loud. Repeating the obstacle also allows the prospect to hear it. Occasionally, prospects reconsider their obstacle after hearing it out loud. It clarifies understanding of the obstacle, provides the recruiter time to think of an appropriate response, and encourages the prospect to say “Yes.” The more the prospect says “yes,” regardless of what they are responding to, the better the interview will go. A potential alternative is “Oh, for that long of a time?”

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**Note:** Repeating or paraphrasing the most important part of the obstacle (typically the last few words) when asking the question prompts the prospect to elaborate and uncovers if the obstacle in this example is based on separation, length of time, or something else entirely. In the event this uncovers a different obstacle, return to Step One, and address the new objection.

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**STEP THREE. CHECK FOR SMOKE SCREEN.**

6-33. The components for this step are remove the obstacle and ask for the commitment.

**Recruiter:** “Well, Patty, if you do not have to be separated from your spouse for that long, will you join the Army?”

6-34. If the prospect answers “Yes,” proceed to Step Four. If the answer is no, go back to Step One to find the real obstacle. A potential alternative is:

**Recruiter:** “If you weren’t concerned about spending this much time away from your spouse, would you be willing to move forward with the process of enlisting?”

6-35. In this step, the recruiter asks a question that removes the obstacle to ascertain if it is the true obstacle. This allows the recruiter to address the true obstacle or continue to the next step.

**STEP FOUR. SHOW EMOTION.**

6-36. The components of this step are express empathy, shared experience, and positive outcome.

**Recruiter:** “I understand how you feel, Sid. Many people in your situation have felt the same way. What we have found is that the end result of this time away from our families is quite beneficial.”

6-37. A potential alternative is the recruiter telling a story that results in a positive outcome highlighting a similar situation or struggle and how they felt.

6-38. In this step, the recruiter takes the opportunity to overtly express empathy toward the prospect's concerns. A successful recruiter tells a story that further deepens their relatability and, as a result, creates the buy-in needed to move toward a close.

**STEP FIVE. USE LOGIC.**

6-39. The components of this step are restate relevant BOPs, connect them to the prospect's expressed DBM and goals, opportunity cost, and ask for the commitment.

**Recruiter:** "Rush, suppose the Army offers you a job with guaranteed skill training in the field of your choice. You also receive a cash bonus, education assistance, and healthcare for your family. We established these things are important to you. However, you must be away from your spouse for a few months. Wouldn't you take it?" (Wait for response.) "Understanding this, are you ready to join the United States Army?"

6-40. A potential alternative is:

**Recruiter:** "Let's circle back to your initial challenge. We understand that you've experienced problems accomplishing your goals and how this is impacting you and your family. We've established that a cash bonus, education assistance, and healthcare for your family alleviates all of your problems. Weigh this solution against the short period of time you'll be away from your spouse, to provide them with the best life possible. Would you agree that selecting this path would be a step toward a better future for you both?" (Wait for response.) "Rush, are you ready to join the United States Army?"

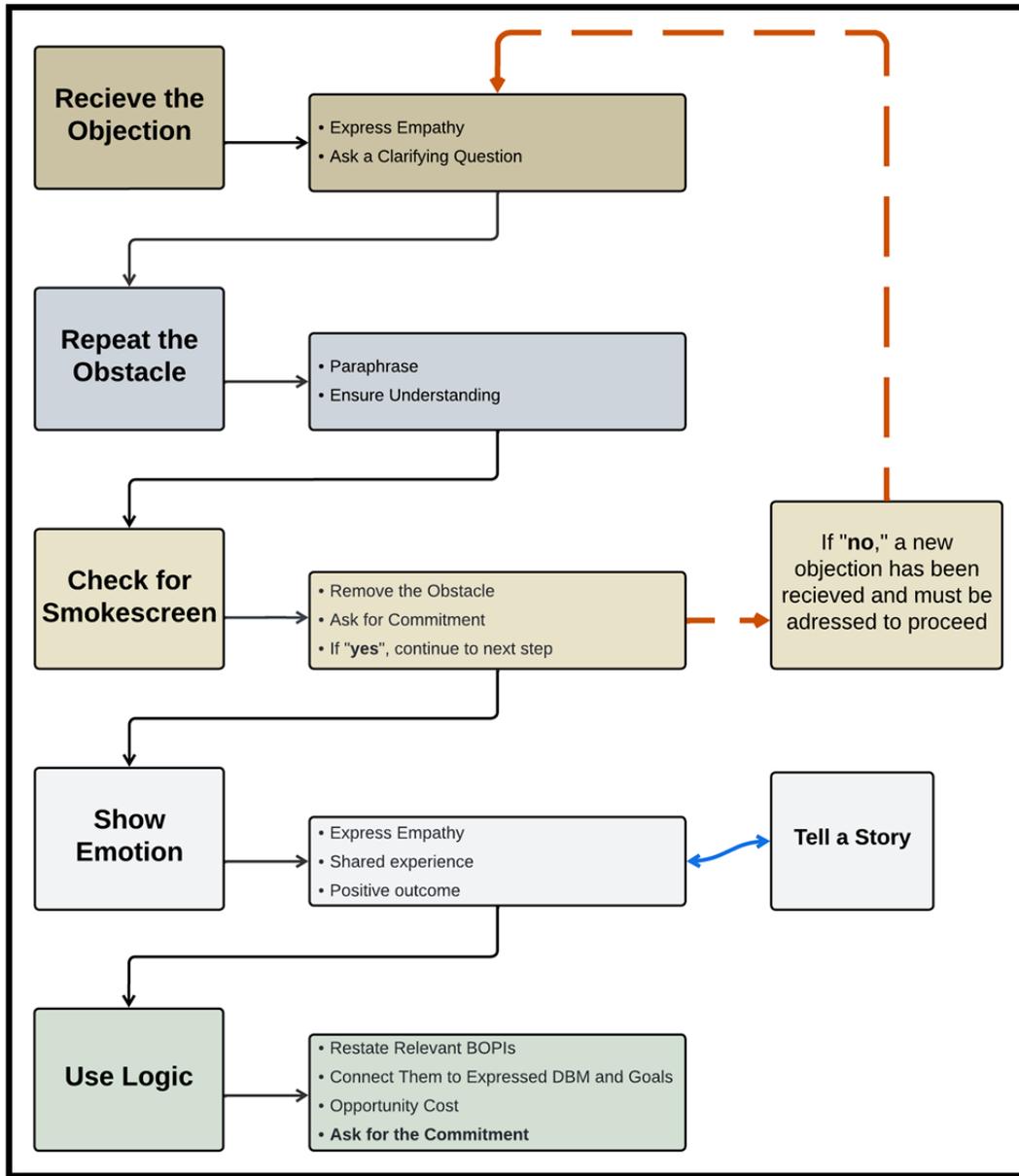


Figure 6-1. Objection Flow Chart

## FOLLOW-UP

6-41. It is not possible to overcome every obstacle or objection on the first try. In some cases, multiple follow-ups are necessary to engender a commitment. Successful recruiters follow up with prospects who were unable to give a “yes,” whether due to an obstacle or an objection, with a distinct purpose. When presented with a “no,” recruiters understand that follow-ups allow time to:

- Reflect on the obstacle or objection
- Develop a strategy
- Recap the previous conversation
- Address the obstacle or objection (policy changes may alleviate some obstacles)
- Ask for feedback
- Set the next step

6-42. Follow-up continues to build rapport, trust, and credibility. This reaffirms the relationship and ensures the prospect is thought of first, last, and always. For more information on follow-up, refer to UTC 5-03.1 (Prospecting, Processing and Analysis).

## **SUMMARY**

6-43. In the Army Interview process, successful recruiters are adept at identifying and addressing objections and obstacles raised by prospects to facilitate transparent and efficient conversations. Objections are direct expressions of resistance, while obstacles are implicit challenges prospects face in decision-making. Recruiters use various strategies, including empathetic questioning and providing factual information, to overcome objections and address obstacles early in the conversation. Three main categories of obstacles are identified: value, stall, and decision maker, each requiring tailored approaches for resolution. Recruiters employ techniques such as reframing perspectives, eliciting positive imagery, and understanding core motivations to effectively overcome objections and obstacles. A structured approach involving steps like receiving the objection, checking for smokescreens, and employing logic ensures a systematic response. Follow-up is crucial for handling unresolved issues, maintaining rapport, and guiding prospects towards commitment.

## Chapter 7

# Problems and Solutions

### INTRODUCTION

7-1. As a recruiter, it is not enough to identify a prospect's DBM, goals, and passions. To earn a strong commitment, find the problem. The problem is a situation a prospect faces that they have not yet been able to solve themselves. In some cases, the prospect has not even identified that a problem exists. This process starts with labeling the problem and ends with connecting the problem to a solution provided by serving in the Army or Army Reserve.

### LABEL THE PROBLEM

7-2. It is critical to use active listening skills and label the problem in this step. Listen for specific problem points or challenges the prospect faces and re-state those problems to the prospect. This ensures that the recruiter and prospect are working together to address the correct problems. Labeling the problem is a two-step process: identify and restate. The outcome of these two steps is the problem statement.

- **Identify.** To identify the problem, recruiters ask open-ended follow-on questions such as:
  - “Can you tell me more about the steps you have taken to achieve (goals, wants and/or needs)?”
  - “What is it that you believe has been missing in your plan so far?”
  - “What do you think are the weakest points of your plan?”
  - Pay attention to any hints of uncertainty or statements such as: “I need,” “I don't have,” “I'm struggling,” or “I'm looking.”
  - The prospect states “I'm looking for stability.”
- **Restate.** Once a recruiter has identified the problem, a best practice is to restate the problem in the form of a question. When asked in a curious tone, this sets the prospect at ease and validates that the problem has been correctly identified. Questions used in this manner could look like:
  - “You're struggling with (their problem)?”
  - “You're looking for stability?”

7-3. Be aware that many times the problem may be as simple as the prospect's own failure to act.

### DEEPER DISCOVERY

7-4. After confirming that a problem has been identified, recruiters ask probing questions to discover solutions. Problems may have significant rippling effects. It is important to be thorough and continue to practice effective active listening. Prospects are not always able to identify their own problems. Asking strategic questions provides the prospect the opportunity for clarity. For example:

- “Can you tell me more about the employment challenges you've been facing?”
- “When you say you don't have time, what does that look like for you?”
- “Can you help me understand the impact of this problem on your personal goals?”
- “What impact do your family's financial struggles have on you?”

### QUANTIFY THE PROBLEM

7-5. Encouraging the prospect to quantify the challenge(s) they are facing (time, financial, emotional, urgency) establishes the gravity of the situation and lays the groundwork for a solution. Example questions used to quantify the problem could look like:

- “In your view, what would be the cost (financial, time, emotional), if the problem remains unsolved?”
- “How long has this been going on? How long do you expect it to continue?”
- “To what extent has the challenge of finding stable employment affected your overall well-being and future plans?”

- “How much do you expect to spend...?”
- “If nothing changes, how will this impact your current path?”

## CONNECT THE PROBLEM TO THE SOLUTION

7-6. Connect the problem to the solution by sharing relevant cases or success stories that demonstrate how the proposed solution has helped others. A best practice is to highlight features and benefits that directly lead to that solution. The recruiter’s storytelling skills along with social proof facilitate the prospect’s ability to visualize how the Army presents the solution to their problems. Many people find solutions easier using visual aids. Talking through a solution is often not as effective as showing or demonstrating the solution. Accessing these resources via official government and military websites increases credibility. The following list contains potential sources of aids used to demonstrate solutions. This list is not all-inclusive.

- Media (social, Army branded, etc.): Show before-and-after photos and videos of previous Future Soldiers. Use Army-branded videos. Use Army-branded media like MOS videos that relate to the problem.
- Phone a friend: Call a “friend” who is relevant and/or relatable to the prospect. This could include other recruiters, personnel in the operational Army, retirees, family members, or those who support Army recruiting efforts.
- Life Plan (see a scenario using the life plan in Appendix C.)
- Leave and Earnings Statements (LES)

## SUMMARY

7-7. In the process of recruiting for the Army or Army Reserve, it’s not sufficient to merely understand a prospect’s goals and passions; it is important to also identify the underlying problems they face. This involves active listening to pinpoint specific challenges the prospect encounters and rephrasing them as problem statements. The recruiter then delves deeper into these problems through probing questions, aiming to uncover their root causes and effects. Encouraging the prospect to quantify the challenges they face helps establish the seriousness of the situation. Once the problem is clearly defined, the recruiter connects it to potential solutions, often using storytelling and social proof to illustrate how Army service can address the prospect’s issues. Visual aids and accessing resources from official military sources enhance the credibility of these solutions.

## Chapter 8

# Commitment Techniques and Closing

## INTRODUCTION

8-1. No matter how good an interview is, the recruiter still must finish by asking the prospect to join the Army. Closing is critical to the Army Interview because it is the point where the recruiter asks for and gains the commitment. The effective use of trial closes and reading of body language are keys to a successful closing. All recruiters have a favorite close, but no singular closing technique is the best for every situation. Whichever technique is used to successfully obtain a commitment is the best one at that particular time.

## ENGAGE THE PROSPECT: TECHNIQUES FOR EARNING COMMITMENT

8-2. Closing is an ongoing process from start to finish. Closing begins at the initial contact. To effectively engage prospects and secure their commitment, employ techniques that foster connection and mutual understanding. Begin by establishing rapport through active listening and acknowledging their perspectives. For instance, start conversations with open-ended questions like, “What motivates you?”, “What are things you are passionate about?”, or “Can you share more about your career goals and why they are so important to you?”.

8-3. As the dialogue progresses, recruiters personalize the discussion by tailoring their approach to the prospect’s interests and aspirations. They ask questions such as, “How do you envision accomplishing your goals?” or “What specific skills or experiences do you need to accomplish your goals?” This not only demonstrates genuine interest but also allows the recruiter to assess alignment between the prospect’s goals and the ability of the Army BOPs to help them.

8-4. Recruiters highlight the unique aspects of the Army, emphasizing its culture, values, BOPs, and lastly opportunities for professional development. They pose questions that invite prospects to envision their future within and after the Army like, “While serving and taking advantage of what’s afforded to you, can you see yourself...?” or “What would it feel like to take advantage of (BOP) to accomplish your goal?”. The recruiter compares and shows how the prospect can get to their goals in a better way than their current plan would allow.

8-5. It is important to actively involve prospects in the decision-making process. Recruiters ask for the prospect’s input on everything discussed. For instance, a recruiter asks, “How do you see your current plan working out?” This is an opportunity for the recruiter to identify shortfalls or risks within the prospect’s current plan. This enhances the recruiter’s ability to showcase where the Army or Army Reserve COA is better. This collaborative approach empowers the prospect and reinforces their commitment by making them active participants in the discussion.

8-6. Throughout the engagement process, recruiters should express appreciation for the prospect’s time and insights. Conclude discussions by summarizing key points and reiterating the positive aspects of their potential contribution. When navigating these techniques, the goal is to create a meaningful two-way dialogue that not only informs the prospect but also reinforces their commitment to joining the Army.

## CLOSING TIME

8-7. Recognizing the right moment to initiate the close is crucial. Knowing when to transition to this phase significantly impacts the success of recruitment efforts. There is no set time during the Army Interview for the close. The recruiter asks at any time during the interview when the prospect gives the communication signals. For example, after presenting the first feature and benefit, a trial close indicates if the prospect is ready to commit. If the prospect commits to joining the Army before completing the interview, the recruiter strengthens their case by explaining how this decision aligns with their needs and goals.

8-8. Once this occurs, the tone of the interview changes to one of reinforcement and providing information rather than selling. Once the prospect has agreed to enlist, recruiters must be careful not to talk the prospect out of their decision by trying to oversell. The following key indicators identify when it is time to close:

- **Affirmative responses.** Affirmative responses or agreement from the prospect throughout the conversation are an indicator. When the prospect consistently responds positively to questions and statements, it is a sign that they are receptive to a close.
- **Active engagement.** Recruiters observe the prospect's level of engagement in the conversation. If they are actively participating, asking questions, and showing interest, it indicates a genuine curiosity about Army opportunities.
- **Enthusiasm and interest.** It is important to pay attention to the prospect's tone and enthusiasm. If they express excitement about the Army's offerings and opportunities, it indicates a suitable time to close.
- **Alignment with goal.** Once a prospect agrees that a program or a benefit will fulfill a need, it is a sign that the prospect is ready for commitment.
- **Positive nonverbal cues.** Recruiters evaluate the prospect's non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions. If they appear relaxed, open, and engaged, it presents an opportunity to close.
- **Direct indicators.** Occasionally, prospects directly express their readiness to commit. They might say "I'm excited to join." or "I really like that." It is critical to acknowledge and act upon these indicators promptly.
- **Agreement on next steps.** If the prospect has agreed to specific next steps in the enlistment process, such as taking the ASVAB, it is a sign that the prospect is open to a close.

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**Note:** Evaluate the level of comfort and trust established during the conversation. When the prospect feels at ease discussing their goals and concerns, it is a positive signal.

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8-9. Recognizing when to close is a skill that requires careful observation and listening. It involves assessing the prospect's receptiveness, enthusiasm, alignment with goals, and direct indications of commitment readiness. When these indicators align, it is an opportune moment to transition to the close and ask the prospect directly to join the Army.

8-10. While knowing when to attempt to close is critical, it is just as important to identify when a close fails. UTC 5-03.1 (Prospecting, Processing, and Analysis) states, "If the prospect is getting defensive or uncomfortable, back off and reestablish rapport. Display a sense of concern and responsibility for the prospect throughout the conversation."

- Recruiters maintain constant awareness for signs of apprehension such as defensive body posture or negative direct indicators. In that situation, consider the following:
- Were the right questions asked?
- Was the interview rushed?
- Was the information provided in alignment with the prospect's DBM, goals, and passions?
- Was there a shared understanding developed?
- Was empathy demonstrated?
- Was rapport established properly?
- Is there an alternative COA (follow-up appointment)?

## PREPARE FOR THE CLOSE

8-11. Integrating open-ended questions into the close creates a space for meaningful reflection and leaves the door open for further exploration. Remember to apply the techniques found in the Questioning Techniques section in Chapter 2. A best practice is to conclude the conversation by inviting the prospect to share their final thoughts or reflections. For example, "As we wrap up, I'd love to hear any additional thoughts you'd like to share. What are your key takeaways from our discussion?"

8-12. It is important to express genuine curiosity about the prospect's perspective. Recruiters encourage future engagement by posing questions that invite continued dialogue. As an example, a recruiter says, "I've

enjoyed our conversation today. What topics or areas would you like to explore further in our future interactions?” This not only signals openness but also lays the foundation for ongoing collaboration.

8-13. Closing statements work best when framed as an opportunity for reflection and growth. An example of this is: “As we conclude, I encourage you to reflect on how our discussion aligns with your goals. How might that shape your approach moving forward?”

## CLOSING TECHNIQUES

8-14. The following list includes proven closes that are effective in recruiting. The list is extensive but not all-inclusive.

- **Single-question close**

“Jason, are you ready to join the Army?”

This is a direct close and is used with caution as this forces the prospect to make a decision, and the answer may be no. However, “no” is not necessarily a bad thing. This provides the opportunity to draw out potential obstacles or objections.

- **Two-choice close**

“Jane, which day do you prefer, Wednesday or Thursday, to take your physical and enlist?”

This close gives the prospect a sense of control because they are allowed to choose the day. If the prospect rejects first two days, try two more. If the prospect still is not ready to commit, determine what the objection or obstacle is and try again.

- **Minor point close**

“Jim, what school are you going to use your Post 9/11 GI Bill at?”

This approach engages prospects in decision-making on less significant details. This subtly implies that the decision to join the Army has already been made. When the prospect envisions themselves in the Army, it makes the decision to join more natural.

- **Contingent close**

“Gale, I know you value your parents’ input. Imagine they see the benefits and support your choice to enlist; would you feel prepared to move forward with the physical examination and enlistment process this week?”

This approach transforms the statement into a question, encouraging the prospect to consider the scenario of parental approval as a stepping stone rather than a barrier to enlisting, while still using the contingency-based framework.

- **FEBA (Facts, Evidence, Benefit, Agreement)**

“The Army offers full educational benefits including tuition assistance and skill training (Fact). Soldiers like SFC Vale gained a degree in engineering while serving, with no debt (Evidence). This path provides valuable skills and financial stability (Benefits). Would you agree this aligns with your goals for education and a secure career (Agreement)?”

This prompts the prospect to think about their priorities and the role the Army plays in fulfilling them. It guides the prospect toward making an informed decision based on the information discussed.

- **Third-person close**

“Flynn, let me introduce you to SFC Smith. His career has followed a similar path to your goals throughout his time in the Army. How would hearing from him benefit you?” After the prospect speaks with the third person, ask what they learned.

In this approach, recruiters engage collaboratively with a colleague to reinforce the conversation’s key points. This reframing invites the prospect to consider the value of receiving confirmation from

a seemingly objective source, thus subtly integrating the third-party endorsement into the decision-making process.

- **Challenge close**

“Rex, what makes you think you’re ready?”

This close challenges the prospect’s ego by implying they probably cannot make it through Initial Entry Training (IET). The danger here is they may agree. Do not use this close with someone who has expressed a worry or concern about IET.

**Vignette**

**Recruiter:** “Greg, you’ve got an impressive athletic background, and you seem to have a strong sense of discipline. But basic training is a different beast altogether. Besides physical strength, what else do you need to possess to be successful in basic training?”

**Prospect:** “I understand that. I’m ready for whatever the training entails.”

**Recruiter:** “It’s good to hear confidence, but I’ve seen some of the toughest individuals reconsider their decision when faced with the reality of the challenge. Basic training is designed to push you beyond your limits. Not everyone is cut out for it.”

**Prospect:** “I get that it’s tough, but I’m not someone who backs down from a challenge.”

**Recruiter:** “And that’s precisely the attitude you’ll need. Just remember, it’s more than a challenge; it’s a commitment to transform. If you’re truly ready, you’ll find a way to excel, not just get by.”

**Prospect:** “I want to do more than excel. I want to lead. That’s why I’m here.”

**Recruiter:** “Leadership is earned through perseverance and the ability to inspire others, especially when the going gets tough. It’s one thing to want it and another to prove it. The question is, are you ready to prove it?”

**Prospect:** “Yes, I am.”

**Recruiter:** “Alright, Greg. If you’re as determined as you say, let’s take the next step and get you prepared for what’s ahead. We’ll start with the enlistment process and then talk about how to get you ready for basic training.”

- **Service to country close**

“Hunter, joining the Army is more than a career; your country calls for your bravery and service. What about this country makes serving an attractive option to you?”

This transforms direct statements into reflective questions, prompting the prospect to contemplate the deeper values and commitments associated with Army service while still appealing to a sense of duty and pride. This close works best with a prospect who has shown interest in the Army Value of selfless service.

- **Ben Franklin close**

This close is essentially a pros and cons list. It is best used when all other attempts to close have failed and it is clear the prospect will not make a decision at that time. It requires the recruiter to set a follow-up appointment and gather more information to overcome obstacles and objections.

The prospect is provided with a piece of paper. They draw a vertical line down the center and write “Pros” on the left and “Cons” on the right. The prospect lists all the cons first. These are their objections and obstacles. Next, the prospect lists all the pros. The recruiter then adds all the pros of joining the Army. It is important to ensure the pros always outweigh the cons. The prospect takes the sheet home to consider and share the information with their parents, spouse, or influencer. The recruiter sets a time to get back with them to discuss their conclusions. It is important to maintain a high level of rapport with the prospect throughout the process. When the prospect leaves, the recruiter immediately writes down the prospect’s objections and develops a plan to overcome them.

This technique aims to guide the prospect through a thoughtful self-assessment process. By doing so, it encourages the prospect to evaluate their own motivations, desires, and potential hesitations regarding Army service.

#### Vignette

**Recruiter:** “Greg, you’ve got an impressive athletic background, and you seem to have a strong sense of discipline. But basic training is a different beast altogether. Besides physical strength, what else do you need to possess to be successful in basic training?”

**Prospect:** “I understand that. I’m ready for whatever the training entails.”

**Recruiter:** “It’s good to hear confidence, but I’ve seen some of the toughest individuals reconsider their decision when faced with the reality of the challenge. Basic training is designed to push you beyond your limits. Not everyone is cut out for it.”

**Prospect:** “I get that it’s tough, but I’m not someone who backs down from a challenge.”

**Recruiter:** “And that’s precisely the attitude you’ll need. Just remember, it’s more than a challenge; it’s a commitment to transform. If you’re truly ready, you’ll find a way to excel, not just get by.”

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**Prospect:** “Yes, I am.”

**Recruiter:** “Alright, Greg. If you’re as determined as you say, let’s take the next step and get you prepared for what’s ahead. We’ll start with the enlistment process and then talk about how to get you ready for basic training.”

- **Scarcity principle close**

“Landon, what would happen if you could not secure your dream job?” (Wait for a response.) “Why don’t we schedule you for your physical so you can select your job before all the other seniors in the nation do?” Alternatively, “Landon, the career field you are looking for is not always open. I think there are a few slots left. Why don’t we schedule you for your physical on Thursday or Friday?”

This close capitalizes on the prospect’s fear of missing out. Emphasize to the prospect that the BOPIs currently presented are not always available. Ensure the creation of an atmosphere of enthusiasm and excitement surrounding the prospect’s goals throughout this process. This close adds value to the opportunity and moves the prospect into the processing cycle as an applicant.

- **Contrast principle close**

“Sabina, I know you feel apprehensive about leaving home for a long time in the active-duty Army, but you still want to select 88M as an MOS. The Army Reserve offers the same opportunity, but you will serve here in your hometown. How does that sound?”

Presenting the information in this manner contrasts being away from home for several years against only being away for the duration of training. This engages the prospect’s objection and makes it easier for the prospect to consider enlisting.

- **Doorknob close**

“Rose, before I leave, can I ask you one question? What is the real reason you decided against joining the Army today?”

If all other attempts fail, the recruiter may try the doorknob close. This occurs just before leaving (when the pressure is off). This close provides one more shot at the prospect and may surface an unspoken obstacle that can later be overcome.

## SUMMARY

8-15. A recruiter who is an effective closer is enthusiastic. They must love the Army. They must believe in the Army and that the Army is the right choice for the prospect. They must have confident expectations and must persist. If they persist no matter how many times people tell them “No,” they will succeed.

8-16. Closing is a vital skill for every recruiter. Express mastery of this skill by knowing how and when to use specific closes. Integrating at least one of these closes into every interview significantly enhances effectiveness. The true art of closing lies not just in the technique itself, but in the delivery. A great closer is always upbeat, confident, and resilient, creating a compelling and persuasive argument. While it is important to acknowledge that not every close will result in a “Yes,” the consistent application of these strategies improves the success rate, producing a more adept and successful recruiter.

## Appendix A

# Pre-Interview Checklist

### INTRODUCTION

A-1. The success or failure of an Army Interview often depends on the level of preparation completed prior to its execution. The example below is not all-inclusive and adapts based on the specific prospect, recruiter, and change in operational environment. A digital example of the checklist is available at [https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/:f:/s/usarec-doctrine/ErruDIToqK1NkShvgL-PrcwBAVcqV0rrui4u0\\_tGJ4ryWA?e=0oakFN](https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/:f:/s/usarec-doctrine/ErruDIToqK1NkShvgL-PrcwBAVcqV0rrui4u0_tGJ4ryWA?e=0oakFN).

<b>PREPARATION CHECKLIST FOR ARMY INTERVIEW</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
<b>I. Initial Planning</b>	
Identify interview details (date, time, location, contact information)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review prospect's background and prospecting information	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>II. Information Gathering</b>	
Identify prospect's DBM, goals, passion, and potential obstacles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research specific Army BOPIs aligned with the prospect	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>III. Setting the Stage</b>	
Ensure the interview location is suitable and free of distractions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange refreshments (if applicable) and seating for all participants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm availability of materials (e.g., brochures, visual aids)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare relevant documents, resources, and evidence book	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>IV. Time Management</b>	
Allocate sufficient time for the interview, considering potential length	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate expected interview duration	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>V. Influencers</b>	
Identify and invite influential figures (e.g., parents, guardians) if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>VI. Professional Appearance</b>	
Ensure personal appearance aligns with professionalism and Army standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verify recruiting station or interview location cleanliness and professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>VII. Appointment Confirmation</b>	
Confirm interview appointment with the prospect (no more than 72 hours prior)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide directions or instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>VIII. Atmosphere Establishment</b>	
Ensure interview environment is welcoming, comfortable, and conducive to discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow guidelines/regulations for closed-door sessions, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>IX. Backup Plans</b>	
Develop contingency plans	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure A-1. Pre-Interview Checklist

## Appendix B

# Army Story Example

### INTRODUCTION

B-1. The below personal Army story serves as an example and is told from the perspective of an Army recruiter. It is important when crafting a personal story to share real events that were experienced by the storyteller. In the event that the recruiter does not have a personal experience that aligns with the prospect's goals and passions, it is possible to achieve the same effect by sharing a co-worker's experience. The successful telling of a personal story increases the trust and credibility a recruiter holds with a prospect. The example presented serves as structural template rather than a content-based one.

B-2. The example Army Story serves as a potential template. It contains history, the Army Values, the Soldier's Creed, and the Warrior Ethos. It is important to connect the elements selected in the Army Story to the specific prospect for whom the story is told. Successful recruiters use these templates as a starting point but craft their own stories after considering each prospect's goals and passions.

### PERSONAL ARMY STORY EXAMPLE

B-3. A long time ago, I was just like you. Growing up in a small town, life felt stagnant. Everyone knew everyone, and there weren't many opportunities to break out of the routine. Deep down, I knew I wanted more. So, one day, I walked into the Army recruitment office, not really sure what I was looking for, but knowing I needed a change.

B-4. I met SGT Ortiz, the recruiter there. He was a no-nonsense kind of guy, but there was something about him that made me feel like he got where I was coming from. I told him I wanted something bigger than small-town life, something with purpose, and he nodded like he understood.

B-5. Basic training was tough, probably the toughest thing I've ever done. The drive for something greater kept me going, reminding me why I was there and what I stood to gain. When I finally made it through, I felt like a brand-new person who could take on anything.

B-6. Then came deployment to Afghanistan. It was a whole different world over there, dusty and dangerous. One day, we were sent to this remote village to help rebuild a school. Working with the locals, we patched up walls, painted classrooms, and made the place safe for kids to learn.

B-7. It wasn't glamorous work, but it felt good knowing we were making a difference, even in a small way. In that moment, I realized I'd found what I was looking for—a sense of purpose and a chance to do some good in the world.

B-8. Looking back on it all, I'm grateful for the journey I've been on. Now, as a recruiter myself, I see it as my duty to help others find their own sense of purpose, just like SGT Ortiz did for me. If sharing my story can inspire someone else to take a chance and discover their path in the Army, then it's all been worth it.

### THE ARMY STORY EXAMPLE

B-9. Let's take a moment to introduce you to the Army. It's important that you learn about the organization, its history, values and really, what it means to join the Army and become a Soldier.

B-10. Imagine a history that began on June 14, 1775, a legacy of bravery, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment. This is the United States Army, an organization that has persevered from the front lines of revolution to the strategic boundaries of the modern world. Our story is one of bravery, a tribute to the remarkable people who have dedicated their lives to defending our country. The Army defends the nation and our allies from those who threaten freedom and democracy as I'm sure you're aware. What most people don't think about is that Soldiers are also involved in humanitarian missions, supporting, and providing aide to those in dire need.

B-11. So, what does it mean to be a Soldier? It is the living, breathing embodiment of the Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage. These are more than just buzzwords; they are our guides, leading us in all that we do, pushing us towards greatness. Take a second and think about which value speaks to you the most and why.

B-12. When we recite the Soldier's Creed, we say, "I am an American Soldier. I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values." This creed is not something we just say; it is who we are and a declaration of our loyalty to our nation and its citizens. Our pledge, the Warrior Ethos, strengthens our commitment to never accept defeat, to always place the mission first, and to never leave a fallen Soldier behind- in peacetime or at war. This is a promise every Soldier you serve with has made to you and to the American people. How does that make you feel?

B-13. This is a transformational journey that challenges you to rise above the ordinary, to make a meaningful impact on something much bigger than yourself, and to actually make a difference in the lives of others as well as the world. The rewards are unlike any others, but the challenges are real and will require you to develop your skills. You will find your strength in the Army, take on leadership roles, and have the chance to leave a mark on history.

B-14. So, think about your goals and values. In what way do they align with the Army's values? Imagine your story becoming a part of the intricate fabric of our history. What impact do you think you will have on the Army's story?

## Appendix C

# Army Interview Scenario

## INTRODUCTION

C-1. This scenario presents a few of the tactics, techniques, and procedures of the recruiting concepts presented in this manual. The examples in the scenario provide a way of thinking about how to conduct an Army Interview and not a prescriptive script or the only way of doing business. This scenario provides a better understanding of the Army Interview model and probable outcomes.

## SCENARIO

### Scene

Staff Sergeant Kenobi sits in a neat, well-organized office within an Army recruiting station far, far away. The walls are adorned with posters showcasing Soldiers in various roles, highlighting the wide range of careers within the Army. The atmosphere is professional yet welcoming. Today, he's scheduled to meet with Luke, a community college student interested in technology and seeking direction.

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (warmly greeting Luke as he enters) "Welcome, Luke! It's great to finally meet you. Please, come on in."

**Luke:** (smiling, slightly nervous) "Thanks, Staff Sergeant Kenobi. I appreciate you taking the time."

[As Luke steps into the Army recruiting station, Staff Sergeant Kenobi is ready to ease him into this new world with some friendly introductions. They make their way toward the team, each of whom has a unique background before joining the recruiting station.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Let's give you a quick tour and meet some of the team. It's interesting to hear about what everyone was doing before recruiting for the Army."

[They approach Sergeant Binks first, who looks up from his paperwork with a welcoming smile.]

**Sergeant Binks:** "Hey, I'm Sergeant Binks. Before I got into recruiting, I was with the 82nd Airborne, specializing in paratrooper operations. Jumping out of planes was my passion. What about you, interested in the thrill?"

[Next, they move to Staff Sergeant Dameron, who's currently explaining a training schedule to another recruit.]

**Staff Sergeant Dameron:** "I'm Staff Sergeant Dameron. I used to be a drill sergeant, helping shape the trainees into Soldiers. It was tough but rewarding. If you have questions about basic training, I've got answers."

[Finally, they reach Sergeant First Class Tarkin, who's organizing some community outreach materials.]

**Sergeant First Class Tarkin:** "I'm Sergeant First Class Tarkin. Before this, I was involved in logistics, making sure troops had what they needed, when they needed it, everywhere from stateside bases to overseas operations. It's all about the details."

[Luke listens, intrigued by each story. The variety of their experiences before becoming recruiters paints a vivid picture of Army life.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "As you can see, Luke, we all come from different backgrounds and have different experiences. Everyone here has been in the field and faced challenges, and now we're using that experience to guide Future Soldiers like you."

[The informal storytelling session helps explain the Army for Luke, making the military world seem more accessible and relatable.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "So, what do you think? Any of these paths sound like they might be up your alley?"

[With a newfound sense of comfort, Luke begins to ask questions, engaging with the team about their past roles and how they transitioned to recruiting. The atmosphere is relaxed, conversational, and full of possibilities as they delve into the rest of the visit.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Can I offer you a bottle of water or a snack?”

**Luke:** “No, thanks.”

### **Establishing Rapport and Building Trust and Credibility**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Luke. Before we dive in, I just want to say that this is a conversation about you—your goals, interests, and any concerns you might have. My role is to provide you with information and support, whatever your decision may be, which could include joining the Army.”

### **Tell Your Personal Army Story**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Let me start by sharing a bit of my story. Given a hundred tries, I never would have been able to predict how my life played out.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi leans back, reflecting on his years of service, choosing his words with the intention of not just informing, but inspiring.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I joined the Army right out of high school. Much like you, I was seeking direction and purpose. I knew I wanted to be part of something larger than myself, but I wasn’t exactly sure what that looked like until I found my place in the Army. My first days were challenging, filled with doubts because of the physical and mental demands of basic training. But with each passing day, I found myself growing stronger, more confident, more disciplined, and deeply connected to my fellow Soldiers.”

[He pauses, projecting a sense of pride so it’s evident in his voice.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “My first assignment was with a communications unit. It was there I discovered my passion for technology and how it could be leveraged to keep our country safe. The Army saw potential in me and provided opportunities for advanced training. I’ve been part of operations that, frankly, taught me the real meaning of selfless service and sacrifice.”

[A reflective smile crosses Staff Sergeant Kenobi’s face as he shares a particularly meaningful memory.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “There was this one operation we were part of in Haiti. The challenges were immense, from logistics to the unknown factors of the mission. But the way our team came together, supported each other, and accomplished our objectives was nothing short of extraordinary. It taught me about leadership, trust, and the unwavering spirit of the Army.”

[Turning his attention back to Luke, Staff Sergeant Kenobi’s expression is earnest.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “But it’s not just about the missions or the technology. It’s about the people. The Army has given me a second family, a group of individuals who stand by me through thick and thin. The values we share, the creed we live by, it’s all real. It shapes who you are, not just as a Soldier, but as a person.”

[Luke listens intently, clearly moved by Staff Sergeant Kenobi’s story.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “So, when I talk about the Army being a commitment to a way of life, I speak from experience. It’s been a journey of growth, challenges, and unparalleled rewards. And I see that same potential in you, Luke.”

[The room is filled with a new sense of understanding and camaraderie as Staff Sergeant Kenobi concludes his story, leaving Luke not just with answers, but with a vision of what his own future in the Army might hold.]

### **Tell The Army Story, Describe the Army**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Luke, let me share with you the essence of what it means to be part of the Army. This isn’t just a job; it’s a commitment to a way of life, grounded in a rich history, strong values, and a promise to oneself and others.

“The United States Army was established on June 14, 1775, making it the oldest branch of the U.S. military. Born out of the need for a unified defense force during the Revolutionary War, the Army has since played a crucial role in shaping the course of our nation’s history. From the battlefields of the Civil War to the beaches of Normandy, and from the mountains of Afghanistan to peacekeeping missions around the world, the Army stands as a pillar of strength, resilience, and freedom.

“Central to our identity are the seven core Army Values: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. These values aren’t just ideals we strive for; they are the very fabric of our character as Soldiers. They guide our actions, decisions, and interactions, both in and out of uniform.

“Every Soldier learns and lives by the Soldier’s Creed. It’s a powerful affirmation of our responsibilities and commitments as members of the Army. The Creed emphasizes our role as warriors, our commitment to the mission, and our duty to stand strong with our fellow Soldiers. It reminds us that we are part of a larger team, fighting not for personal glory, but for the security of our nation and the values it stands for.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (leaning forward, curious) [He shows Luke a display containing the Army Values.] “Luke, when considering the Army Values, which one do you feel speaks to you the most?”

**Luke:** (pausing thoughtfully before speaking) “Integrity, I’d say. It’s about doing the right thing, even when nobody’s around to see it. That’s crucial, not just here but in cybersecurity too, where it’s all about trust and protecting others.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi picks up on the fact that Luke mentioned cybersecurity. This is important to remember later when shaping facts and evidence.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (nodding, clearly impressed) “That’s a solid choice. Integrity is the foundation of everything in the Army. It’s what makes a team trust each other and stick together. Your grasp on its importance tells me you’re more than ready for what’s ahead.

“Integral to the Soldier’s Creed is the Warrior Ethos: ‘I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade.’ These lines encapsulate the spirit and determination that define an Army Soldier. The Warrior Ethos is about resilience, perseverance, and unwavering solidarity. It’s what drives us to push beyond our limits, to face challenges head-on, and to uphold the highest standards of honor and duty.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That, Luke, is the Army story—a legacy of bravery, a culture shaped by enduring values, and a life defined by a commitment to service and excellence. Imagine being part of this storied tradition, carrying forward the torch of those who served before you, and paving the way for future generations.”

**Luke:** (moved) “Hearing all this, I feel a deep sense of respect and a growing connection to what the Army stands for. It’s not just about serving; it’s about being part of a legacy and living up to ideals that really matter. I’m truly beginning to see how my path could align with such a noble and fulfilling mission.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “And we see great potential in you, Luke, to contribute to and grow within this tradition. Let’s explore how you can take your place in the Army story, fulfilling both your personal aspirations and our collective mission.”

### Validate Qualification (Prequalification APPEMDT)

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Now, let’s talk a bit about your background, Luke. I’ve noted your interest in technology and your current studies. The Army offers incredible opportunities for growth in tech fields. But first, let’s ensure we cover some basic eligibility criteria. Before we start, I just wanted to share the Privacy Act of 1974 with you. This is a law that essentially means that everything we discuss will stay between you, me, and the Army. The information we are about to discuss will never be sold and will only be used to determine eligibility and qualification for the U.S. Army.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi hands Luke a printed copy for him to review and sign.]

**Luke:** “Sounds good.”

**A: Age**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “First off, can you confirm your date of birth for me?”

**Luke:** “Sure, it’s May 4, 2004.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Where were you born?”

**Luke:** “Orlando, Florida.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “What is your social security number?”

**Luke:** “123-45-0000.”

**P: Physical**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (shifting to a more serious tone) “Let’s talk about your physical health a bit. When is the last time you were under the care of a physician or spoke with a doctor?”

**Luke:** “About six months ago, just for a regular check-up.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Did any new conditions or prescriptions come out of that check-up?”

**Luke:** “Not that I can recall.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “And when is the last time you visited the emergency room or urgent care?”

**Luke:** “I can’t remember doing so recently. It’s been years.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Are you currently on any medications?”

**Luke:** “No, I’m not on any medications.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Have you ever been on any medications?”

**Luke:** “Just the usual stuff when I was younger, nothing long-term.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Please tell me about all the illnesses you’ve ever had.”

**Luke:** “Honestly, nothing major. Just the chicken pox when I was a kid and the occasional flu.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “When was the last time you used marijuana or any other drugs?”

**Luke:** (straightforward) “I’ve never used drugs.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “How tall are you and how much do you weigh?”

**Luke:** “I’m six feet tall and weigh 180 pounds.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Do you have any tattoos or piercings?”

**Luke:** “No tattoos or piercings.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (nods, jotting down notes) “Alright, Luke. Your responses give a good overview of your physical health status. This information is crucial for understanding how ready you are for the physical demands of Army life.”

**P: Prior Service**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Now, let’s delve into your past a bit more, specifically regarding any service or training. Are you now or have you ever been a member of or processed for any branch of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserve?”

**Luke:** “No, I’ve never been part of the Armed Forces or gone through any processing for it.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “What about youth organizations with a focus on leadership, discipline, or military training? This includes ROTC, JROTC, Naval Sea Cadets, Air Force Civil Air Patrol,

National Defense Cadets Corp, or even the Boy Scouts. Have you participated in any of these? And if so, what awards or recognitions did you receive?”

**Luke:** “I was in the Boy Scouts and made the rank of Eagle Scout. I received various merit badges, particularly in camping, first aid, and leadership. It was a great experience for learning about teamwork, leadership, and pushing myself.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (nods approvingly) “Being an Eagle Scout is a significant achievement, Luke. It speaks volumes about your dedication, leadership skills, and ability to commit to a goal. These are qualities we highly value in the Army. Your experience in the Boy Scouts will definitely be beneficial as you pursue a career with us and even qualifies you to enter at an advanced rank!”

### **L: Law Violations**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (adopting a more formal tone) “Moving forward, Luke, it’s important we discuss any past law violations. This includes everything from tickets to more serious matters, involving any law enforcement agency, including military police. I need a complete list, covering incidents from your juvenile years as well. Additionally, I’ll need the disposition of these cases, including those that might have been expunged or sealed. It’s critical that we have a full and transparent overview here.”

**Luke:** (taking a moment to gather his thoughts) “I understand the importance of transparency here. To be honest, my record is pretty clean. I received a parking ticket once, about two years ago. It was paid off immediately, and there was no issue. That’s the extent of my history with law enforcement. I’ve never had any encounters or issues as a juvenile or otherwise.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (nodding, jotting down notes) “A parking ticket that’s been resolved is minor and won’t impact your eligibility. It’s good that you’ve kept out of trouble otherwise. A clean record like yours simplifies the process moving forward. Remember, honesty is key in every step of this journey. Your honesty here is appreciated and noted.”

### **E: Education**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Let’s talk about your education, Luke. It’s an area we focus on to ensure our recruits are prepared for the challenges they’ll face. Did you graduate from high school or college?”

**Luke:** “I graduated from high school.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Great to hear. Was your school public, private, online, or a charter school?”

**Luke:** “It was a public high school.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “And are you currently pursuing any college degrees?”

**Luke:** “I’m actually in my second year at community college right now.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s excellent! Continuing your education is always a good decision. What school did you attend for high school, and what’s the name of the community college you’re attending?”

**Luke:** “I attended Lincoln High School for my high school education, and I’m currently enrolled at Central Community College.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Got it, Lincoln High and Central Community College. How many college credits have you earned so far?”

**Luke:** “I’ve earned about 30 credits up until now.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (nods, making notes) “Thirty credits, good. That shows a commitment to furthering your education, which is commendable. What are you majoring in?”

**Luke:** “Honestly, just general studies for now.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s quite alright, it gives you a good foundation to build upon. Your academic background will serve you well in the Army, especially given our various programs for continued education and training.”

#### **M: Marital Status**

[The scene continues to unfold in the Army recruiting office, where Staff Sergeant Kenobi gently steers the conversation towards Luke’s marital status, recognizing the impact personal relationships can have on a recruit’s military journey.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Alright, Luke, let’s touch on another aspect of your life—your marital status. It’s important as it can influence various aspects of your military career. Have you ever been married?”

**Luke:** “No, I’ve never been married.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Do you have any plans in the near future to get married or, on the other hand, are you going through any separation or divorce?”

**Luke:** “No plans to get married any time soon, and I’m not going through a divorce.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Understood. Just for completeness, if you were married, we’d also need to know if your spouse is currently in the military. It helps us with certain arrangements and benefits. But since that’s not applicable, we can move on. Your current status provides a level of flexibility for your initial training and assignments.”

#### **D: Dependents**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Do you have any dependents? Is anyone morally, legally, or financially dependent on you for support?”

**Luke:** (laughing) “Not that I know of.”

#### **T: Testing**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “We’re almost done, Luke. Now, let’s discuss testing, specifically the ASVAB, which is the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. It’s a key test for all potential recruits. Have you ever taken the ASVAB?”

**Luke:** “No, I haven’t taken the official ASVAB yet.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s alright. Knowing your score is important for understanding where you might fit best in the Army. It helps us match your skills and preferences with the right job. Since you haven’t taken it, we don’t have a score to discuss. Have you ever taken a practice ASVAB, perhaps with a military recruiter or through another venue?”

**Luke:** “Yes, I did take a practice ASVAB online a while back. I was just curious about it, but I didn’t do it through a military recruiter, so I’m not sure how official my score was.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Since we’re on the subject of the ASVAB, and you’ve mentioned taking a practice test online, it might be beneficial for us to knock out a practice ASVAB here. It’s a more structured environment, and you’ll get a feel for what the real test is like. How does that sound?”

**Luke:** “That sounds like a great idea. I’d like to get a better understanding of where I stand and what areas I might need to focus on.”

[Scene shifts to 30 minutes later, when Luke has completed a ASVAB Practice Test (APT) at the recruiting office. Staff Sergeant Kenobi reviews the results with him.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Alright, Luke, you’ve done quite well on the practice ASVAB. Your scores are strong in areas like Math Knowledge, which is a good indicator for technical roles. Your overall score places you well within the range for a wide variety of occupations in the Army. Based on this, we can start looking at specific career paths that align with your skills and interests. How do you feel about that?”

**Luke:** “I’m relieved to hear that I did well. I’m definitely interested in exploring the career options that match my scores, especially in technology or intelligence.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Excellent. Your practice scores will be a valuable tool as we proceed. The next step is preparing for the official ASVAB. Since you have never taken an ASVAB before, you’re eligible to take the PICAT. PICAT stands for Pending Internet Computerized Adaptive Test, and essentially, it’s a version of the ASVAB you can take online. This can be taken here in the office or at home and isn’t proctored or timed. Doesn’t that sound awesome?”

**Luke:** “Yeah, it sounds like it’s low pressure.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Exactly, and I’ll provide you with resources to aid in your studies. Doing as well as you did on the practice test, I’m confident you’ll excel on the PICAT too.”

### Identify and Establish Goals

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Luke, reflecting on your passion for technology, especially cybersecurity, let’s pinpoint a specific goal within this broad field. Can you think of a particular milestone or achievement you’re aiming for?”

[Here, Staff Sergeant Kenobi has asked the “What.”]

**Luke:** (pausing to think) “Well, one thing that really excites me is the idea of developing cybersecurity solutions that can preemptively stop cyber threats. So, I guess a specific goal would be to lead a team that specializes in creating and implementing advanced cybersecurity protocols and technologies. I want to be at the forefront of innovation in cyber defense.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi identifies this as Luke’s short-term goal. Luke has already provided the “Why” when he mentioned being excited about developing cybersecurity solutions and wanting to be at the forefront of innovation in cyber defense. Knowing this, Staff Sergeant Kenobi moves on to the “When.”]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s an ambitious and highly impactful goal, Luke. Leading such a team requires not only deep technical expertise but also strong leadership skills and strategic vision. How soon would you like to be leading a team?”

**Luke:** “I think I should finish my degree and get a little experience under my belt before leading, so probably four years from now.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi realizes an additional short-term goal of completing a cybersecurity degree as well as working as a team member to get experience has been uncovered. He moves on to the “Where.”]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Okay, so in about four years, when you’re leading a cybersecurity team, where do you see yourself operating?”

**Luke:** “I know that Washington, D.C., and San Francisco are the top locations in the country for cybersecurity work, so either of those would probably be where I’d want to be.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “So, it sounds like you would be happy working wherever the best opportunities are, is that correct?”

**Luke:** “Pretty much, yeah.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi now knows that as long as he can demonstrate that a location in the Army presents the correct opportunities, Luke will likely be open to placement there.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Great! Now, considering this goal, what steps have you taken toward it, and where do you feel you need more support or resources?”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has now, in a way, asked “What’s Stopping You?” This helps him identify what benefits, options, programs, and incentives (BOPIS) to offer when presenting facts and evidence later and suggesting a course of action.]

**Luke:** “I’ve been taking courses in cybersecurity and trying to stay updated with the latest in tech. But honestly, I’m not sure how to transition from learning about these technologies to actually

applying them in real-world scenarios, let alone leading a team. It feels like there's a gap between my current academic knowledge and the practical experience I need."

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi now understands that Luke is worried about or is unsure how he'll get both cybersecurity and leadership experience after finishing his education.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "I get it. It's common to encounter that gap. The Army recognizes this and offers a unique environment where you can bridge it. Our cybersecurity Soldiers are involved in real-world operations, employing cutting-edge technology to safeguard national and global security. Were you aware that the Army invests in all of its Soldiers, in every job, not just cyber, through ongoing education and leadership training, preparing them to take on roles like the one you aspire to?"

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has just used a question that sparked curiosity.]

**Luke:** "I hadn't considered that the Army could be a place where I could grow into such a role. It sounds like it could provide the hands-on experience and leadership development I'm looking for."

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Exactly, Luke. Within the Army, you'd have the opportunity to work on meaningful projects from the start, contributing to national security while developing your expertise. How would it feel to be part of a community that values innovation and teamwork, all while being supported in your career and educational goals?"

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has just used a question to encourage self-reflection.]

**Luke:** "That's really appealing, actually. The idea of being part of a team that values innovation and works together on projects with real impact is exactly what I've been searching for. And knowing there's support for my career and education goals makes it even more exciting."

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi, having uncovered a few short-term goals, now shifts to look for a long-term goal. This is important for creating a fully developed course of action later.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "We've talked a lot about what you can do in the Army, Luke, and how it can prepare you for the future. But let's zoom out a bit. Thinking long-term, beyond your service, what's a goal you have for yourself in the civilian sector? Something you'd really like to achieve or be a part of?"

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has framed his questions artfully when asking for a long-term goal by using the phrase "zoom out." Additionally, he engaged a portion of the assumption close by using the phrase "beyond your service" to insinuate that the decision to join has already been made. At this point, he has once again asked the "What."]

[Luke takes a moment, his thoughts collecting around the conversations of the day, the people he's met, and the stories he's heard. A vision for his future starts to crystallize, merging his interest in technology with a broader ambition.]

**Luke:** "You know, hearing about the technology and leadership opportunities in the Army got me thinking. Long-term, I'd love to start my own tech company, specifically focusing on cybersecurity solutions. With cyber threats evolving every day, I think there's a real opportunity to make a difference. The leadership and tech skills I'd gain in the Army, dealing with high-pressure situations and complex problems, would be invaluable. That experience could really set me up to lead a team in the civilian world, developing technology that keeps people safe."

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi nods. Luke has provided not only the "What" (starting his own tech company) but also the "Why" (making a difference and keeping people safe). Staff Sergeant Kenobi wants to ensure that he fully understands the "Why," so he asks a follow-up question.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "That's an ambitious and commendable goal, Luke. Starting a tech company, especially one focused on cybersecurity, is a significant undertaking. But you're right; the skills and experiences you gain in the Army—leadership, technical expertise, strategic thinking—would be foundational to your success. You mentioned making a difference and keeping people safe, why is it important for you to do that?"

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has just used a question to enhance guidance and counseling.]

**Luke:** “There’s not a lot of people that cyber just ‘makes sense’ to, and I feel like the threats of the future will be of that nature. Since I have the skill, I feel a responsibility to step up and protect those who are unable to do so themselves.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi realizes this response ties back to the Army Value of integrity that Luke mentioned earlier, but even more so speaks to selfless service. He then moves forward to establish the “When.”]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That makes perfect sense. What you mentioned sounds a lot like one of our core values, selfless service. Thinking about timelines, when do you realistically see your cybersecurity firm up and running?”

**Luke:** “I think it’ll take some time as a leader to build up the credibility and skillset I need to run an entire operation of my own. Realistically, 10 years feels like a good amount of time to have developed that.”

[At this point, Staff Sergeant Kenobi has identified several short-term goals and a long-term goal that he’ll now prepare to align with BOPs the Army has to offer. Before moving to that step, he must ask two more questions. He starts with the “Where.”]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I know you wanted to work in a city that has the best opportunities and mentioned D.C. and San Francisco. Is that where you would want your firm to be?”

**Luke:** “I haven’t thought that far ahead, but those cities would be a good place to start looking.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi now knows that Luke isn’t tied to any specific place in the far future. He then asks the final question, the “What’s Stopping You?”]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “What are some things along your current path that you think might prevent you from launching your firm in 10 years?”

[Luke thinks for a few moments before answering, and Staff Sergeant Kenobi remains silent and waits patiently.]

**Luke:** “Well, I don’t know the first thing about running a business, so I need to figure out how I’m going to figure that out. I’m also not sure how much startup funding I’ll need to get up and running, or even how I’ll come up with that amount. Honestly, I really haven’t begun to think about those things seriously yet.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s understandable, as 10 years is still a ways out. It’s okay to not have a plan hammered out because, like I mentioned, one of my roles as a counselor is to ask the hard questions and help you build a plan to get you to your goals.”

**Luke:** “I appreciate that!”

[Now that Staff Sergeant Kenobi has a thorough understanding of Luke’s goals, he prepares to uncover Luke’s motivations. He accomplishes this by presenting the acronymic SOLDIER.]

### **Presenting Facts (Align Relevant Benefits, Opportunities, Programs, and Incentives)**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “There’s a way we summarize the essence and values of being a part of the Army, breaking it down into components that reflect what every Soldier embodies. It helps provide clarity on our commitments and what drives us. Let me walk you through it, using the word ‘SOLDIER’ as our guide.

- **Service to Country:** “First off, service is at our core. We’re here because we’ve chosen to dedicate ourselves to something bigger than any one individual. It’s about committing to protect and serve our country, no matter what.
- **Occupational and Career Enhancement:** “The Army isn’t just a job; it’s a place where you can grow your career in ways you might not have imagined. From tech fields to leadership roles, the opportunities to advance and excel are vast.

- **Leadership:** “Leadership is something we live by. It’s about guiding others, taking responsibility, and being someone others can rely on. In the Army, you’ll develop these skills early on, and they’ll serve you in every aspect of your life.
- **Diversity:** “The Army offers more than 250 jobs and related technical training. That’s valuable in the public sector. We also have postings available around the world.
- **Income:** “Financial stability is important, and the Army provides that. From a steady paycheck to benefits that extend to education and housing, you’re supported not just in your career but in building a future.
- **Excitement:** “Adventure, excitement—these aren’t just buzzwords. In the Army, you’ll find yourself facing challenges that push you to grow and experiences that expand your view of the world.
- **Respect:** “Finally, respect is something you both earn and give. In the Army, you’ll gain the respect of your peers, but you’ll also learn the deep value of respecting others, their cultures, and their perspectives.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Which ones speak to you the most? Which of these values or opportunities do you feel is most meaningful in shaping your decision or your future?”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has just used a question to empower others.]

**Luke:** (reflectively) “You know, while leadership really stands out to me, I can’t overlook the significance of occupational and career enhancement. The opportunity to grow professionally, to learn new skills and apply them in meaningful ways, it’s just as important.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Thinking about your ambition in cybersecurity, let’s dive into how the Army’s ‘occupational and career enhancement’ opportunities can propel you towards your goal. Given your interest, how important is hands-on experience with cutting-edge technology to you?”

**Luke:** “It’s crucial, honestly. Theoretical knowledge is one thing, but applying it in real-world scenarios is where I think the true learning happens. It’s what I feel I’m missing right now.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Absolutely, and that’s exactly what the Army offers. Imagine having access to the latest technologies and being part of missions that safeguard national security. Additionally, many of our roles come with a Secret or Top-Secret security clearance. Knowing this, how do you see such hands-on experience impacting your career in cybersecurity?”

**Luke:** “It’d be a game-changer for me. Applying my skills on such a significant scale and contributing to national security would not only accelerate my learning but also give my work a sense of purpose.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That sense of purpose is what drives many of us in the Army. Now, let’s talk about leadership. You mentioned wanting to lead a team. How do you view the role of leadership in achieving innovation and success?”

**Luke:** “Leadership is key. It’s about guiding a team to think outside the box, collaborate effectively, and drive forward to achieve common goals. I want to be that kind of leader, but I’m not sure how to get there.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “The Army’s leadership training is designed to equip you with those exact skills. From strategy to team management, you’ll learn to inspire and guide your team towards innovation. Knowing this, can you envision how developing such leadership skills in the Army could enhance your ability to lead in the tech industry?”

**Luke:** “Definitely. The thought of combining real-world tech experience with solid leadership training... it feels like that would set me up to not just participate in the field, but to really make an impact.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “And making an impact is what it’s all about. The Army provides a unique platform for both personal and professional growth, aligning with your aspirations. How do you feel about taking steps towards this journey with us?”

**Generate and Compare (Demonstrate Comparison of Army/Army Reserves Alternatives)**

[In the Generate and Compare phase, Staff Sergeant Kenobi adopts a conversational approach to discuss Luke's options, aiming to provide clarity and insight into how each path aligns with Luke's aspirations. As he goes through each COA, he fills it out on a printed or digital life plan. This ensures Luke can visualize the COAs as they are presented, and he has a product to take home and share with his influencers after the interview. The completed life plan used in this scenario is at the end of the "Generate and Compare" section.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Let's break this down together, Luke. Think of your career as a journey. Where you're heading is just as important as where you start. Starting with your current plan, let's recap your current goals. We've got a few: obtaining your cybersecurity degree, leading a team of cyber professionals, and in the long run, operating your own cybersecurity firm. It's like setting out with a good map. As you complete each goal, you're gathering knowledge and skills... but what about the terrain you'll encounter?"

[Luke nods, intrigued by the metaphor. As Staff Sergeant Kenobi begins to speak, he writes each point down in the appropriate column of Luke's life plan.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "The first clear marker or goal on your path is your degree. We know you already have 30 credits towards your associate in general studies. This means that you only need 90 more credits. If you continue along with your current path as a full-time student, you should be able to accomplish this three years from now. Does that sound about right?"

**Luke:** "Yes, as long as I'm able to find a program to transfer into once I complete my associate degree."

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi now knows that Luke is uncertain about the process involved with continuing his degree after community college. He is able to reinforce his value as a counselor by reiterating his ability to aid in planning.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Exactly! We can take a look at some colleges that have suitable programs so that we can get a good idea of their requirements and acceptance rates once we choose a course of action. I'm confident that together we can figure that out. After getting your degree, the plan is to lead a team of cybersecurity professionals, right?"

**Luke:** "Well, that's the goal, yes, but I need to get some experience doing the job before I'd feel comfortable being in charge."

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Of course, that makes perfect sense! Everyone needs time and experience, no matter what their role is, before they are ready and able to lead others. I know you want to start on these four years from now, and as we discussed, three of those years will be devoted to completing your degree. This leaves us a year to get that experience and stay on track. Let's talk about what that process might look like. First, after graduation, you need to get hired onto a cybersecurity team. On average, job seekers spend about three months seeking work after graduation. Then, once you start working, you've got nine months to gain experience and prepare to lead. Does that feel like enough time?"

[Luke hesitates for a moment before responding, and Staff Sergeant Kenobi keeps and respects the silence.]

**Luke:** "Best-case scenario, I think I could be ready that soon, but I'd feel more comfortable with two years of experience before taking charge."

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has now begun the process of identifying weaknesses in Luke's current plan. He has identified that it will take longer than Luke wants to get to the goal Luke has set for himself.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "I think I feel the same way. Two years is a pretty standard amount of time to be considered experienced enough for leadership. So, adjusting the timeline, it looks like you can comfortably be leading a cybersecurity team in five to six years, depending on how long it takes to get hired initially."

**Luke:** “It’s a little frustrating, but I’m seeing that that’s what most likely will happen, yes.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi knows he’ll be able to resolve or relieve some of that frustration when presenting the other course of action and makes a mental note to specifically address this issue at the appropriate time.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (looking over what is now written on the life plan) “Things are starting to shape up here, Luke. Let’s go ahead and chart the route to your next goal. As we discussed, your end goal is to own your cybersecurity firm, where you’re leading not just a team but an entire organization of professionals. When was it that you wanted to achieve this by?”

**Luke:** (Remembering.) “I felt like 10 years from now made sense at the time, but now I’m not so sure.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “What makes you feel like that?”

**Luke:** “Well, thinking about it, I still don’t really know anything about building or running a business. So, I’d need to figure that out, and like I mentioned before, I’m also unsure about how much it costs to get up and running and where that money will come from. What I do know is that I want to make a good reputation leading a team before I open my own firm so that people will have a good reason to choose to work with me.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi knows that Luke is making his case for him and encourages him to continue.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “And all that takes time.”

**Luke:** “Yeah, so it feels like ten years is a bit too soon to have figured all of that out.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Let’s take a look at how things could play out, and then see what we can do. So, by now you’ve graduated with your cyber degree, worked for a few years to gain experience, and then became a cybersecurity team leader. How much leadership experience do you think you’ll need to run your own firm?”

**Luke:** “Well, I’m not sure. I think it depends on my accomplishments during that time and how varied the situations are that my team and I faced and resolved. I’d say at least four years, maybe more, maybe less.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Okay, so let’s say four years of experience leading. You mentioned that you would need to figure out how to own and operate a business. Do you think a second degree in business would be helpful?”

**Luke:** “For sure, it seems like the go-to place to learn about that.” (looks down for a minute and continues with a lower tone) “I’m just not thrilled about another four years of college at that point.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “It’s not as bad as it seems, Luke. Since you already have a degree at that point, you won’t have to take your general studies or electives again. It’s entirely possible that if you enrolled as a full-time student, you could knock out a second degree in two years or less. However, if you went part-time while working, it would take longer.”

**Luke:** “Oh, I hadn’t even considered that.” [Luke’s mood appears to brighten a bit.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “So let’s say two additional years for business school, to be safe in our estimate. That brings us up to…”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi takes a minute to go back and count the years for each step.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Five to six years to get into leadership, another four years of experience, and two years of business education brings us to 11 to 12 years total. Now this, of course, also factors in that you’ve been able to save up or find funding to launch the business by that time. How do you feel about this course of action?”

**Luke:** “I can see I need to put a lot more thought into everything. I’ve been so focused on my goals that I hadn’t considered the actual journey I’d need to take to reach them. Still, it seems like they are all achievable, but it’ll take longer than I expected.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “You’re right, they are achievable. I think we’ve uncovered some concerns that we might be able to resolve with different courses of action. The timelines are a bit in question, and being ready for the next step could be an issue. Namely, I want to circle back to your problem: the gap in leadership experience. That’s one of the biggest unknowns we faced when building this plan. You mentioned variety of experience and building a reputation of accomplishments, and that’s something that I’d like to talk about more in-depth in our next course of action. Let’s talk about the Active-Duty course of action.”

ACTIVE DUTY ARMY (COA 2)	CURRENT PLAN (COA 1)	ARMY RESERVE (COA 3)						
	<p>1-99 Years Stay in Local Area (1-99 years) Depart (5-99 years) Part Time Pay</p> <p><b>Problem: Gap In Leadership Experience</b></p> <p><b>Short Term Goals</b></p> <p>Cyber Degree</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="609 604 980 699"> <tr> <td data-bbox="609 604 776 699">3 Years</td> <td data-bbox="776 604 980 699">Current Credits: 30 Credits Remaining: 90 Full Time Enrollment Time to Complete: 3 Yrs</td> </tr> </table> <p>Lead a Cyber Team</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="609 720 980 835"> <tr> <td data-bbox="609 720 776 835">5-6 Years</td> <td data-bbox="776 720 980 835">Graduate with BS/Cyber Get Hired Work with Peers Lead a Team Time to Complete: 5-6 years</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Long Term Goals</b></p> <p>Open a Cyber Firm</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="609 877 980 1014"> <tr> <td data-bbox="609 877 776 1014">10-12 Years</td> <td data-bbox="776 877 980 1014">Graduate with BS/Cyber Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 10-12 Years</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>Debts: Student Loan X 2, Business Loan Necessity for Housing and Insurances Stay Local / No Delay for Army Training Less Overall job and Leadership Experience Make a Difference / Keep People Safe</p>	3 Years	Current Credits: 30 Credits Remaining: 90 Full Time Enrollment Time to Complete: 3 Yrs	5-6 Years	Graduate with BS/Cyber Get Hired Work with Peers Lead a Team Time to Complete: 5-6 years	10-12 Years	Graduate with BS/Cyber Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 10-12 Years	
3 Years	Current Credits: 30 Credits Remaining: 90 Full Time Enrollment Time to Complete: 3 Yrs							
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10-12 Years	Graduate with BS/Cyber Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 10-12 Years							
Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement	Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement	Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement						

**Figure C-1. The Luke’s Current Plan**

[At this point, the center column on the life plan is filled out. Staff Sergeant Kenobi has discussed this column with Luke, gotten Luke’s opinion on the plan, and pointed out some potential weaknesses. He now prepares to go through a similar process in the next COA, demonstrating precisely how the Active-Duty Army path bridges the gap between his current ambitions and his broader vision for the future, weaving together the tangible and intangible benefits Luke stands to gain.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Let’s connect the dots between serving in the Active Duty Army and your goals. I want to explain that this path is designed around doing three years of service in the Army, but we have the option to offer four, five, or even six, if it really speaks to you. We can start with your immediate aim of completing your cybersecurity degree.”

**Luke:** “That really is the first thing I need to accomplish the rest of my goals.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Absolutely, the degree is something you’ll have to have, but as we go over this plan, you might see that it isn’t necessarily the first thing you need to accomplish.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi prepares to discuss how completing a cybersecurity degree would look for Luke if he decided to join the Active Duty Army. Despite the fact that the goals would be accomplished in a different order, he presents it this way to provide additional clarity later when he'll ask Luke to select a course of action.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Just like in your course of action, you already have 30 credits towards your associate in general studies. This means that you only need 90 more credits. However, when you join the Active Duty Army, you're taking a full-time job. Does this mean you won't be able to progress your degree while serving?”

**Luke:** “Well, yeah, I don't see how that would work. Aren't Soldiers working 24/7?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I'm glad you brought that up. Sure, a Soldier is a Soldier all day, every day, but that doesn't mean we are always at work. Most Soldiers work a pretty regular schedule. Many of us take classes in the same way any adult with a full-time job does online, night, or weekend classes. Would you believe that I'm currently enrolled at Dantooine University and taking managerial accounting online?”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi has just used a question to identify a knowledge gap.]

**Luke:** “You're in college right now? I had no idea Soldiers had so much time to pursue their education.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Yup! (leans in and proceeds quietly) For free.”

**Luke:** “Oh, I've heard about that. You're using the GI Bill, right?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Actually, I'm pretty much done with my degree and haven't even touched my GI Bill at all. The Army has this benefit called tuition assistance that gives Soldiers \$4,000 a year to attend college for every year that they are in the Army. It essentially allows us to take five courses a year for free.”

**Luke:** “So, if you're going to finish your degree without it, the GI Bill is just a waste for you?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “The Army thought of that! I can use it for a second degree after I finish serving, or I can transfer it to my spouse or my children. The Army wanted to make sure that every Soldier's service would result in someone getting an education.”

**Luke:** “I like the sound of that. It sounds like the Army values education.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “It very much does. Civilian education plays a factor in our opportunities and promotions. Paying for it through tuition assistance is just one of the ways they encourage it. However, I haven't told you the best part yet.”

**Luke:** (leans forward) “What?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “When I decided to start college, I submitted something we call a Joint Service Transcript.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi turns to the page of his evidence book containing his JST and rotates the book for Luke to see.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (pointing to the JST) “This document provides an explanation of everything we trained on and do on a daily basis in the Army. It suggests what type of credits that colleges should award based on our experience. This document is the proof that experience serving in the Army carries enormous value. Dantooine University evaluated my JST and awarded me 62 credits towards my degree, which meant that I got to start college as a junior!”

**Luke:** “That's crazy! So, if I was in the Army, I'd get 62 college credits?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Keep in mind that the credits are based off the individual Soldier's experience. Since I've been serving for 10 years and have attended a wide variety of Army courses, I was able to get that many credits. You'll get roughly nine credits right at the start just for attending basic training. After that, you'll get more for your job training, and then even more for each additional

course you take and role you fulfill. The actual amount varies based on the college you attend and the degree you pursue.”

**Luke:** “Okay, that makes more sense. I must admit I was worried about putting my education on hold for three years and losing that time. Now I feel like it wouldn’t be so bad.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “So, even though the Army is only paying for five classes a year, there’s nothing preventing you from taking more as you see fit. As a safe estimate, let’s assume you took five classes each year for the three years you would be in the Army. That would be 15 classes, or 45 credits. We would add that to the 30 credits you already have, and that brings us to 75 credits. We already discussed how basic training will give you nine additional credits through your JST and adding that brings us to 84 out of the 120 you would need.”

**Luke:** “Wouldn’t I get more credits for my job training?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Yes, you would. You would also get credits for attending Basic Leader Course when you promote to Sergeant. This feels like a good time to mention that the Army recognizes how big of an achievement it is to become an Eagle Scout. The Army is going to promote you two times before you even work a day because of that achievement.”

**Luke:** “That’s awesome!”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “It certainly is! Going back to your original question, the additional credits are based on the job you select, and we don’t know which job that is yet. How many credits can someone who goes to school full-time get in a year?”

**Luke:** “I was able to get 30 as a full-time student.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Exactly! So, we know your current credits plus the ones you accrue during your three years of service will get you about 90, which means you’ll only need one year of college afterwards to get the 120 credits you need. Depending on how many credits you get for your job, it could be even less than a year. Realistically, how long would it take for you to have a degree in your hands if you took this course of action?”

**Luke:** (does some mental math) “Looks like it’d take about four years from today.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s right.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi adds the information discussed that was relevant to Luke’s goal of attaining a cybersecurity degree to the life plan and writes four years on the timeline.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “So, remember how I said that your goal of attaining a degree wasn’t necessarily the first thing you would achieve on this path?”

**Luke:** “Yeah.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Tell me, what do Soldiers do over the course of the three years they serve?”

**Luke:** (looks completely stunned for a moment before responding) “I don’t really know.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Well, what do you think they would be doing?”

**Luke:** “Working out, running around, shooting stuff, and uh, their job, I guess.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Yes! All of the above and more. But let’s focus on the last thing you said: their job. Every day for those three years, Soldiers are gaining job experience. If you followed this path, you would already have three years of work experience before finishing your degree.”

**Luke:** “Now I’m starting to see how I might achieve another one of my goals first. I see how Soldiers get the work experience, but what about leadership experience?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Do you remember earlier when I mentioned Basic Leader Course and promotion to Sergeant?”

**Luke:** “Yeah.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Well, when someone becomes a sergeant in the Army, it’s the first rank at which they are considered to be a noncommissioned officer. NCOs are leaders in the Army and are responsible for setting the standard, training Soldiers, and ensuring the health and welfare of their Soldiers. To prepare Soldiers for the role of a sergeant, they attend Basic Leader Course. Later in their career, there are several advanced leadership courses they take so that they continue to increase their leadership capabilities as they move up in the ranks.”

**Luke:** “Okay, so when would I be a sergeant?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “A Soldier typically progresses to this rank in three to four years, but the soonest is two years. Some of our career options, like the band, simultaneous membership program, or counterintelligence agents, even start Soldiers out at that rank from day one.”

**Luke:** “That sounds great, but I see that a lot of that could potentially happen outside of the three years I’d be doing. What kind of leadership experience would I be getting before becoming a sergeant?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Believe it or not, the tenants of leadership are instilled from the very beginning of a Soldier’s career during basic training. Soldiers during training are given leadership roles like squad leader, platoon sergeant, and student first sergeant. They rotate through these roles throughout training and learn things like accountability, time management, and responsibility. After training, and at their first unit, Soldiers first join a team. After a short time, they become a team leader and are responsible for two to four other Soldiers. After team leader, the next leadership roles are squad leader and platoon sergeant. Essentially, a Soldier’s foundation in leadership starts the day they become a Soldier and continues to grow for the rest of their career.”

**Luke:** “I get it now. I’ll be responsible for a team before I’ve even finished my time in the Army or gotten my degree. I think that would make me a lot more confident leading a team of professionals after finishing my degree in the civilian world.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s right, Luke. With this course of action, you’ll achieve your goal of leading a team of professionals within two to three years. How do you think that will affect your overall timeline?”

**Luke:** “So far it seems like I’ll have achieved all of my short-term goals within four years on this path. I imagine that the extra time will make it easier to achieve my long-term goal on or ahead of schedule.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I think so too. Let’s talk about your problem again. Our top concern is getting you to the solution. How do you think this path impacts your gap in leadership experience?”

**Luke:** “I think the fact that I’ll immediately start learning the elements of leadership and that there are so many opportunities to execute them in just three short years significantly impacts that gap. Honestly, I feel like it’ll put me in a really good place.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I’m glad to hear that. So, let’s talk about the final goal: running your own firm. We’ve established that you’ll have finished your service, led your first team, and received your degree in about four years. Next, as we discussed during your current plan, you’ll need to get some experience operating as a cybersecurity leader to establish your reputation before running a firm. You’ll also need to complete a business degree which will take about two years. Completing your degrees back-to-back would have you earning your experience in around six years. All things considered, your firm could be operational anywhere between eight and 10 years. Looking at this plan, what would stop you from achieving your goals?”

**Luke:** “This plan feels more like what I envisioned when setting my goals. But I’m still concerned about being ready to operate a business and securing the start-up funds. Sure, the business degree will confirm my formal education, but what about actually knowing what to do?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I’d like to share a few more things with you that I think will set your mind at ease. When Soldiers leave the Army, they attend the Transition Assistance Program. This is a program designed to set Soldiers up for success as they return to the civilian world, be it after three

years or 20. Part of this program is the Career Skills Program, which essentially is an internship opportunity. Not only does TAP contain workshops geared entirely towards entrepreneurship, but there are also internships available so our Soldiers can get their feet wet as an executive in large-scale business. Lastly, the Small Business Association has a large variety of benefits it extends only to veteran-owned businesses.”

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi turns to the page of his evidence book containing information from the SBA, rotates the book, and shows Luke.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (pointing to the evidence book) “Here are some of their benefits. This brings me to my ultimate point. After having honorably served, you’ll carry the title of veteran. This will aid you in a number of things for the rest of your life, but you specifically expressed the need for credibility when operating your own firm. How do you think the fact that you’re a veteran would impact your credibility?”

**Luke:** “I remember when we talked about the values and the creed. If that’s what Soldiers stand for, then the same must be true for veterans of the Army. I know that I’ve always respected those who serve and those who have served. I feel like my service will have a big impact on the success of my firm.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Luke, I couldn’t agree more. How do you feel about the Active-Duty plan?”

**Luke:** “I can definitely see the benefits of this plan. What I really like about it is the experience that I’ll gain without really impacting my education plan. Also—not that it’s that big of a deal—it’d be pretty neat to not have to pay for college anymore. The last thing we talked about, what it means to be a veteran, makes me understand how much service matters.”

ACTIVE DUTY ARMY (COA 2)	CURRENT PLAN (COA 1)	ARMY RESERVE (COA 3)
3-6 Years as a Full Time Soldier Depart Local Area Full Time Pay / Benefits	1-99 Years Stay in Local Area (1-99 years) Depart (5-99 years) Part Time Pay	
<b>Problem: Gap In Leadership Experience</b>	<b>Problem: Gap In Leadership Experience</b>	
<b>Short Term Goals</b>	<b>Short Term Goals</b>	
Cyber Degree	Cyber Degree	
4-5 Years Current Credits: 30 TA: 15 credits / year Joint Service Transcript Army Training: 6-12 months Time to Complete: 4-5 Years	3 Years Current Credits: 30 Credits Remaining: 90 Full Time Enrollment Time to Complete: 3 Yrs	
Lead a Cyber Team	Lead a Cyber Team	
2-3 Years Early Promote to E-3 (Eagle) Job Training Through Army Leadership School (BLC) Promote to E-5 (Leader) Lead a Team of Soldiers Time to Complete: 2-3 Years	5-6 Years Graduate with BS/Cyber Get Hired Work with Peers Lead a Team Time to Complete: 5-6 years	
<b>Long Term Goals</b>	<b>Long Term Goals</b>	
Open a Cyber Firm	Open a Cyber Firm	
8-10 Years Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Finish Service Graduate with BS/Cyber Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 8-10 Years	10-12 Years Graduate with BS/Cyber Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 10-12 Years	
<b>Notes</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
TAP - Enterperneurship Program / MOS selection SBA - Veteran Owned Business Benefits Veteran Status / Free Health, Vision, Dental, Life Protect Others / Security Clearance / Housing / Food Free Cyber Degree, Reduced Cost Business Degree Skill Training and Leadership Experience / Travel Make a Difference / Keep People Safe	Debts: Student Loan X 2, Business Loan Necessity for Housing and Insurances Stay Local / No Delay for Army Training Less Overall job and Leadership Experience Make a Difference / Keep People Safe	
<b>Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement</b>	<b>Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement</b>	<b>Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement</b>

Figure C-2. The Active Duty Plan

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi's explanation lays out a clear and actionable roadmap for Luke, highlighting how the Active Duty Army serves as a catalyst for achieving both his immediate and future aspirations. Through this dialogue, Luke gains a comprehensive understanding of the practical and enriching benefits that come with serving, aligning his military service with his professional and personal goals. At this point, they have completed the Active-Duty COA column on the life plan.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "I feel exactly the same, Luke. Now, there's one more course of action I would like to present, and that's the Army Reserve course of action. Like we've just done for the Active Duty and Current courses of action, we'll map out how it aligns with both your immediate and future goals. We'll discuss things in the same order to avoid any confusion. Starting with the cybersecurity degree, we still get to bring in the 30 credits you've already completed and still need to complete another 90 credits. How do you think the Army Reserve might contribute to your goal?"

**Luke:** "Well, the Reserve is the part-time component of the Army, right?"

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Yes, it is."

**Luke:** "Okay, so if it's part-time, that means it won't really impact my college at all. I work part-time now and am still able to attend full-time. I'm sure it gives me something to help pay for college, but I'm concerned about how much of my free time it'll take up."

[Staff Sergeant Kenobi notices two things during this comment. First, the impact to Luke's current college plan is one of the most important things to him, and second, Luke is concerned that serving in the Army Reserve may prevent him from doing the things he enjoys. Staff Sergeant Kenobi makes a mental note to address both of these concerns.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "The fact that you prioritize your college journey is commendable, and it speaks volumes about your drive and commitment. These are traits that we look for in our Soldiers, and it's clear that you'll fit in. You're mostly correct about the impact the Reserve will have. When you join the Reserve, you'll be able to attend basic and job skill training, which on average takes five months. This means, that you'll skip a semester to train before returning to your college path. How do you feel about skipping a semester?"

**Luke:** "Well, I'm not super enthused about the idea, but couldn't I get the college credits for my training like I would on active duty?"

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (smiles) "You absolutely would. At least nine for your basic training and then additional credits depending on what job you select. Do you remember what we use to get credit for our experience in the Army?"

**Luke:** (points to the Staff Sergeant Kenobi's evidence book) "The JST."

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Exactly. The credits from the JST will put you right back on track or even ahead of where you would've been. Essentially it would be just like you had never missed a semester at all. Just like your current plan, I'd expect you to complete your degree close to three years from now. Also, you mentioned help paying for college. How important is that for you?"

**Luke:** "Well, community college honestly hasn't been expensive, and I've been able to pay for it without any loans so far. I know that once I transfer to another college to complete the cybersecurity degree, it'll get more expensive. I'm also thinking about the business degree that I'm going to want down the road. Let's put it this way: I'm certainly not going to say no to money for school."

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** "Fair enough, and I wouldn't say no to that either." (laughing) "So, just to quickly cover how it'll help you, the tuition assistance that we covered for Active Duty also applies to the Reserve, so there's no change there. The GI Bill for the Reserve is handled a little differently. It pays out \$466 a month, and that money comes directly to you in your check. This is applied every month you're enrolled as a full-time student, up to 36 months. As we established earlier, you should finish your degree ahead of that, so some will remain to apply towards your second degree. On top of that, we have an incentive called the 'kicker' that adds up to \$350 more each month. This is awarded for selecting a job or location that's in high demand. How does all that sound?"

**Luke:** “It sounds like it’ll help, but maybe not as much as the active-duty option does. What does a normal work week look like in the Army Reserve?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s a great question, Luke. Rather than talk about a work week, let’s talk about a work month. Soldiers in the Army Reserve join for a period of six years. During that time, they work one weekend each month, a full day on both Saturday and Sunday, called ‘drill.’ Then, each year, they have a two-week period over the summer where they complete an in-depth exercise that they call annual training. Aside from those time periods, they essentially are going about their civilian life.”

**Luke:** “Okay, so I’m getting all that college stuff for two days a month? How would working two days a month impact the amount of experience I’d be getting?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “To answer your first question, yes, plus the two-week period each summer. I’m glad you asked the second question because that leads us into talking about achieving your next goal. Let’s talk about the experience you’ll earn, both job and leadership. You’ll gain job experience based on the job you select when joining the Reserve. One key benefit here is that all the available roles will be local. This means it won’t interfere with the way you’re currently operating. Then during your weekends and annual training, you’ll stay up to date with all relevant changes and technology. Soldiers in the Reserve still promote and lead teams, squads, and platoons. The major difference takes place once you finish your degree. Since all but two days a month you’re working as a civilian, you’re able to start as a member on a cyber team at the three-year mark. This means by four or five years; you’ll have enough experience to start leading your own cyber team. How do you think having a security clearance would affect your ability to find a cybersecurity job?”

**Luke:** “I imagine that would make it significantly easier to find a job. Since my background has already been cleared, I’ll be a known factor for them. So, I’ll get a clearance if I join the Reserve?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Not every single job comes with a clearance, but a significant amount of them do. Some even come with a Top-Secret clearance. Provided your background screening comes back clean, we can work together to find the right opportunity for you.”

**Luke:** “Okay, that sounds good.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Remember also that you’ll be starting out at an accelerated rank due to your Eagle Scout achievement, and once you’re promoted to Sergeant, you’ll be able to attend the Basic Leader Course. What value does that leadership course have to you?”

**Luke:** “I feel like learning the core tenants of leadership in a formal environment will be something I can share with future employers. It’ll also give me confidence in my own capabilities once I graduate.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I’m happy to hear that, Luke! Let’s talk about the next steps towards accomplishing your long-term goal while serving in the Army Reserve. We’ve discussed how attaining your degrees would work with the benefits afforded by the Reserve, and how you’ll develop both in your job and as a leader. I’d like to talk about networking with you for a moment. How do you think the Army Reserve helps a Soldier build a network?”

**Luke:** “What do you mean network? Like for tech, computers, and stuff?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (laughing) “No, as in a group of people who work together and have collective influence.”

**Luke:** “Oh, well, I suppose that since the people in the Reserve spend most of their time working as civilians out in the community that they probably have a lot of influence when they come together.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “You nailed it! Soldiers in the Army Reserve have civilian jobs, and much like they move up with promotions over time in the Army, they also get promoted in their outside workplaces. Since Soldiers in the Army Reserve unit are typically from the same general area, it’s likely that all of that civilian influence is focused into that same area. How would this benefit a Soldier working in a Reserve unit?”

**Luke:** “If the leaders in the unit can vouch for the work ethic and character of the Soldier at their civilian workplaces, it could help the Soldier get a good job and maybe even get selected over others.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I agree. Your leaders will have firsthand knowledge of your capabilities and influence in the outside world. They also will have experience working in a wide variety of fields and may include those who own or operate their own business. Do you think having people like that in your network would help you accomplish your long-term goal?”

**Luke:** “Yeah, especially if they’ve run a business. They’ll be able to give me pointers and connect me to the right people. That could even help with securing funding to get started.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I think so too. The entire time you’re working as a Soldier in the Reserve you’ll be progressing in many ways towards your ultimate goal of owning your own cybersecurity firm. I think that on this course of action, it’s not unreasonable to believe you could open your firm in as little as seven or eight years. Keep in mind that everything we discussed in reference to the SBA, as well as having veteran status, still applies in the Army Reserve. How do you feel about this course of action as a whole?”

[At this point, Staff Sergeant Kenobi has completely filled out the Army Reserve COA column. He now has a completed life plan that Luke will be able to take home and share with his influencers.]

**Luke:** “I really like how the Reserve doesn’t disrupt my college plan while at the same time enhancing it with extra credits through experience and funding from the GI Bill and tuition assistance. It doesn’t seem like they’ll ask a whole lot from me but are giving me quite a bit in return. I’m a bit concerned about being limited in job choices, though, due to staying local. Also, I feel like I won’t get as much leadership experience on this path. It definitely seems like it’ll help me achieve my goals, but I’m not sure it’s the best way.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s a pretty good summary, Luke. I couldn’t have done it better myself. So, weighing these options—Active, Reserve, or Current—it’s not just about what you gain in knowledge or skill. It’s also about who you become in the process. The Active Army could catapult your growth, immersing you in leadership and technology. The Reserve offers a blend of civilian and military life, enriching your education and career simultaneously. Where do you feel the pull?”

ACTIVE DUTY ARMY (COA 2)	CURRENT PLAN (COA 1)	ARMY RESERVE (COA 3)
3-6 Years as a Full Time Soldier Depart Local Area Full Time Pay / Benefits	1-99 Years Stay in Local Area (1-99 years) Depart (5-99 years) Part Time Pay	6 Years as a Part Time Soldier Stay in Local Area Part Time Pay / Benefits
<b>Problem: Gap In Leadership Experience</b>	<b>Problem: Gap In Leadership Experience</b>	<b>Problem: Gap In Leadership Experience</b>
<b>Short Term Goals</b>	<b>Short Term Goals</b>	<b>Short Term Goals</b>
Cyber Degree	Cyber Degree	Cyber Degree
<b>4-5 Years</b> Current Credits: 30 TA: 15 credits / year Joint Service Transcript Army Training: 6-12 months Time to Complete: 4-5 Years	<b>3 Years</b> Current Credits: 30 Credits Remaining: 90 Full Time Enrollment Time to Complete: 3 Yrs	<b>3 Years</b> Current Credits: 30 TA: 15 credits / year Joint Service Transcript Full Time Enrollment Army Training: 6-12 months Time to Complete: 3 Years
Lead a Cyber Team	Lead a Cyber Team	Lead a Cyber Team
<b>2-3 Years</b> Early Promote to E-3 (Eagle) Job Training Through Army Leadership School (BLC) Promote to E-5 (Leader) Lead a Team of Soldiers Time to Complete: 2-3 Years	<b>5-6 Years</b> Graduate with BS/Cyber Get Hired Work with Peers Lead a Team Time to Complete: 5-6 years	<b>3-4 Years</b> Early Promote to E-3 (Eagle) Job Training Through Army Graduate with BS/Cyber Leadership School (BLC) Promote to E-5 (Leader) Lead a Team of Soldiers
<b>Long Term Goals</b>	<b>Long Term Goals</b>	<b>Long Term Goals</b>
Open a Cyber Firm	Open a Cyber Firm	Open a Cyber Firm
<b>8-10 Years</b> Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Finish Service Graduate with BS/Cyber Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 8-10 Years	<b>10-12 Years</b> Graduate with BS/Cyber Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 10-12 Years	<b>7-8 Years</b> Acquire Job Exp Acquire Leadership Exp Graduate with BS/Cyber Finish Service Acquire Business Education Acquire Funding Time to Complete: 7-8 Years
<b>Notes</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Notes</b>
TAP - Enterpreneurship Program / MOS selection SBA - Veteran Owned Business Benefits Veteran Status / Free Health, Vision, Dental, Life Protect Others / Security Clearance / Housing / Food Free Cyber Degree, Reduced Cost Business Degree Skill Training and Leadership Experience / Travel Make a Difference / Keep People Safe	Debts: Student Loan X 2, Business Loan Necessity for Housing and Insurances Stay Local / No Delay for Army Training Less Overall job and Leadership Experience Make a Difference / Keep People Safe	SBA - Veteran Owned Business Benefits Veteran Status / Low Cost Health, Vision, Dental, Life MOS Selection / Security Clearance / Local Network Stay Local / Reduced Cost Cyber Degree Skill Training and Leadership Experience / Travel Make a Difference / Keep People Safe
<b>Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement</b>	<b>Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement</b>	<b>Leadership + Occupational and Career Enhancement</b>

Figure C-3. Luke’s Life Plan

[Luke takes a moment, his thoughts more focused now.]

**Luke:** “I hadn’t looked beyond the academic side before. The idea of being part of something bigger, gaining leadership skills so early... the Active Army sounds compelling. Yet, the balance the Reserve offers is appealing too.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s the heart of it, Luke. Each path has its strengths, aligning differently with your goals. It’s about where you see yourself growing the most—not just as a cybersecurity expert, but as a leader, as a person who makes a difference.”

[Through this conversational approach, Staff Sergeant Kenobi skillfully guides Luke to a deeper understanding of his options, emphasizing both the tangible and intangible benefits and gently uncovering the potential weaknesses in Luke’s current plan. This dialogue ensures Luke is well-equipped to make a decision that resonates with his personal and professional growth ambitions.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “We’ve looked at your current plan and the possibilities with both the Active Army and Army Reserve. It’s time to think about what really aligns with your aspirations. Which path seems like the best for you?”

**Luke:** “After hearing about the Active Army, I see a clear path for me there. It offers the immediate application of job skills, leadership development, and a sense of purpose I value.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “The Active Army will challenge you and offer opportunities to grow technically and personally. You’re choosing a path with direct impact and swift advancement in your field.”

**Luke:** “Exactly. The practical experience and leadership training are what I’m looking for. Plus, contributing to something greater than myself is appealing.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Good choice. Are you ready to join the Active Duty Army?”

### **Working Through Objections**

**Luke:** (hesitantly) “Staff Sergeant Kenobi, I’ve been thinking a lot about this. The opportunities sound amazing, but I’m really concerned about leaving my family behind and adapting to military life. It’s a big change, and I’m not sure how well I’d handle it.”

### **Step One: Receive the Objection**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** (nods understandingly) “I hear you, Luke. Leaving familiar surroundings and stepping into a new way of life is indeed a big step. It’s natural to have concerns about such a significant change.”

### **Step Two: Repeat the Obstacle as a Question**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “So, if I’m hearing you correctly, you’re mainly concerned about how you’ll adapt to the military lifestyle and the impact of being away from your family. Is that right?”

**Luke:** “Yes, exactly. The idea of being away and the whole adjustment process is really daunting.”

### **Step Three: Check for Smokescreen**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Let’s imagine for a moment that the transition is smoother than you expect, and the Army provides support systems to help you stay connected with your family. If those concerns were alleviated, would you feel more confident about your decision to join?”

**Luke:** “I think so, yes. That would definitely make a big difference.”

### **Step Four: Show Emotion**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “I completely understand where you’re coming from, Luke. When I first joined, I had similar concerns. I wondered how I’d fit into this new life and how my family would cope with the distance. But what I found was a supportive community and resources that helped me and my family through the transition. The bonds you form and the support you receive in the Army are unlike anything else. It’s like gaining a second family.”

### **Step Five: Use Logic**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Let’s look at this logically. The Army invests heavily in the well-being of its Soldiers and their families. From communication resources to family support services, there are systems in place to ensure you remain connected. Moreover, the skills and experiences you gain in the Army, especially in a field as critical as cybersecurity, not only prepare you for a rewarding career but also contribute to a larger purpose. Weighing these benefits against the initial challenges of adaptation, the long-term advantages can be significant. Given this perspective, how do you see yourself moving forward?”

**Luke:** (pausing to consider) “When you put it that way, the benefits do outweigh my initial fears. The support of the systems you mentioned, and the sense of community are reassuring. I’m ready to face those challenges if it means growing and making a difference. I’m leaning towards saying yes to joining.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “That’s a courageous and thoughtful decision, Luke. Remember, every Soldier has faced this moment of decision, and you’re not alone. We’re all here to support you through this journey.”

### **Engender the Commitment and Execute the Decision**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Luke, with all we’ve discussed, do you feel ready to take the next step and join the Active Duty Army, embarking on a journey towards becoming a cybersecurity specialist?”

**Luke:** (with renewed confidence) “Yes, I do. I can see a clear path forward with the Army. Let’s do this.”

### **Follow-up**

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Fantastic, Luke! I’ll outline the next steps, including the enlistment process and what to expect in the coming weeks. And remember, I’m here to support you every step of the way. Let’s get back together tomorrow afternoon at 4. When we meet, please bring the following documents. They’re essential for processing your application:

- Government-issued photo ID: A driver’s license or passport.
- Social Security card: The original or a certified copy, not a photocopy.
- Birth certificate: An original or certified copy to verify your age and citizenship.
- Educational records: Your high school diploma and transcripts or GED, along with any college transcripts. These are vital for determining your eligibility and potential job training programs.
- Organizing these documents now will ensure we’re not delayed later on.”

**Luke:** “That time works for me. I’ll have my mom help me find those documents.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “We’ll knock out your application packet tomorrow, which contains a detailed background like personal references, address history, and legal and medical history. I’ll also take your fingerprints and send them off to the FBI. When we finish, I’ll submit the packet for acceptance.”

**Luke:** “Sounds good.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Once the application has been accepted, you’ll be scheduled for MEPS—that’s the Military Entrance Processing Station. There you’ll undergo a series of steps:

- Aptitude test: Set you up for the PiCAT or schedule you for the ASVAB to determine your qualifications for MOS (military occupational specialties).
- Physical examination: A comprehensive check-up to ensure you’re medically fit for service.
- Background check: Reviewing your history to maintain the Army’s integrity.
- Job counseling: Discussing your job preferences based on ASVAB scores and availability.
- Oath of enlistment: Officially becoming a member of the U.S. Army.

This process is crucial for ensuring you’re fully prepared and eligible for the next phase of your Army career. Once you’ve cleared MEPS, we’ll focus on your enlistment contract and job selection. This is where your preferences meet the Army’s needs. We’ll look at the roles available, especially those in cybersecurity, and align them with your skills and career goals. It’s about finding the right fit for you and the Army.”

**Luke:** “It sounds like everything’s coming together. What can I do to prepare for MEPS and job selection?”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Review the job descriptions available online and think about where you see yourself. Also, consider how different roles can serve as stepping stones to your long-term goal of running a cybersecurity firm. Do you have any other questions about what we’ve discussed today?”

**Luke:** “No, we covered everything, it seems. Thank you for taking the time to explain things to me. I’m excited about the process.”

[As they conclude the meeting, Staff Sergeant Kenobi adds one more point.]

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Luke, your journey is just beginning, and I’m here to support you every step of the way. I’m glad I was able to show you how the Army will benefit your goals. Who else do you know who could benefit from what we discussed today?”

**Luke:** “My buddy Leia has hit a bit of a rough patch lately. I think she could benefit from the courses of action we discussed. Her number is 123-456-7890, and you can tell her I gave it to you.”

**Staff Sergeant Kenobi:** “Great, I appreciate it. Remember, you’re not just starting a job; you’re joining a community. And bringing others into this community can be incredibly rewarding.”

[From this moment on, Luke embarks on a transformative journey, guided by the steady hand of Staff Sergeant Kenobi. Together, they navigate the enlistment process, setting the foundation for Luke’s future as a leader and specialist within the ranks of the Army. This new path promises not just personal growth and education but also the opportunity to make a significant impact on national security and to contribute to a legacy of service and excellence.]

## Glossary

Use chapter intro style for glossary introduction.

### SECTION I – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACASP</b>	Army Civilian Acquired Skills Program
<b>APPLEMDT</b>	A=Age, P=Physical, P=Prior Service, L=Law Violations, E=Education, M=Marital Status, D+Dependents, and T=Testing
<b>ASVAB CEP</b>	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Career Exploration Program
<b>BAH</b>	Basic Housing Allowance
<b>BOPI</b>	Benefits, Options, Programs, Incentives
<b>CAR</b>	Central Army Registry
<b>COA</b>	Course Of Action
<b>CP</b>	Community Partner
<b>DBM</b>	Dominant Buying Motive
<b>FSPC</b>	Future Soldier Preparatory Course
<b>FSTP</b>	Future Soldier Training Program
<b>HQ USAREC</b>	Headquarters, United States Army Recruiting Command
<b>IET</b>	Initial Entry Training
<b>LES</b>	Leave and Earning Statement
<b>MOS</b>	Military Occupational Specialty
<b>OCS</b>	Officer Candidate School
<b>RRC</b>	U.S. Army Recruiting and Retention College
<b>SMP</b>	Simultaneous Membership Program
<b>SOLDIER</b>	S=Service to Country, O=Occupational/career enhancement, L=Leadership, D=Diversity, I=Income, E=Excitement, R=Respect
<b>SORB</b>	Special Operations Recruiting Battalion
<b>STP</b>	Soldier Talent Profile
<b>TAP</b>	Transition Assistance Program
<b>USAREC</b>	United States Army Recruiting Command
<b>WOFT</b>	Warrant Officer Flight Training

### SECTION II – TERMS

#### APPLEMDT

An acronym used to aid the recruiter in remembering all of the areas that address a prospect's qualifications. The acrostic stands for: A=age, P=physical, P=prior service, L=law violations, E=education, M=marital status, D=dependents, and T=testing.

#### Applicant

A prospect who has agreed to process to join the Army.

#### Army Interview

A formal meeting between an Army recruiter and a prospect for the purpose of telling the Army Story and counseling the prospect on the benefits of an Army enlistment or commission.

**Benefit**

A guaranteed type of non-monetary compensation or services provided to improve the quality of life of every Soldier in conjunction with their salaries and wages.

**Blueprint**

An action to obtain specific or personal information about people requiring contact.

**Close**

Closing the communication session by asking for either a commitment for an appointment for an Army Interview, a commitment to contract or access, or a commitment to the next step in the processing cycle.

**Community Partner**

A person or persons capable of directly or indirectly influencing people to seek more information about Army enlistment or commissioning opportunities or boosting the Army's market success and credibility through referrals, testimonials, simply undervalued word-of-mouth, and third-party endorsements.

**Dominant Buying Motive**

The primary reason or incentive—like necessity, desire, status, or value—that drives a decision. In a broader context like recruiting, it is the compelling “why” behind a decision. It is used extensively in sales and marketing to understand and address the core motivations of potential customers.

**Establish Rapport**

Developing a harmonious connection; gaining respect, trust, and credibility while putting someone at ease.

**Face-to-Face Prospecting**

A prospecting activity where a recruiter attempts to make a face-to-face contact with a specific lead with the intent to schedule an Army Interview.

**Goal**

Specific and often measurable outcomes or objectives that individuals or organizations aspire to achieve over a certain period. They are used in personal and professional settings to set targets and drive behavior.

**Incentive**

A monetary offering or the availability of an option designed to motivate the selection of a specific career field or MOS, enlistment contract length, or training ship date.

**Lead**

A name with an address, telephone number, or e-mail address and for whom no appointment exists for an Army Interview.

**Objection**

A specific concern or disagreement voiced by leads or prospects during a conversation. These are direct expressions of resistance or points of contention related to aspects like benefits, options, programs, or the process.

**Obstacle**

A challenge or concern prospects may face in the decision-making process. These barriers can be related to personal fears, misconceptions, or uncertainties.

**Option**

An agreement added to the enlistment contract guaranteeing terms of service, specialized training, or duty location.

**Overcome Obstacles**

Identifying the real obstacle or objection of a prospect or applicant and then providing clear, brief, and direct answers, information, or alternative courses of action.

**Passion**

Intense, driving feelings or enthusiasms toward specific activities, subjects, or causes. They are deeply personal and often evoke a strong emotional response.

**Program**

A pathway to service guaranteed in a contract.

**Prospect**

A person who has agreed to meet with an Army recruiter or a person who has been interviewed but who has not committed to process into the Army.

**Smokescreen**

A term to denote when a prospect or applicant provides a false or vague reason, not the real obstacle or objection, for not wanting to commit to the Army.

**SOLDIER**

An acronym used during the Army Interview to discuss Army opportunities to present facts and identify the prospect's goals. The acronym stands for: S=Service to country: Tradition, history, and Army Values; O=Occupational/career enhancement: Practical work experience, marketable job skills, college education, emerging technology; L=Leadership: Management and professional development; D=Diversity: Wide range of jobs and technical training, duty stations around the world; I=Income: Financial stability and security, health benefits; E=Excitement: Challenge, adventure, and recreation; R=Respect: Pride of service, public opinion, sense of self-worth.

**Temperature Check**

A technique used to determine whether a prospect is willing to commit to the Army or agree to portions of the Army Interview. This technique helps determine when the time is right for the next assessment (trial close). The technique involves asking the prospect for an opinion on how they feel about the Army or a specific program and then analyzing their reaction, which leads the prospect to commit to a series of "yes" answers. A temperature check is not asking for the full commitment to join the Army. Asking for the full commitment always takes place after presenting the programs, features, and benefits that meet the prospect's needs and goals.

**Trial Close**

A technique to discover when the time is right to perform the next assessment (close). Trial closes occur during the presentation of programs, features, and benefits. It is similar to a temperature check in that the recruiter asks for an opinion or feeling about the Army or a specific Army program and analyzes the reaction. However, a positive response to a trial close opens the door to go ahead and ask for the close.

## References

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- Army Regulation 601-210, Regular Army, and Reserve Components Enlistment Program – 8 Nov 23
- USAREC Manual 3-0, Recruiting Operations – 9 Mar 22
- UM 3-30, Recruiting Company Operations – 7 Mar 22
- UM 3-31, Recruiting Station Operations – 7 Mar 22
- UM 3-32, The Army Recruiter – 9 Mar 22
- USAREC Regulation 601-210, Enlistment and Accessions Processing – 3 Jan 23

### RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, Army Leadership and the Profession – 31 Jul 19

Army Techniques Publication 6-22.1, Providing Feedback: Counseling—Coaching—Mentoring – 13  
Feb 24

Department of Defense Instruction 1304.33, Protecting Against Inappropriate Relations During  
Recruiting and Entry Level Training – 5 Apr 17

USAREC Training Circular 5-03.1, Prospecting, Processing, and Analysis – 26 Sep 19

## **WEBSITES**

Basic Combat Training Vignettes: [https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/:f:/s/usarec-doctrine/ErruDIToqK1NkShvgL-PrcwBAVcqV0rrui4u0\\_tGJ4ryWA?e=aZe7ug](https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/:f:/s/usarec-doctrine/ErruDIToqK1NkShvgL-PrcwBAVcqV0rrui4u0_tGJ4ryWA?e=aZe7ug)

Central Army Registry: <https://rdl.train.army.mil/>

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (Army Pay and Allowances):  
<https://www.dfas.mil/MilitaryMembers/>

Pre-Interview Checklist: <https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/:x:/s/usarec-doctrine/EW2A6mmu0YFAvsVhZ5CEljUBXey-dv5X4812LLo0oGMQVA?e=R8WGje>

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance: <https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/sgli/>

Tricare (Army Dental Insurance): <https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental>

Tricare (Army Health Insurance): <https://www.tricare.mil/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA Benefits): <https://www.VA.gov/service-member-benefits>

## **REFERENCED FORMS**

DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms)

DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)