



GIs — Know your rights

Some things to remember:

- It's wise to:
- Get civilian counseling before signing anything you're not sure about.
- Keep a log when seeking discharge or documenting harassment.
- Make at least two copies of documents — keep one and send one to at least one trusted person off-base, such as a counselor, attorney, friend, or family member.
- Rumors about automatic discharge upgrades after six months or whenever are **not true**.
- In the 1947 Nuremburg trials, the US government held that there was a duty to resist carrying out crimes against humanity, defined as "*murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds.*"
- Congress members can conduct inquiries and initiate investigations of the military; an aide in each member's local office is supposed to help constituents with problems with the military. See www.congress.gov
Talk to a counselor first to find out how to pursue this option.

Helpful organizations, in addition to the GI Rights Hotline:

- National Lawyers Guild/Military Law Task Force — www.nlg.org/mltf
- Center on Conscience and War — www.centeronconscience.org
- Courage to Resist — www.couragetoresist.org
- Madres contra la Guerra — madrescontralaguerra.blogspot.com
- Iraq Veterans Against the War — www.ivaw.org
- Military Families Speak Out — www.mfso.org
- Bring Them Home Now — www.bringthemhomenow.org
- Proyecto Guerrero Azteca — www.guerreroazteca.org
- Veterans for Peace — www.veteransforpeace.org
- Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors — www.objector.org
- Vets 4 Vets — www.vets4vets.us

Discharges | DEP | Hazing | Discrimination | Gay | AWOL/UA | Harassment | Conscientious Objection

Information from a network of nonprofit, non-governmental organizations. The service is free. The call is confidential. Call M-F, 7 -10 pm (Central European time), to speak with a counselor, or leave a message any time for callback.

001-510-535-1104

In the U.S. call toll-free
1-877-447-4487

The GI Rights Hotline

girightshotline.org girights@girightshotline.org

ANGRY, ALARMED, OR FED-UP with what the military has done to you, or made you do to others?

Do something about the way you feel. Your commander may not like it, but many inside and outside the military agree with you. Acting alone can make you a target, but find out what you can do with others to preserve liberties and human rights, and to stand proud with others who want to do the right thing. Hold On to Your Humanity. **You have the right to keep one copy of this or any other information at any time** (DoD Directive 1325.6). Read military regulations and the Bill of Rights. **Get help.** Contact an organization listed on this card. Remember that **Rights are not given — they are fought for and exercised.**

Seeking a Discharge:

- You may seek a discharge from the military at any time. Regulations that superior officers are required to follow cover every kind of discharge.
- You may be able to get out of the military if:
 - You are opposed to war in general.
 - Military life or your assignment creates an unusual hardship for your dependents.
 - You have a persistent medical or psychological problem that makes military service difficult.
 - You are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.
 - You qualify for another discharge available under military regulations.
- Educate yourself first. Talk to the GI Rights Hotline; talk to a civilian lawyer with experience in military law.

GIs have the legal right to:

- Consult with a congressional office, civilian counselor or service, or a lawyer about a problem.
- Appeal any court-martial conviction, discharge denial, or non-judicial punishment.
- Say what you think and feel about the military, and participate in peaceful demonstrations, when you're off-duty, out of uniform, off-base, and in the U.S.A. (DoD Directive 1325.6).
- Protection against racial, sexual, and sexual orientation harassment and discrimination (Articles 93, 134 UCMJ).
- Protection from assault by other military personnel (Articles 93, 117, 120, 124, 128, 134 UCMJ).
- Request redress from your Commanding Officer for any grievance (Article 138 UCMJ).
- **Write a formal complaint against your Commanding Officer if you are not granted redress (Article 138 UCMJ).**

GIs don't have the legal right to:

- Demonstrate on-base or breach law-and-order anywhere. You can't take part in anything "when violence is likely to result."
- Encourage violence or urge others to violate regulations, disobey lawful orders, desert, or refuse to do their jobs.
- Call high government officials names, including "fascist", "thief", "murderer", "tyrant", "fool", or "gangster."
- Join a labor union (DoD Directive 1325.6).
- Sue the military for damages (Feres Doctrine).