

through the Reno office are looking to join the infantry. Sgt. Hunt said that the army's recruitment numbers are down with the war in Iraq continuing on with no end in sight, but there are still people joining. According to Sgt. Hunt, the army is only missing its goals by small numbers. If the army's goal is to have 7,000 recruits, they still consider it missing their numbers even if they get 5,000 people to join.

"The kids that are born soldiers, the ones that played with bb guns and G.I. Joe's as a kid, are still joining. We're losing the kids that were looking to join as a means to pay for college," Sgt. Hunt said. "Those kids are hanging back for a few years to see what happens."

With that said, every recruiter I talked to agreed that most people were joining to get money for college and or college debt.

At the Job Corp. we met up with Sgt. Suter, Sgt. Zirbel, and E1 ranking Barnett, a 21-year-old Reno local, just out of boot camp. Barnett was along to talk to the kids and answer any questions they might have had about boot camp.

We entered a room where six kids waited to take practice tests for the ASVAB. In order to join the army one must score a minimum of 31 out of 99. The higher the score the more likely it is that enlisting in the service will come with a hefty cash bonus. This test score also helps the army decide what jobs the new recruits would be fitted for.

Over the next few hours, 13 kids in all would take the practice ASVAB test. Only two of the kids received a passing score, but the young lady scoring the highest was ineligible to join the army due to weight restrictions. Sgt. Suter and Sgt. Hunt still encouraged the young lady to keep taking the practice test and working on her scores, encouraging her in her plans to lose the required weight.

During the testing I had a chance to talk with E1 Barnett about why he chose to join the army. Barnett said he went into the army to gain job skills; now a trained heavy equipment operator, he plans to come back to Reno to get a job after his time in the army is up.

Barnett said his parents are happy and proud of his decision to join the army, but they are concerned about the possibility of their son being sent to Iraq.

As for Barnett, he said, "In training you think about it every day (Iraq), but it's your job and it's what you do for a living."

4pm

Back at the office the recruiters go back to the P1 part of their day- cold calling people on the telephone. Between phone calls and meetings, the recruiters stay in the office until 8pm. The work 8am to 8pm four days a week, Fridays they're let out at 5pm, and Saturdays they work until 3pm.

As Sgt. Zirbel pointed out, "It's better than being shipped out where you're there for six months and up on patrol for 24 hours straight. I still get to go home and sleep in my bed at night."

At 5:30pm I called it quits and headed back to my home in Truckee. After a full day of hanging out with army recruiters I defiantly gained a different view of what they do for a living, but I couldn't help realizing no one ever brought up the military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan to any of the recruits. To me it's like a police officer describing their job to an interested party. The officer tells them how they'll learn to drive a car at high speeds, shoot guns, make good money, and meet interesting people; but at no time does the officer ever tell them that their life will be put in danger.

I know a lot of people joining the army are trying to earn money for college or gain job skills. I know education can provide more opportunities; my whole life I've heard people say that an education is priceless. But are these opportunities worth dying for? For some, I guess they are.

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