

# All That I Can Be

## Study Guide



### A Co-Production of



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# Introduction

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The Educational Video Center (EVC) is a non-profit youth media organization dedicated to teaching documentary video as a tool for social change and as a means to develop the artistic, critical literacy, and career skills of young people. Founded in 1984, EVC is a nationally acclaimed leader in the fields of youth media and education.

The documentary *All That I Can Be* was produced during the 2003-2004 school year by students participating in EVC's Youth Organizers Television (YO-TV). YO-TV is a ten-month, paid internship program for graduates of EVC's Documentary Workshop. YO-TV students build college preparation and media career skills as they produce a documentary video for a client. In 2003, documentary filmmaker Eugene Jarecki commissioned YO-TV to produce a piece about the U.S. military's recruitment of young people. Turning their cameras on themselves and their teenage peers, the YO-TV producers asked their friends why they were enlisting in the military during a time of war. Mr. Jarecki included this critical youth perspective in his documentary film *Why We Fight* which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005.

In addition to contributing to *Why We Fight*, the YO-TV crew fashioned their portraits of young recruits into the intimate and sophisticated documentary short, *All That I Can Be*. This video has screened locally and nationally in schools, community organizations, and film festivals, including the Human Rights Watch, Tribeca, Media That Matters, Hamptons, and Los Angeles film festivals. Counter recruitment organizing groups such as the War Resisters League, the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, Military Families Speak Out, Vermont Network on Iraq War Resolutions, Veterans for Peace, and the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME) have also held youth and community screenings. ACME and Vermont Families Against the War screened *All That I Can Be* in Vermont towns the week before the March 2005 town hall meetings where 46 out of 52 Vermont towns voted in support of a referendum to withdraw Vermont's National Guard troops from Iraq.

EVC's collaborations with the Action Coalition for Media Education began with this initiative; and they have continued with the *All That I Can Be Study Guide*, a co-production of ACME and EVC. This Study Guide, written by Dr. Rob Williams, combines EVC and ACME's innovative, active learning approach to teaching media literacy. The Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME) is a not-for-profit continental coalition that champions critical media literacy education, independent media production, and grassroots media reform and justice initiatives. ACME believes in using media literacy education – teaching students and citizens how to better access, analyze, evaluate, and produce media – to give individuals greater freedom to make choices about their lives and their role in the world.

**For more information on ACME programs and educational materials,** visit the ACME website at [www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org)

**For more media education materials written by Dr. Rob Williams** including *Selling the Soldier (Out): An Interactive Media Education DVD*, visit [www.robwilliamsmedia.com](http://www.robwilliamsmedia.com)

**For more information on the Educational Video Center** and to purchase EVC videos, publications, and curricula, visit [www.evc.org](http://www.evc.org)

# Guidelines For Using This Tape

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**EVC documentaries are powerful**, and often deal with sensitive issues of critical importance to young people. Military recruitment and the war in Iraq are no exception. For this reason, we strongly recommend that you preview *All That I Can Be* and supporting materials before screening it to your students. The curriculum we've prepared represents one suggestion for using *All That I Can Be* in the classroom. If any of the activities are not useful to you, feel free to modify them and design your own.

**Assumed in this curriculum model are a number of beliefs about teaching and learning.**

- Writing deepens thinking and is one of the best ways to explore sensitive issues, even before discussion.
- All learning starts from the students' own experiences.
- Diversity of opinion is useful in a classroom and must be respected.
- Students can make a difference in the world.
- Students can learn from each other.
- Social issues and community problems are an integral part of the school curriculum.
- Students learn from a variety of methods.
- Students learn best through experience.
- An active viewing experience leads to a richer understanding of the documentary.

**Before using these materials you might want to consider the following questions. These are designed to help you modify these activities to suit the needs of your particular situation.**

- How similar/different are your students and their experiences from the students who made this video?
- How does this video relate to the subject you are teaching?
- What results do you hope to see from using this video?
- What concerns do you have about the content of this video?
- What concerns do you have about your students' responses to the issues raised in this video?
- What background information will your students need before viewing this tape?
- What do you need in order to adequately prepare yourself for teaching this unit?

**Active Viewing:** For many teachers, having students write or take notes while viewing is not something new. For others, this aspect of active viewing is a bit controversial. Some feel it gets in the way of their viewing experience, while others feel it enhances it. You may want to show the tape twice: the first time to view it, and the second time to complete the viewing exercise. You might also find it worthwhile to discuss this process with your students.

**Your comments and questions are always welcome.**

Please contact us at: EVC, 120 West 30<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10001 or [info@evc.org](mailto:info@evc.org)

# Background Information

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## Synopsis

*All That I Can Be* follows the stories of William and Dorian as they embark on separate journeys with the United States Army. Interweaving their experiences with reflections from twin high school students Shinel and Shimel, recruiters, veterans, journalists, anti-war activists, and people on the street, *All That I Can Be* is at once an intimate portrait and an exploration of the promises and realities of the U.S. military in post-9/11 America. This documentary offers insight into the lives of young people making their way in a society in which joining the military seems to be their best or only option.

## Main Characters

**William**, a high school graduate and an alumnus of the Educational Video Center, is interested in joining the military after his mother dies and his attempts to find work to pay for basic necessities – food, utilities, and rent – are unsuccessful. At the time of his interviews with YO-TV, William was 23 years old and living on his own in an apartment in Washington Heights, New York City.

*William: "Times were tight...Going into the service you get rid of utilities, you get rid of rent... Anything that's work-related they reimburse you for."*



**Dorian** signs up for the U.S. Army Reserves after his high school graduation. Dorian doesn't agree with the war in Iraq, but he joins anyway to earn money for college and to travel and see the world. Dorian's first year at the State University of New York (SUNY Purchase) is interrupted when he receives an order to report for duty at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

*Dorian: "I want to go to Iraq because I have so much to learn. I'm only 19. I want to learn my job. I want to do more self-discovery...plus the money."*



**Shinel** is also a high school graduate and an alumna of the Educational Video Center. Shinel dreams of getting away and starting a life of her own. She and her twin brother **Shimel** plan to either join the military or go to college – whichever allows them to leave home first. Shinel and Shimel were 20 years old at the time of their interview and living with their family in the Bronx.

*Shinel: "[I'm] tired of seeing the same old faces. I want to see new things. I want to get away."*



*Shimel: "I want to wake up looking forward to doing something I'm really enjoying."*

# Pre-Screening Activities

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## Brainstorming

**Important Note:** Talking about military recruitment and war is a sensitive matter. We urge teachers and facilitators leading group activities around *All That I Can Be* to create a “safe space” for all voices to be heard before diving into discussion relating to the film. This can be as simple as reading aloud the first sentence above and asking students to be respectful of everyone’s point of view. You can also state that the goal of the screening is to learn from one another, to listen to different points of view, and to deepen the group’s collective understanding of the issues around military recruitment. It may be helpful to make a list of responses on the blackboard or on chart paper where everyone can see them.

*Question #1: The United States currently has the largest military force of any country in the world, with soldiers and bases in more than 130 countries globally. What do you think is the primary purpose of the U.S. Armed Forces today?*

Possible Answers:

- To protect U.S. citizens from terrorists
- To avenge the 9/11 attacks
- To uproot political figures like Saddam Hussein who are said to support terrorists
- To spread “freedom” and “democracy” to other countries
- To protect U.S. strategic interests abroad – to protect natural resources like oil and ally countries like Kuwait
- To follow orders from the federal government
  - Congress as a body has the Constitutional power to declare war.
  - The President (Commander in Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces) and his/her cabinet and advisors have the constitutional power to send troops anywhere in the world for a 30 day period before having to explain their decision to Congress.
- To enforce binding multilateral treaties with other countries, i.e. the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreement

*Question #2: Ask for a show of hands. Are there people in the room who have friends or family members who have served or are currently serving in the military? Are there people in the room who have served in the United States military themselves?*

**Note:** This can be a sensitive question to ask because many veterans and friends and family members of veterans have strong feelings about military service. However, asking this question allows you to honor those who have served and to quickly gauge your audience. One suggestion: in the interest of time, simply invite those who raise their hands to provide a ten second “sound bite” explaining their personal connection to the U.S. military. (For example: “My dad served two tours as a G.I. in Vietnam...”)

*Question #3: Why do young people decide to join the U.S. military?*

Possible Answers:

- To make money
- To pay for college
- To carry on a family tradition of military service
- To learn new skills and build a career

- To travel and meet new people
- To protect others from harm
- To participate in an organization that values discipline and teamwork
- To honorably serve one's country
- To follow one's friends
- To learn how to use new tools and weapons, i.e. planes, tanks
- To become more physically and mentally fit
- Successful persuasion by a military recruiter

## Writing Activity

If you'd like to do a writing activity, end the brainstorming session with Question #2. Then ask students to sit quietly for a few minutes and write about young people they know who have joined the military or are thinking of joining the military. What are their reasons for joining the military? Do you agree or disagree with these reasons? After they've had time to write, ask for volunteers to share their writing aloud with the class. If your students don't know each other well or if the class environment doesn't feel safe for them, ask students to share their writing in small groups.

# Screening Activities

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## Introducing the Video

It may be helpful to say a few words before watching *All That I Can Be*. You can also read aloud the film's synopsis on page 5 (See "Background Information"). Here are a few other points to introduce the film.

- High school students made *All That I Can Be*.
- This film is called a documentary because it *documents* the real-life experiences of four young people – something very different from a Hollywood movie that has paid professional actors playing roles unrelated to their everyday lives.
- The four young people who are interviewed in the documentary are: William (age 23), the twins Shinel and Shimel (20), and Dorian (age 19).
- The film brings up many different points of view about the U.S. military: some are critical of the military; others may seem less so. The filmmakers would like you to use this information to form your own opinion.
- The film's title, *All That I Can Be*, is taken from a famous U.S. Army advertising slogan: "Be All That You Can Be." This slogan was designed to persuade young Americans to join the U.S. military by linking personal growth and rising to one's fullest potential with the Army.

## While Viewing the Documentary

Ask students to pay close attention to the interviews with William, Dorian, and Shinel and Shimel and write down each of their reasons for joining the military as they watch the film.

## Screen Video

(22 minutes)

## After Viewing the Documentary

Ask students to divide into small groups to discuss what they wrote down for the main characters' motivations for joining the military. Do you agree with the characters' motivations? Why or why not? Ask one person from each group to report back to the class. It might be helpful to assign a specific character to each group. (For more information on the main characters' motivations, including quotes from the documentary, see the *Main Characters* section under *Background Information* on page 5.)

## Choose additional discussion questions from the list below, as time allows.

*Question #1: In the documentary, we visit with an army recruiter, Sergeant Valentine, who meets with William and convinces him that a military career is a good option for his future. What is an army recruiter's job? How do military recruiters try to persuade young people to join the military?*

Possible Answers:

- By offering recruits free things (t-shirts, posters, etc.)
- Painting a rosy picture of military service
- Emphasizing honor and duty to one's country
- Pointing out the financial benefits of military service
- Emphasizing the "band of brothers" bonding that comes with joining
- Highlighting the high-tech training recruits will experience

*Question #2: What are some aspects of military life that recruiters might NOT mention?*

Possible Answers:

- You might be injured or killed in the line of duty.
- You will be trained and expected to kill.
- You might lose your closest friends in battle.
- You might be exposed to toxins that cause chronic physical illness.
- You might experience psychological disorders like post-traumatic stress disorder.
- You might not be able to find a job when you return home.
- You might become homeless like Nicole Goodwin, the young mother and Army veteran in the documentary, and like the 460,000 homeless veterans in the United States.

*Question #3: What did you learn about life as a new military recruit from Dorian's experiences at Fort Dix? Was any of this surprising to you?*

Possible Answers:

- He meets interesting people his own age.
- He wears a uniform.

- He has to march a lot every day.
- He shares his personal space with many people.
- As a soldier, he has no control over his comings and goings.

*Question #4: In the documentary, President Bush gives a speech to a crowd of soldiers on board the aircraft carrier the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln. He declares that combat in Iraq is over and that casualties have been minimal. However, the filmmakers show that the war has, in fact, continued and that many U.S. soldiers and Iraqi civilians have died since the President’s speech. The President’s speech was broadcast on live television, but information on casualties (especially Iraqi casualties as well as the number of wounded U.S. soldiers) is often not reported in the news. Do you believe that the media has a responsibility to report on this information? Why or why not?*

*Question #5: At the end of the documentary, William says, “If my relationship with my recruiter is any indication of what life in the Army will be like, then I’ve got nothing but positive feelings about it.” Do you agree with William? Why or why not? Has this youth-produced documentary changed your thinking about the U.S. Military? Why or why not?*

## Post-Screening Activities

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**Teachers can follow-up with a variety of activities. Here are a few suggestions.**

### *Media Analysis Exercise*

Screen the “Army of One” ad again for the class. It can be found 12 minutes into the documentary. Have students write down every image they see. Then ask students to share what they saw with the class. Make a list of their responses on chart paper or a chalkboard. Then ask students to take a few minutes to read through ACME’s *From Persuasive Techniques to Analytical Tools* (See Appendix 2, pages 13-15). Do any of these persuasive techniques apply to the “Army of One” ad? Which ones apply and why? If your school has access to video cameras, you can have your students make a public service announcement that includes messages and/or information the “Army of One” ad leaves out.

### *Reflection Essays*

Ask students to write a personal reaction to the four main characters’ motivations for joining the U.S. military. [You can provide them with direct quotes from the main characters – see Background Information on page 5.] OR Ask students to write an essay about the documentary’s point of view. Is *All That I Can Be* a pro-military or anti-military documentary?

### Debate

Have students debate one of the following questions. As an added challenge, you can ask students to debate from the point of view they do not agree with. Do “Army of One” advertisements tell the truth about life in the U.S. military? Should U.S. military recruiters be required to tell potential recruits as complete a picture as possible about life in the U.S. military? Should the United States government re-impose a national draft for all young persons under the age of X?

### Oral History

Have students find and interview someone in their community who has personal contact with the military in some way and interview that person about their connection to the military. (Again, this is a sensitive area, so proceed in a thoughtful and age-appropriate manner with your students.)

### Video Making

If your school has access to video cameras, have your students collect video testimony, including reactions to *All That I Can Be* and interviews with students and teachers about military recruitment. Then use this to edit together a short film, commercial, or public service announcement.

### Further Research

Using the web resources listed in Appendix 3 of this Study Guide (pages 16-19), have students conduct more in-depth community and/or global research on one of the following topics:

- The nature and scope of military recruiting at their school or within their community
- Justifications advanced by the Bush administration to invade and occupy Iraq and different opinions about the validity of each of these justifications
- The varying statistics on Iraqi and U.S. casualties and the U.S. soldiers wounded – why might these statistics vary greatly depending on their source?

### Community Night

Host a community night. Have students present their research and invite community members to participate in an open discussion.

### Screenings

Organize a screening of *All That I Can Be* or another film about military recruitment and the war in Iraq War in your classroom or community. Contact EVC at 212-465-9366 x15 for a complete list of EVC youth-produced documentaries. See Appendix 3 (pages 16-19) for additional video resources.

# Appendix 1

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## Questioning Media: Ten Basic Principles of Media Literacy Education

Provided by ACME: [www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org)

1. **Medium:** *a form of communication – i.e. television, a video game, or a magazine article – that transmits messages, tells stories, structures learning, and constructs a “reality” about the world.*
2. **Media Literacy:** *an educational approach that seeks to give media users greater FREEDOM and CHOICE by teaching them how to access, analyze, evaluate and produce media. ACME-style media literacy education emphasizes: knowledge, skills, and activism!*
3. **“Reality” Construction/Trade-Offs:** *Media construct our culture and involve trade-offs (goods and bads). Consuming media always involves choices that enhance or degrade our lives. We should ask ourselves, “What are the trade-offs of this media experience?” Ask: Who produced this media? What kind of reality does this media create? How accurate is this “reality?” What stories are NOT being told and why?*
4. **Production Techniques:** *Media use identifiable production techniques. Advertisers, the public relations industry, and other powerful media makers spend massive amounts of time, energy, and money carefully creating media to influence the ways we think, behave, and buy. “Deconstructing” or analyzing production techniques – camera angles, lighting, editing, sound effects, colors, font styles, symbols, etc. - can build awareness, leading to more careful and “literate” consumption of media. Ask: What kinds of production techniques does this media use?*
5. **Value Messages:** *Media contain ideological value messages. Some value messages are intended, while others are unintended. Messages can be positive or negative, and messages target specific groups. Ask: What kinds of value messages does this media promote?*
6. **Commercial Motives:** *Media are business and commercial interests. Most media are produced within the commercial industry. Researching questions of ownership, production, and distribution is vital to fully understanding media’s influence. Ask: What are the commercial motives behind this media? Who or what paid for this media and why? Who or what owns this media product?*
7. **Individual Meanings:** *Individuals construct their own meanings from media. If parents, teachers, students, and citizens are to learn about media, let’s honor, discuss and debate each other’s meanings. Ask: What meanings do YOU find in reflecting about this media? What differing meanings might other individuals or groups find?*
8. **Emotional Transfer:** *Commercials and other multi-media experiences operate primarily at an emotional level and are usually designed to transfer the emotion from one symbol or lifestyle onto another (usually a product or behavior). Ask: What emotions does this media tap? What might we consider if we think more deeply about this media?*

9. **Pacing:** *Media Pacing - TV runs at 30 frames per second (movies at 24).* The conscious mind can process about 8 frames per second; hence television and movies tend to keep us from conscious analysis and reflection about individual messages and larger industry contexts. Ask: *What do you observe about this media upon reflection? (After showing media multiple times, slowing media down, or stopping media regularly for discussion).*
  
10. **Symbolic Rhetoric/Techniques of Persuasion:** Symbols, flattery, repetition, fear, humor, powerful words and sexual images are especially common and effective techniques of media persuasion. Ask: *What persuasive techniques is this media using?*

**See ACME at [www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org) for more information** about media literacy education curricula, activities, and resources.

# Appendix 2

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## *From Persuasive Techniques to Analytical Tools: Developing a Media Literacy Language*

Provided by ACME: [www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org)

*“A democratic civilization will save itself only if it makes the language of the image into a stimulus for critical reflection - not an invitation for hypnosis.” - Umberto Eco*

1. **Symbols:** Persuading through the use of idea-conveyances (an American flag on a lapel pin) that associate one thing (a politician) with another (support for his speeches or policies). Symbols are often phrases (“Just Do It”), images (the famous “Earth seen from space” photo) graphic brands (McDonald’s Golden Arches), or icons (well-known politicians, athletes, or artists). Symbols are rarely used by accident or chance. They are usually employed very carefully.
2. **Big Lie:** Persuading through dishonesty; not telling the truth about X. An easy technique to spot in advertising (“Smoking makes you glamorous.” “Drinking makes you cool.”), but sometimes harder to spot in political propaganda. This is where reading a variety of independent media sources comes in handy.
3. **Flattery:** Persuading by complimenting insincerely or excessively. Advertisers use this technique all the time (“You deserve a break today.”). Television programs (including so-called “reality TV”) use this technique in a more subtle way, suggesting that the audience is smarter, more cool, etc. than people on the screen.
4. **Hyperbole:** Persuading by making exaggerated claims. Found all the time in advertising media (“The best smoke ever!”) and often in political propaganda.
5. **Bribery:** Persuading through the offering of a bribe: money, favors, savings, or a little something extra. Advertisements use this technique all the time (“Act now and we’ll throw in extra X or save you Y dollars.”).
6. **Bandwagon:** Persuading by insisting that “everyone’s doing X.” Works in both advertising and political propaganda.
7. **Scapegoating:** Persuading by blaming problems on one individual or group (The Nazis blaming Jews, for example, for Germany’s problems during the 1930s).
8. **Simple Solutions:** Persuading by offering a simple solution to either a manufactured or more complex problem. (“Take these pills and lose all the weight you need!” What about a responsible diet, regular exercise, the influence of genetics on one’s weight, and a healthy sense of individual self-esteem despite being larger than some?)

9. **Rhetorical Questions:** Persuading through the asking of questions designed to provoke further exploration or generate a certain predicted response. (“Do you want greasy hair?” “Why did politician X lie about Y?”)
10. **Fear/Defensive Nationalism:** Persuading through fear, creating and/or exaggerating the presence of an enemy – Communists, terrorists, or godless liberals. (The Bush administration has leveraged the 9/11 tragedy to begin addressing other so-called “rogue nations” like Iraq, Korea, and Iran that comprise an alleged “axis of evil.”)
11. **Humor:** Persuading through appeals to the funny bone. Laughter is often the best medicine, especially if you don’t want people to think too deeply about something.
12. **Testimonial:** Persuading by invoking support from respected individuals (like athletes, movie stars, and doctors) or institutions (Like having the AAP approve media literacy curricula or a former Surgeon General endorse pharmaceutical products).
13. **Plain Folks:** The opposite of testimonial; persuading by appealing to the common man or portraying yourself as “just one of the guys/gals.” (Used in many beer advertisements, as well as by millionaire politicians who stage “photo ops” of themselves chopping wood, fishing, or reading to school children.)
14. **Repetition:** Persuading through repetition of the same image, word, symbols, or phrase over and over. (Advertisers use this, as do politicians. How many times have you heard the phrase “weapons of mass destruction?”)
15. **Nostalgia:** Persuading through appeals to a more simple or romantic (and often mythical) past. (See Tom Brokaw’s book *The Greatest Generation* or any Hollywood World War II movie.)
16. **Diversion:** Persuading by diverting attention away from damning information or an alternative point of view. (The alcohol and tobacco industries use this technique in all of their advertising.)
17. **Denial:** Persuading by avoiding (or seeming to avoid) an attachment to unpleasant symbols, moments, or stories.
18. **Warm Fuzzies:** Persuading with appeals by cute little children, large furry animals, or anything else that warms your heart. (Think “Little Debbie” snack cakes – a classic example.)
19. **Beautiful People:** Persuading through images of good-looking individuals to sell products, lifestyles, behaviors, or ideas. Common in advertising and politics.
20. **Group Dynamics:** Persuading by building a sense of solidarity; replacing the “I” aloneness with “we” togetherness. Look for “we,” “our,” and other GD power words. (“We the people,” begins the U.S. Constitution.)
21. **Either/Or:** Persuading by appeals to simplistic black and white and either/or thinking. (To quote President Bush, “You’re either for us or against us.”)

22. **Maybe:** Persuading with promising but “hedgy” language – words like “might,” “could,” or “maybe.” (“Play the Lottery. You *could* win a million dollars!”)
23. **Strength:** Persuading by appeals to strong leadership – be strong, aggressive, bold, firm, and “in charge.” (Watch any action movie or State of the Union message.)
24. **Scientific Evidence:** Persuading with scientific (or pseudo-scientific) language – graphs, diagrams, charts, statistics, and “jargon.” (“4 out of 5 dentists surveyed...”)
25. **Card Stacking:** Persuading by taking information out of context or not providing the whole story. (Movie advertising featuring critics’ one-liners, “This is the best movie I’ve ever seen!”)
26. **Name Calling:** Persuading with personal attacks that feature colorful, offensive, crude, and humorous language.
27. **The Race Card:** Persuading through appeals to race, often mythical notions of racial harmony (advertising) or race-based fear appeals (politics).
28. **Timing:** Persuading through the orchestrating of various story elements or production techniques to enhance media’s meaning and power. (Study scary or tear-jerking movie scenes or effective advertisements to see this at work.)

# Appendix 3

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## ***U.S. Military Recruiting and War: Further Resources***

### **Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME) [www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org)**

Co-Producer of the *All That I Can Be Study Guide*, ACME is a not-for-profit continental coalition that champions critical media literacy education, independent media production, and grassroots media reform and justice initiatives.

### **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)**

The AFSC carries out service, development, social justice, and peace programs throughout the world, including an extensive national Youth & Militarism campaign.

### **America's Army, The Official U.S. Army Game [www.americasarmy.com](http://www.americasarmy.com)**

Millions of Americans are introduced to Army recruitment via this popular video game and web site, developed by the U.S. Army.

### **America's Defense Monitor [www.cdi.org/adm](http://www.cdi.org/adm)**

This organization provides balanced coverage of U.S. military activities and programs and the rationales behind them.

### ***America's Military Today: The Challenge of Militarism* by Tod Ensign, (New Press, 2004)**

The most comprehensive critical new book on U.S. military recruitment.

### ***Arlington West* (Dir. Sally Marr and Peter Dudar, 2004, 60m) [www.arlingtonwestfilm.com](http://www.arlingtonwestfilm.com)**

Moving film that explores Americans' reactions to a military "cemetery" built by concerned citizens on a California beach.

### **Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) [www.objector.org](http://www.objector.org)**

CCCO supports and promotes individual and collective resistance to war and preparations for war.

### **Citizen Soldier [www.citizensoldier.org](http://www.citizensoldier.org)**

An organization devoted to defending the legal rights of U.S. soldiers.

### **The Congress [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)**

This site allows you to write to the U.S. Congress, President Bush, and your state legislators.

### **Cost of War [www.costofwar.com](http://www.costofwar.com)**

How much is the war costing the United States on a per state basis? How else might the U.S. government be spending our taxpayer monies? This informative website is part of the National Priorities Project.

### **Department of Veterans Affairs [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)**

A federal agency charged with supporting U.S. military veterans and their families.

### **Educational Video Center (EVC) [www.evc.org](http://www.evc.org)**

Producers of *All That I Can Be*, EVC is a non-profit youth media organization dedicated to teaching documentary video as a tool for social change and as a means to develop the artistic, critical literacy, and career skills of young people.

**Educators to Stop the War** [www.educatorstostopthewar.org](http://www.educatorstostopthewar.org)  
This site has many counter recruitment resources for educators.

**Gold Star Families for Peace (GSFP)** [www.gsfp.org](http://www.gsfp.org)  
Co-founded by Cindy Sheehan to organize military families who have lost loved ones in the Iraq war.

***The Ground Truth: The Human Cost of War*** (Dir. Patricia Foulkrod, 2005, 30m)  
[www.thegroundtruth.org](http://www.thegroundtruth.org)  
This documentary features interviews with former Iraq War soldiers recounting their experiences in the Middle East, and discussing the difficulties of adjusting to civilian life. This film is still in production, but a 30-minute version is currently available online.

***Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear, and The Selling Of American Empire*** (Media Education Foundation, 2004, 60m) [www.hijackingcatastrophe.org](http://www.hijackingcatastrophe.org)  
*Hijacking Catastrophe* takes a critical look at executive branch neo-conservatives – Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz – their imperial ambitions, and their use of the 9/11 tragedy for political purposes.

**Human Rights Watch International Film Festival High School Program**  
[www.hrw.org/iff/2005/classroom/index.html](http://www.hrw.org/iff/2005/classroom/index.html)  
This program provides free human rights-related videos and educational resources to supplement existing high school and after-school program curricula. (See their video collection on militarism.)

***Independent Media in a Time of War*** (Dir. Amy Goodman, 2004, 30m) [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)  
*Democracy Now* civic journalist Amy Goodman examines the relationship between mainstream U.S. media and the Iraq War.

**Iraq Body Count** [www.iraqbodycount.net](http://www.iraqbodycount.net)  
This site offers a “worldwide update of reported civilian deaths in the Iraq war and occupation.”

**Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW)** [www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net)  
A site for military veterans opposed to the war in Iraq.

**Mediarights’ Media That Matters Film Festival** [www.mediathatmattersfest.org/mtm05](http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/mtm05)  
The festival site offers 16 innovative video shorts (including an 8-minute version of *All That I Can Be*) in streaming media. Topics include civic engagement, justice, sustainability, and more.

**Military Families Against The War** [www.mfaw.org.uk](http://www.mfaw.org.uk)  
“War torn families unite.” This site is the British equivalent of the U.S. organization Military Families Speak Out.

**Military Families Speak Out** [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)  
U.S. military families speak out against the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

**Military Free Zone** [www.militaryfreezone.org](http://www.militaryfreezone.org)  
An excellent resource on how to opt out of the No Child Left Behind Act, this site also lists sources for college funding other than the military.

***Military Myths*** (Paper Tiger TV and ROOTS, 2001, 28m) [www.papertiger.org](http://www.papertiger.org)  
This documentary considers how media representations of war compare to the reality of war experienced by veterans. A critical look at the U.S. military’s promises to young recruits.

**Occupation: Dreamland** (Dir. Ian Olds and Garrett Scott, 2005, 78m) [www.occupationdreamland.com](http://www.occupationdreamland.com)

A candid portrait of a squad of American soldiers deployed in Falluja during the winter of 2004.

**Operation Truth** [www.operationtruth.com](http://www.operationtruth.com)

A non-partisan advocacy organization for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, this site offers veterans' testimony, photos, and video footage.

**The Pentagon** [www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pentagon](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pentagon)

The official web site for the Pentagon.

**Project for a New American Century** [www.newamericancentury.org](http://www.newamericancentury.org)

Neoconservative thinkers chart their blueprint for 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. dominance of the globe.

**The Real Price Of War: How You Pay For The War On Terror** by Joshua Goldstein, (New York University Press, 2004) An economist makes war's economic costs easy to understand.

**Selling the Soldier (Out): An Interactive Media Education DVD** (Dr. Rob Williams, 2005)

[www.robwilliamsmedia.com](http://www.robwilliamsmedia.com)

This DVD features six video clips on military recruitment from a range of perspectives – advertisers to inner city youth – together with essential exercises in deconstructing media. A valuable resource for activists and classroom teachers on the high school and college levels.

**September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows** [www.peacefultomorrows.org](http://www.peacefultomorrows.org)

An organization of families of 9/11 victims opposed to the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

**Shocking and Awful: A Grass Roots Response to War in Iraq** (Deep Dish TV, 2005)

[www.deepdish.org/shocking](http://www.deepdish.org/shocking)

A series of thirteen half-hour programs that address the implications of U.S. war in Iraq and show how people are mobilizing through art, actions, and international law.

**The Sorrows of Empire** by Chalmers Johnson, (Metropolitan Books, 2004)

A U.S. policymaker lays out a blueprint for understanding the United States as an empire, and the trade-offs that come with it.

**Uncovered: The Truth About the Iraq War** (Dir. Robert Greenwald, 2004, 60m)

[www.truthuncovered.com](http://www.truthuncovered.com)

In this documentary, federal government insiders reveal truths about the reasons why the U.S. government went to war in Iraq.

**United for Peace and Justice** [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

“A coalition of more than 1300 local and national groups throughout the United States who have joined together to protest the immoral and disastrous Iraq War...”

**The United States Department Of Defense** [www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)

Official web site of the United States Department of Defense.

**United States Air Force** [www.airforce.com](http://www.airforce.com)

Official web site of the United States Air Force.

**United States Air National Guard** [www.ang.af.mil](http://www.ang.af.mil)  
Official web site of the United States Air National Guard.

**United States Army** [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com)  
Official web site of the United States Army.

**United States Army National Guard** [www.180ogoguard.com](http://www.180ogoguard.com)  
Official web site of the United States Army National Guard.

**United States Marine Corps** [www.usmc.mil](http://www.usmc.mil)  
Official web site of the United States Marine Corps.

**United States Navy** [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil)  
Official web site of the United States Navy.

**Vermont Network on Iraq War Resolutions** [www.iraqresolution.org](http://www.iraqresolution.org)  
During annual town meeting day in March 2005, concerned citizens in Vermont organized a statewide discussion on the Vermont National Guard's participation in the Iraq War. This web site is full of information on organizing town meeting discussions or the equivalent in your community or state.

**Veterans for Peace** [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)  
U.S. war veterans championing a more peaceful future.

**Veterans for Common Sense** [www.veteransforcommonsense.org](http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org)  
U.S. war veterans championing the practical ideals of Thomas Paines' *Common Sense*.

**Vietnam Veterans Against the War** [www.vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org)  
Vietnam war veterans opposed to the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

**War Resisters League (WRL)** [www.warresisters.org](http://www.warresisters.org)  
With chapters in cities across the country, WRL's programs include youth and counter recruitment, war tax resistance, and resisting the war in Iraq.

**The White House** [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)  
Official web site of the President of the United States.

**Working Films** [www.workingfilms.org](http://www.workingfilms.org)  
Working Films is a non-profit organization that links provocative documentary films with national grassroots organizing. Working Films is currently organizing screenings of *Occupation: Dreamland*, a documentary on U.S. soldiers deployed to Falluja in the winter of 2004, in Fayetteville, North Carolina, home to the Army's 82nd airborne division.