

DRAGON PULSE



Do you feel military pay and benefits are keeping up with the cost of living?



"I do. We're dual income, but it would be that way even if he was a civilian."

— Kara Carrier, Military Spouse



"I believe they are if you have a financial plan. It depends on children, mortgage, budgeting and planning."

— Phebe Furlow, Military Spouse



"No because because there's a lot of expenses; daycare, food, housing. The pay is not enough."

— Pfc. Judy Garland, 82nd Personnel Support Battalion



"I don't think so. I think we're six percent below civilian pay for the nation."

— Spc. Brian Merwin, Company B, 319th Military Intelligence Battalion, 525th Military Intelligence Brigade

The best part of advice

by Master Sgt. Rich Greene
1st TSC PAO

One of the best things about advice is that there is never a shortage of it. Everyone is more than willing to share his or her view on how you should approach any given subject. When it comes to travel, everyone has more than one view to share.

I would say I have heard just about every possible way to get from Washington D.C. to El Paso, Texas. The day I found out I was on the list to attend the Sergeant's Major Academy my colonel began the entire ordeal. He told me that I should take ten days leave and drive to Florida, and then take Interstate 10-West all the way to El Paso.

With a smirk peering out from behind his half-chewed cigar, he called it the "scenic

route."

My supervisor was not as accommodating. He wanted me to work up until the day I needed to report and then catch a flight. In his mind, driving to Texas would take me away from work too soon.

Our S-1 attended the academy sometime in the mid 1980's. After listening to his soliloquy on how much the Army has changed since he "got his ring," he told me the worst part of the course would be the drive to El Paso. "That long drive across Texas will put you to sleep for sure, nothing but dust and asphalt."

When I checked www.mapquest.com for directions it directed me through Nashville and Memphis, Tenn., and again across Texas.

www.yahoo.com's directions routed me on I-70 West all the way to St. Louis, then I-44 to Oklahoma City. I was to take I-35 South to Dallas and then, just like all the others, drive west across Texas.

My father is a member of AAA, the American Automobile Association, and true to form for old Gene Greene, he got me a "Trip-Tik" outlining the best route. "This has all the construction and bottlenecks highlighted there in yellow" he said, "and the lady at the counter even put the known speed traps in pink for you."

The majority of the freshly highlighted speed traps were along the stretch from Oklahoma City down to Dallas, then over to El Paso. "You'll want to go as fast as you can there," my father said. "That haul across

Texas is a bear."

I've never driven out west, so after hearing from everyone that the drive across Texas would be arduous, I broke out the map. I spread Rand McNally's 2003 edition across the table and looked at that extremely long blue line that stretched from Dallas to El Paso. In my misery, I did not notice my wife leaning over my shoulder, studying me studying the map. The wisdom of the mother of four children broke my concentration when she said, "Do we have to drive across Texas? Isn't there another way?"

Another way, how could there be another way? Everyone said go south, then across Texas: the colonel, my supervisor, the S-1, my father, Mapquest, Yahoo, even AAA! It was obvious to

me that to get to El Paso, one must drive across Texas.

Just then, she pointed to the junction of I-44 West and I-35 South at Oklahoma City and said, "If we go across Oklahoma we can take the kids through New Mexico too, and then go south into Texas. It will be fun for them, and it won't be like we're driving all day in Texas."

And so, day one we left Washington D.C. and drove to Columbus, Ohio. Day two: Joplin, Mo. On day three, we drove across Oklahoma, across the Texas panhandle through Amarillo, Texas and stopped in Tucumcari, NM where I had an incredible rib eye steak at the Holiday Inn. Tucumcari was a small town, but like most kids, my kids loved the pool and I got

a solid night's sleep for the drive to El Paso on day four.

Each of my kids commented on the mesas and the desert colors they saw as we passed the rolling hills on the way through New Mexico. It was like the Travel and National Geographic channel in real life — with no TV remote in sight. Looking back, day three and four were about as far from boring as you could get, and when you are traveling with four kids and a dog that is important.

After spending my year at the Sergeant's Major Academy in El Paso, and then driving back across the country to Fayetteville, I have changed my opinion on advice. The best part is not that there is never a shortage of it; it is that you can choose to ignore it.

Army Strong campaign attracts recruits in many ways

by Lt. Col. Wayne M. Shanks
Army News Service

The new "Army Strong" recruiting ad campaign kicks off in early November. The Army's recruiting advertising contract, managed by McCann Worldgroup, commits up to \$200 million in 2007 to market the Army to potential recruits.

The contract covers the full range of marketing efforts to include ad development and the purchase of time and space for television, radio, print and online ads.

This price tag represents a significant investment, but by way of perspective, the Army's \$200 million is not large enough to rank in the Top 100 U.S. marketers. According to industry publications, Advertising Age and Adweek, the world's

largest companies spend much more on advertising. For example, Procter & Gamble spends about \$4.6 billion annually on advertising and promotion alone. Similarly, Walt Disney spends nearly \$2 billion on advertising and promotion, while Target and J.C. Penney each spend more than \$1 billion.

The Army's marketing campaign is a continuous effort that helps connect America to America's Army and its Soldiers who demonstrate what it means to be Army Strong. The advertising campaign is one important component of this recruiting effort.

"The Army is fighting a tough recruiting battle and must do all it can to make the U.S. Army message distinctive and powerful, and then deliver that message in ways

that reach eligible recruits and those who care about them," said Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, commander of U.S. Army Accessions Command. "The Army Strong campaign aims to demonstrate the value of Army service and being a Soldier."

The advertising contract reaches out to prospective recruits by supporting recruiting efforts in local communities as well as through direct mail and marketing, public relations and community events. It also funds the Army's extensive online presence at goarmy.com and other Web-based activities.

Additionally contract funds national sponsorships that help to drive awareness and interaction with the Army, such as sponsored drivers with NASCAR and NHRA, and sponsored athletes who com-

pete as professional bull riders, cowboys, and in arena football.

These efforts attract individuals to active and reserve components, to the Reserve Officer Training Corps, and to special missions such as the medical and legal professionals and chaplains.

The Army faces a unique recruiting environment given that the nation is at war. Each year, the Army must recruit more new Soldiers than all the other military services combined. Only three out of every 10 people in the U.S. meet the Army's high standards that qualify them to enlist. This 30 percent is the same group being recruited by other services as well as civilian corporations at a time when the unemployment rate in the U.S. is relatively low.



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