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**ESL Podcast 367 – Going into the Military**

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**GLOSSARY**

**attention** – a word shouted to get someone to look at or listen to oneself, especially in the military

\* The general entered the room and one of the soldiers shouted, “Attention!” Everyone immediately stood up and looked at him.

**to salute** – to raise one’s right hand to one’s forehead, with the fingers held straight, touching those fingers to one’s forehead, and then quickly move them a few inches to the right and to the front

\* Sometimes Americans salute the American flag as a sign of respect.

**superior officer** – a person who works in the military and has a higher rank than another person

\* Is Geraldine your superior officer, or do you and she have the same rank?

**to goof around** – to be silly; to not act seriously; to waste time; to do things that are not important

\* The children spent the afternoon goofing around, playing outside and telling silly jokes to each other.

**to pack** – to put the things that one will need into suitcases or other bags for traveling

\* Did you remember to pack your toothbrush and toothpaste?

**to report to duty** – to present oneself for the first day on a new job, or for the first day of military service

\* When you report to duty, you need to bring your identification card and only one suitcase.

**AWOL** – absent without leave; missing, especially from the military, without permission and/or having told anyone where one would be not where one is supposed to be

\* How many soldiers go AWOL each year?

**dismissed** – allowed to leave a room, especially in the military; no longer needed; with permission to leave

\* When the army general calls you into his office, you cannot leave until you are dismissed by him.

**to enlist** – to sign up; to register to participate in something

\* Frank enlisted in the U.S. Navy when he turned 18 years old.



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**camouflage** – a green, brown, and gray design that is used on fabrics and on painted surfaces to make things more difficult to see, especially in the military  
\* The men and women wore camouflage clothing and hid in the forest, where it was very difficult to see them.

**no laughing matter** – not funny; nothing to laugh about; something that should be taken very seriously and should not be joked about  
\* Their parents told them: Deciding to get married is no laughing matter, since your marriage should last for the rest of your life.

**recruiter** – a person whose job is to get other people to work in an organization or participate in a specific group, especially in the military  
\* The university sent a recruiter to Megan's high school to try to get her and other good students like her to apply to the university.

**discipline** – the ability to control one's actions, words, and/or thoughts; the ability to control one's behavior; the ability to be obedient and do what other people tell one to do  
\* Losing weight requires a lot of discipline regarding what you eat and how much you exercise.

**foxhole** – a small hole in the ground that soldiers lie in for protection while they are shooting at other people and while they are being shot at  
\* The soldiers were cold, hungry, and tired, yet they had to stay in the foxholes for their own protection while the enemy was shooting at them.

**deployment** – the planned and coordinated movement of soldiers, equipment, and supplies to a place where they are needed  
\* Denise is on deployment in Afghanistan.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Robert need to do in two days?
  - a) He needs to salute his superior officer.
  - b) He needs to write a report about his duties.
  - c) He needs to begin serving in the military.
  
2. What does a recruiter want people to do?
  - a) To salute.
  - b) To be dismissed.
  - c) To enlist.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **attention**

The word “attention,” in this podcast, is a word shouted to get someone to look at or listen to oneself, especially in the military: “The students were talking too much, so the teacher shouted, ‘Attention, please!’” The phrase “to pay attention to (something or someone) means to look at and/or listen to something or someone: “You need to pay more attention in class, Samantha.” Or, “Have you been paying attention to the news about the elections?” The phrase “to pay attention to detail” means to be detail-oriented, or to be interested in the small details of something more than the big picture: “Accountants must pay attention to detail in their work.” Finally, “attention” is the interest that people show in something or someone: “She dresses in bright colors to attract attention.”

#### **to pack**

In this podcast, the verb “to pack” means to put the things that one will need into suitcases or other bags for traveling: “Kelly is packing too many things. She has five suitcases for her two-day trip to the mountains!” The verb “to pack” also means to package, or to put something into a container for storage or for selling: “They packed the dishes into boxes with lots of newspaper to protect them from breaking.” “To pack” sometimes means to put many people or things into a small area so that they are very crowded: “Hundreds of people packed onto the dance floor when the band started playing.” Finally, “to pack” can mean to push on something very hard so that it takes up less space: “This cookie recipe requires packing one cup of brown sugar.” Or, “The earth is packed here where so many people walk on it.”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

The United States Armed Forces, also known as the United States Military, “comprises” (is made up of) five “branches” (parts): the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

The U.S. Army is the oldest branch of the military. It was created in 1775 for the Revolutionary War against Britain. The Army is also the largest branch of the military, with more than one million members. Its soldiers fight mostly on land.

The U.S. Navy is smaller, with only about 500,000 people “in service” (working in the military). The Navy primarily works on the oceans and seas. It has almost 300 “ships” (large boats) and more than 4,000 “aircraft” (planes, helicopters, and other flying vehicles of different sizes).

The U.S. Marine Corps works closely with the U.S. Navy. It is the smallest military branch, with only about 200,000 members. It is very good at responding to “crises” (emergencies, or very urgent situations) quickly.

The U.S. Air Force was “founded” (created) in 1947 and mostly focuses on fighting that happens in the air. It has more than 6,000 aircraft, more than any other air force in the world.

Finally, the fifth branch of the U.S. military is the U.S. Coast Guard. It has a “broader” (wider and including more things) “mission” (purpose) than do the other branches of the military. The Coast Guard is supposed to protect the public, the environment, and the United States’ economic and security interests in “maritime” (related to the sea) regions.

The people who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces are very proud of their work, but they are often even more proud of the specific branch that they serve in. There are many friendly “rivalries” (competition between people or groups) between and among the different branches of the military.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – c



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 367: Going into the Military.

This is ESL Podcast number 367. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) to download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide is an 8 to 10 page guide that will help improve your English even faster. We also have our ESL Podcast Store, where you can buy additional courses in business and daily English I think you'll enjoy.

This episode is called "Going into the Military." It's a dialogue between Chantelle and Robert about life in the army, or in one of the military services. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Chantelle: Attention! Aren't you supposed to salute?

Robert: You're not my superior officer. Stop goofing around. I'm busy.

Chantelle: You're packing already? You don't need to report to duty for two days. Are you afraid they'll think you went AWOL?

Robert: I just want to be prepared. Now, leave me alone so I can finish packing.

Chantelle: Am I dismissed? Maybe I want to enlist, too? I think I would look good in camouflage make-up and fatigues.

Robert: Being in the military is no laughing matter. Do you really think that the most desperate recruiter would want you?

Chantelle: That's not very nice. I have as much discipline as you do...about some things. You may find yourself in a foxhole with me someday.

Robert: Whatever deployment you'd get, I'd make sure I'm on the other side of the world!

[end of dialogue]



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This episode is about people who are in the military. “To be in the military” means to work for the government in the army or the navy, or some other military service. These are people who have gun that protect a country – their own country, we hope!

In the United States, the military is “all volunteer,” meaning that men and women are not required to go into the military, as they are in many countries. In the U.S., you “volunteer,” you say, “Okay, that’s what I want to do.” And if you don’t want to do it, you don’t do it, at least that has been the way the system has worked for the last 30 years or so.

In our dialogue Chantelle says to Robert, “Attention! Aren’t you supposed to salute?” “Attention” is a word that you shout at someone to get them to look or listen to you. It is often used in the military when the people who are working – the soldiers – are told by, for example, one of their bosses, such as a general, to stand “at attention,” or simply “attention,” every one needs to stand up and look like they are paying attention, they are listening to the general. “Attention” has a couple of different meanings; take a look at the Learning Guide for some more meanings of that word.

Chantelle says, “Aren’t you supposed to salute?” meaning don’t you have to, or shouldn’t you have to salute. “To salute” (salute) means to raise, usually, your right hand to your forehead, with the fingers held together straight; you touch those fingers on your forehead and then quickly move them a few inches to the right and front of your face. This is what happens when someone – a soldier in the military sees someone who is higher up – who is one of the bosses, if you will. They have to salute; they have to bring their arm up with their fingers against their forehead to show respect.

Robert says to Chantelle, “You’re not my superior officer. Stop goofing around. I’m busy.” Chantelle is joking with Robert. Robert says, “You’re not my superior officer.” Your “superior” is someone who is higher up, above you. An “officer” is a general word we give to someone who is in charge of, or is a supervisor in the military. So, your “superior officer” is someone who works in the army or the navy that has a higher level job than you. We would say a “higher rank,” that is, they have a higher position than you. Robert says, “Stop goofing around.” “To goof (goof) around” means to be silly, to not act seriously, to waste time. “The children were goofing around instead of studying.” Robert is saying to Chantelle, “I’m busy, stop bothering me, stop joking with me.”



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Chantelle says, “You’re packing already?” meaning you are packing already – so soon? “To pack” means to put things that you will need usually into a suitcase, when you are traveling or going on a trip. “To pack” has a couple of different meanings; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations. Chantelle says, “You don’t need to report for duty for two days.” “To report for duty” means to go to your job on the first day, to begin a new job, or in this case, to begin your first day of working in the military, in the army or the navy. The “army” are the soldiers, the people who fight on the land, and the “navy” are those that have boats and ships and fight on the ocean, or on the water.

Chantelle says, “You don’t need to report for duty for two days. Are you afraid they’ll think you went AWOL?” “AWOL” is an acronym (AWOL – all capital letters) that means “absent without leave.” If you are in the military and you suddenly decide not to go where you’re supposed to go – if you decide to stay home – you would be considered AWOL. This is something that the army and navy doesn’t like very much, and you will get in a lot of trouble – you will be punished if you go AWOL. Sometimes you’ll hear this expression for people who, for example, don’t come to work, or don’t show up to the job that they’re supposed to do, we might say they “went AWOL.” Notice the verb is “to go AWOL.”

Robert says, “I just want to be prepared. Now, leave me alone so I can finish packing.” Chantelle, once again joking with Robert, says, “Am I dismissed?” “To dismiss someone” is to say “leave the room,” to give someone permission to leave. This is often used in the military; someone may say, “You’re dismissed.” Your superior officer would tell you, “You’re dismissed,” meaning you can go now; I give you permission to leave.

Chantelle says, “Maybe I want to enlist, too?” “To enlist” means to sign up for something, to agree to participate in something. We often use this verb in talking about the military: “Frank enlisted in the navy when he turned 18 years old.” Chantelle says, “I think I would look good in camouflage make-up and fatigues.” “Camouflage” is a green, brown, and gray design that is used on clothing, and sometimes painted on people’s faces to make them more difficult to see. This is often a technique used in the military. “To camouflage,” as a verb, means to hide something by changing the appearance so it looks like everything around it. “Fatigues” are the clothing that someone in the military would wear, so Chantelle is joking, saying, “I think I would look good in camouflage make-up (on her face, for example) and fatigues (or clothing).”

Robert says, “Being in the military is no laughing matter” meaning it’s not funny; it’s nothing to laugh about or make jokes about. “Do you really think,” Robert



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says, “that the most desperate recruiter would want you?” “To be desperate” means that you have no other choices, that you need something very badly. A “recruiter” is a person whose job it is to get other people to work for his or her organization or group. The military has recruiters in most cities of the United States, and their job is to find men and women who want to work in the military. What Robert is saying is that no one would want Chantelle, even a very desperate recruiter who needed more people.

Chantelle says, “That’s not very nice (that’s not a nice thing to say). I have as much discipline as you do.” “Discipline” is the ability to control your actions, to control your behavior, to do what other people tell you to do, in this case. Chantelle says, “You may find yourself in a foxhole with me someday.” “You may find yourself” means you may be surprised to be in the same situation, in this case, to be in a foxhole. A “foxhole” is a small hole in the ground that soldiers lie in and hide in for protection, when they are shooting at other people. Chantelle is saying that someday I may be in a foxhole with you, working with you, fighting alongside you, next to you

Robert says, “Whatever deployment you’d get, I’d make sure I’m on the other side of the world!” “Whatever deployment,” whatever place that you were told to go, he’s saying, “I would make sure I was on the other side of the world,” nowhere close to you. So, “deployment” is the place where soldiers and equipment and supplies are taken. Usually we use the expression “on deployment.” For example: “Denise is on deployment in another country,” that’s where she is working for military.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Chantelle: Attention! Aren’t you supposed to salute?

Robert: You’re not my superior officer. Stop goofing around. I’m busy.

Chantelle: You’re packing already? You don’t need to report to duty for two days. Are you afraid they’ll think you went AWOL?

Robert: I just want to be prepared. Now, leave me alone so I can finish packing.

Chantelle: Am I dismissed? Maybe I want to enlist, too? I think I would look good in camouflage make-up and fatigues.





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Robert: Being in the military is no laughing matter. Do you really think that the most desperate recruiter would want you?

Chantelle: That's not very nice. I have as much discipline as you do...about some things. You may find yourself in a foxhole with me someday.

Robert: Whatever deployment you'd get, I'd make sure I'm on the other side of the world!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by my superior officer, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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