

# Army Soldier vs Christian Soldier

by  
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Intro.

Some things in life are exciting, and I have done a lot of exciting things in my time. I've done scary things with my skateboard that I used to think were only possible in video games. I have gone so fast with my snowboard in the mountains that I thought I might start lifting off the ground! I know the feeling of riding up to a huge kicker with a dirtbike, my heart about to blow a hole through my chest, and wonder if I calculated my gears and speed right, and then float through the air trying to see the landing through eyes on an adrenaline high.

Alright maybe I'm exaggerating just a little.

But the honest truth is, no adrenaline rush, no idiotic stunts I've pulled, nothing, has ever hit me as hard as becoming a father. Everything else is a wisp in the wind in comparison to that moment when I fully realized that I had just become a father. There is no word for that feeling. . . To describe it I would try to use words like excitement, dread, fear, happiness, total joy, more fear, love, and back to excitement, and then the whole works all over again!

Today is father's day. Today we celebrate being fathers!

Today is especially exciting for me; I have had very little preparation time.

So since today we are so excited, we are going to join the army. Whatdya say boys? Free guns! Almost enough to get a good mennonite to sign up ;)

Turn with me to **II Timothy 2:3-4**

*You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*

Did you come with your boots on today? Because today I would like to encourage you to join the army, and hey if you're already signed up, hopefully this message will serve to encourage you to pull up your socks, tighten your boots, pick up your gear, and fall in.

Let's start by finding out what a soldier is. According the wikipedia, a soldier is “*one who fights as part of an organized land-based armed force;[1] if that force is for hire the person is generally termed a mercenary soldier, or mercenary.*”

Organized, land-based, armed force. . . That's almost right! Isn't it?

Organized: hey we've got a committee for that!

Land-based: well we aren't goin anywhere until God calls us home.

Armed force: we've got a Living Sword, the Word of God!

According to wikipedia, we have a decently sized regiment right here this morning!

Let's see what it would take to become a Canadian soldier. I have pulled some basic training information from our Canadian Forces website at [forces.ca](http://forces.ca), and I'll read that off for you real quick. I'd like to read this in a loud booming military voice, but hey, somebodies gotta sing tenor!

**Basic training will teach you a new way of life. It may be the most demanding experience you have ever had and requires hard work and perseverance. The more prepared you are, the better able you will be to meet the physical demands of basic training.**

**Here is an overview of what to expect:**

### **DAILY ROUTINE**

**Your days start at 5:00 a.m. and end at 11:00 p.m.** (for those of you trying to quickly do that math, that's an 18 hour day, with 7 hours of sleep) **Each training day consists of physical training, marching, classes and practical sessions on a variety of military subjects. Evenings are spent maintaining personal equipment and living quarters in addition to preparing for the next day's activities.**

### **FIELD EXERCISES**

**Field exercises focus on practical military skills such as weapons firing, map and compass use, and marches of various lengths in full combat gear. You may also set up your own accommodations and do your own cooking.**  
(sounds like that's a privilege of some kind)

## **OBSTACLE COURSE**

**Obstacle course training involves physical tasks like scaling 2- and 4-metre walls, climbing a 4-metre netting apparatus, and crossing a 4-metre ditch while hanging from a set of monkey bars. Good upper body strength and power are necessary to successfully complete the obstacle course.**

## **SWIMMING**

**The military swim standard is a key element of basic training. This test involves jumping into a pool wearing a life jacket and swimming 50 metres (that's 164 feet or the whole High Level pool, twice). You must also somersault into the water without a life jacket, tread water for 2 minutes and then swim 20 metres. If you cannot swim, take some basic swimming courses before basic training.**

## **PHYSICAL TRAINING**

**Regular physical training sessions will prepare you for field exercises, 13-kilometre marches in full combat gear, and meeting the Canadian Armed Forces minimum physical fitness standard which is a requirement for passing basic training.**

**Your physical training at basic training will include:**

**skill and strength development;**

**running progressively longer distances up to 6 kilometres; and**

**completing marches of various lengths in full combat gear.**

**It is, therefore, important for you to be as fit as possible before basic training.**

**A good idea is to start a regular physical fitness routine before basic training that focuses on upper body muscular endurance, core muscular endurance, muscular strength and aerobic fitness. Talk with your doctor before starting a fitness routine or appraisal.**

**Your overall success in basic training will depend on your contribution to the team effort. If you are out of shape, you will not do well on the field exercises and you will not be a strong team member.**

## **PHYSICAL FITNESS EVALUATION**

**During the first week of basic training, you will take the Exercise Prescription – or EXPRES – Program test to assess your level of physical fitness. You must pass the test to continue with basic training.**

**The EXPRES test includes four activities – a 20-metre shuttle run to measure aerobic fitness; push-up and sit-up tests to measure muscular endurance; and a hand-grip test to measure strength. The chart below outlines what will be expected of you when tested.**

(I don't have the chart here for you, I couldn't understand it anyway)

**If you do not meet the EXPRES test objectives but can meet a minimum threshold (see chart below), you may be able to take additional training as part of the Warrior Preparation Company at the Leadership School where you will have three opportunities to pass – after 30, 60 or 90 days.**

**Should you fail to meet the minimum fitness standard during the EXPRES test or after 90 days of additional training, you will be released from the Canadian Forces.**

Well that's just peachy. Welcome to the army!

Sometimes I wonder why there isn't bootcamp for Christians. . .

Let's dig a little more into this soldier metaphor in Paul's letter to Timothy.

To do that I want to try to compare the Canadian Forces to our Christian Forces.

#### I. Types of enlistment

There are a few ways to get into the Canadian Forces. One: you can volunteer. This is most certainly not the Mennonite thing to do for several reasons. We simply just don't go to war. And when we do, we certainly wouldn't get shot for free! Two: you can sign up like most people do, try to pass the basic training we already went through, and get paid by the army sort of like an employee would. Apparently there are great careers to be had in the army. . . Three: in times of crisis, governments in the past have conscripted regular citizens, put a gun in their hands, and told them to defend their country. I know for Israel, every man and woman out of high school is required to serve a minimum 3 years of service. My Jewish friend Asaph Hershcovitz, spent 1-1/2 years training with his dog to locate bombs before Israelie foot soldiers would take over, and then spent another 1-1/2 years of actual combat service.

Now if you want to join God's army, how many ways are there? Volunteer? Employee-style service for payment? Conscription? These days this is a dangerous question. Don't all religions lead to Heaven. . . ? If there was a true Calvinist here he would say, "God already chose who gets saved and who doesn't. It's called *election*. HELLO." My answer to that would be this, "I know

John 6:64 says that Jesus knew from the beginning those who would not believe, and those who would betray Him. But He knows everything! Of course He knows that too, but it doesn't mean He **chose** that for them. He has always given man a free will which includes the choice to serve God, or serve the devil. Just read John 3:16!

And how about Matthew 10:22, *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.*

Sounds to me like anyone who endures to the end will be saved.

I actually have a whole message on debunking the Calvinist's election further evidence.

So back to joining God's army, there's only one way isn't there? It's a choice you make for yourself. You can do the easiest thing, **nothing**, but that's still a choice. Once you have heard the Gospel you are no longer passive, you are either choosing to be in, or choosing to be out, but the choice is yours. And don't make it lightly, but please, make the right choice. There is only one good choice.

I'm sure there are souls in Hell that are crying, "Why did nobody tell us? Why did God not send soldiers to warn us?!" But I'm also sure there are other souls in Hell crying, "Why didn't we listen when that man told us about this?"

II Corinthians 6:2

*For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

The only way is to repent and believe. I know that seems narrow-minded, but it really is.

## II. Types of Discipline

Let's check out the different types of discipline needed for a soldier. The way I see it, there are two types of discipline in the Canadian Forces: physical, and mental. Soldiers are taught and required to be fit physically, going through rigorous drills of running, climbing over and under obstacles, swimming, basically be required to go wherever they are needed to go, faster than they can, with a ton of gear and weapons attached to their bodies. They are also taught amazing amounts of self-discipline by being required to be on time, or suffer the consequences, have their beds made, tight, and measured with tool, clothes pressed and boots polished, or suffer the consequences, and to submit to authority at all times, or suffer the consequences.

Mental strength is taught by pushing soldiers to their limits, and making them believe they can go farther. They spend hours upon hours conditioning the mind with knowledge and experience against any and every possible situation they could possibly come into. They know that a soldier that hasn't been taught to be a steeled fighting machine, will mentally break down in their first real combat. If your mind cannot handle blood, death, drowning, leaving a friend behind, or obeying orders even if it will kill you, you will be a hazard to your regiment. The soldier that can keep his head clear and his wits about him will make smart choices quickly, and save lives instead of cost lives.

When I compare the discipline of a Canadian Forces Soldier, and a Canadian Christian Soldier, I have got to say that for the most part, the Canadian Forces have got us beat HANDS DOWN. If we were as disciplined spiritually as they are physically and mentally, we might make it through

more battles as well.

Do Christians have discipline? Should we be disciplined? Are we commanded to be disciplined? The book we all should be disciplined to read has a lot of instructions in it. Is it possible to obey a lot of instructions without discipline?

Let's take a closer look at discipline itself. The definition of discipline from wikipedia is as follows:

*In its original sense, discipline is systematic instruction intended to train a person, sometimes literally called a disciple, in a craft, trade or other activity, or to follow a particular code of conduct or "order". Often, the phrase "to discipline" carries a negative connotation. This is because enforcement of order—that is, ensuring instructions are carried out—is often regulated through punishment.*

*Discipline is the assertion of willpower over more base desires, and is usually understood to be synonymous with self control. Self-discipline is to some extent a substitute for motivation, when one uses reason to determine the best course of action that opposes one's desires. Virtuous behavior is when one's motivations are aligned with one's reasoned aims: to do what one knows is best and to do it gladly. Continent behavior, on the other hand, is when one does what one knows is best, but must do it by opposing one's motivations.[1] Moving from continent to virtuous behavior requires training and some self-discipline.*

And that's a secular definition!

So discipline is not self-inflicted pain, it is *systematic instruction intended to train, regulated through punishment*. But if this is true for the Christian soldier, who's doing the punishing? Other Christian's? Not God. . . He's always known as that merciful, gracious, loving, fuzzy wuzzy friendly buddy upstairs.

Listen to King David in Psalms chapter 6, *O Lord , do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, O Lord , for I am weak.*

How about Job 5:17-18 *“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.*

How about Hebrews 12:6 *For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.*

How about the words of Christ in Revelation 3:19 *As many as I love, (there's that word love again) I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

All this doesn't sound to me like God is some sort of “buddy.” It sounds more to me that God is a KING, and He demands order and discipline and will chasten and scourge His sons, his soldiers, not because He isn't loving, but because He IS loving. That is true love in action by God Himself, our Creator and our Example.

*Nothing can be more hurtful to the service, than the neglect of discipline; for that discipline, more than numbers, gives one army the superiority over another.*

George Washington, general orders, July 6, 1777

He understood that he didn't need numbers to make an army, but disciplined soldiers to make a formidable force.

Without this aspect there would be no order in the army, every soldier would do as he pleased. And it is this aspect that God uses to bring His sons and daughters back to Him.

Sometimes I imagine it this way:

“But Lord it just doesn't feel right!”

*“It doesn't matter how it feels son, just carry out My order because My Word is truth.”*

“But Lord I'm so tired of all this trouble.”

*“Son, My orders are not optional, carry them out and learn to do it joyfully.*

*And those soldiers who grow weary, come to Me, and I will give you rest. For I have plenty of grace and mercy and wisdom for those who obey, but those who don't I will chasten and scourge.”*

*James 1:2-8 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

### III. Types of Orders

In a court of law, there are two types of orders that a soldier may receive: lawful or unlawful. In an investigation, these types of orders will decide if prosecution is necessary for the order receiver, or the order giver. Lawful orders must be obeyed. For example, a suicide mission order is still a lawful order, if it affects the war being fought. It doesn't matter if everyone knows they are going to die. However, an order to kill a civilian may or may not be lawful, and the soldier committing the deed is ultimately responsible.

The main document affecting these things is called the Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Forces, or QR&O. In it are all the regulations that affect soldiers and officers from the time they enter the army to the time they leave. I have looked through this document a little and it is loaded to the hilt with detailed regulations and procedures. So when an officer makes an order, whether lawful or unlawful, and the soldier disobeys it, it is this document and the courts that will decide who was right and who was wrong. And it wasn't that long ago that the death penalty still stood for disobedience to lawful orders in times of war. According to wikipedia, Capital punishment in Canada was abolished generally in 1976, and for military offences in 1998. Harold Pringle was the last Canadian soldier executed, in 1945, for a military offence.

Now when a soldier obeys an unlawful order and is called to court for it, he may feel like he's got a get-out-of-jail-free card with what is called Superior Orders. (wiki) Superior orders (often known as the Nuremberg defense or lawful orders) is a plea in a court of law that a soldier not be held guilty for actions which were ordered by a superior officer.[1] The superior orders plea is

similar to the doctrine of respondeat superior in tort law where a superior is held liable for the actions of a subordinate.

Those familiar with the Nuremberg Trials will remember these men that did such horrible things to other humans, especially the Jews, pleaded not guilty because they were “just following orders.” It was during this time that they really realized that that is not a justifiable plea to eliminate punishment, but merely sometimes to lessen it.

To me this seems a little stressful for a soldier, and also somewhat inefficient, because during war times especially every soldier really should think through his orders to make sure they wouldn't come back to haunt him later in court. And if he disobeys an unlawful order, he might face serious immediate consequences from his superior officer. Yikes. Obey orders at your own risk is what it comes down to.

Now for a Christian soldier, all of our orders are already made, and contained in a single book. All we have to do is decide whether or not we believe the Bible is the Word of God. If yes, every order is a lawful order. No questioning needed. By the way, the Bible is the Word of God, deciding if you believe it or not doesn't change that. I really like how Eric Hovund can blow evolution out of the water with mind-numbing facts! The facts and evidence are there, its not the Bible that needs to prove itself, its us that need repent and believe and prove ourselves faithful to Christ. On the other hand, if you feel that some orders are unlawful, you **do not** believe the Bible is truly the Word of God, and therefore you **do not** believe in God, and therefore, you **are not** a soldier.

I have backup for that statement.

Turn to

*John 8:42-47 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”*

The reason wasn't that God's Word isn't understandable, but that they were not able to listen. *therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.*  
Having ears they could not hear.

Every order God has made has been lawful, if there was one that wasn't, He would cease to be God! It is up to us as soldiers to obey, and to fight the good fight.

#### IV. Types of Battles

I would like to make a quick point here on types of battles. In military warfare there are all kinds of battles: battles on foot with rifles, battles with tanks, battles with aerial machines like helicopters and fighter jets, then there's chemical warfare, nuclear warfare, and now cyber



warfare. Modern soldiers fight battles in so many more ways now than even 100 years ago.

How about for the Christian? What sort of battles do we fight? We could be here all week going through examples from just one Christian here. The battles are endless in number, and equally endless in variety. But they can all be summed up like this,

*“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

But let's not stop there!!!

*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.* Ephesians 6:12-18

If you want to meet Satan and his horde of demons in battle, just start praying. The power of the prayer of a righteous man is huge! But we neglect prayer like a lost cause, or a lottery ticket that never wins. If you feel called to do battle, it happens here every Wednesday night, 7:30. But it can also happen anywhere there is a Christian willing to kneel and pray whenever it is needed.

Concl.

In conclusion, I think that most Christians these days, maybe even in our small town, didn't sign up for the army. They want love, and peace with everyone, without any conflict, and God's grace will cover everything. The Devil's lies are never more deceiving than when they use God's Word as an alibi. That's exactly what the serpent did in the garden of Eden, and he's still using the same old trick, sniping off soldiers with a smile on his face. We who are truly believers need to start standing up for the Truth of God's Word, even if it costs us our friends, our jobs, our family, even our lives! The cost no longer matters to a true soldier of Christ. Look at Paul's example!

Turn to

II Corinthians 11:22-28 *Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.*

And guess what Paul has to say about himself! *For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* I Corinthians 15:9

I don't mean to belittle the struggles of any soldiers here today, but Paul was a veteran, and his sufferings put things into perspective don't they? When was the last time you got put in prison for Christ? When was the last time you got beaten for Christ? When was the last time you got shipwrecked for Christ? Have you ever even packed up your bags and moved for Christ? These are questions I ask myself as I read this passage. How many in that list would I be willing to endure? Thank God that in La Crete we don't need to suffer like Paul. Yet. But the time may come. And if we can't suffer for Christ now in the small things, what makes us think we will when the hard times come? And I don't mean that we should go looking for persecution so that we can live right, but live right, and persecution will find you!

II Timothy 3:12 *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus **will suffer persecution.***

That's a promise you can count on.

I like the way Sir Winston Churchill put it: "*You have enemies? **Good.** That means you've stood up for something in your life.*"

When you're looking for something to do Friday night, Saturday night, maybe Sunday afternoon, don't climb into the wrong vehicle and compromise yourself with bad company. They will tempt you with smoking, drinking, bad music, sex, anything they are doing, because they need your approval to feel better about themselves. One encouragement from you to live right might make you look like a total outcast, but I guarantee they will remember you and what you stood for.

Maybe the conversation in the coffee shop goes south and you have an opportunity to soldier up and defend your faith. Don't miss out! Do it in love and always speak up for truth.

Maybe you're constantly put in a tough situation by your Christian friends or family. Pick up your cross and defend your faith! It might mean saying something. It might mean leaving. It might mean saying something and then leaving.

Maybe as a father your tired of disciplining your children. Remember this: what you do is going to influence your children for right or wrong, and doing nothing encourages wrong. Their eternal destination relies very heavily on what you do as a parent. Remember Proverbs 13:24?

*He who spares his rod **hates** his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*

A witness for Christ cannot be silent. He will be heard by his voice or his actions, but he will be heard. Don't let what people hear from you be meaningless.

And always remember II Timothy chapter 2. Two two's with a Timothy in between.

*You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*

