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the united states military the largest  
most powerful  
most dangerous fighting force on the  
planet a military that hasn't been  
involved in a defensive war since the  
1940s

yet whose budget continues to balloon  
every year

u.s military spending currently exceeds  
that of the next 10 nations combined  
we have over 600 military bases outside  
our borders

occupying over 80 countries around the  
world the united states

military while it tries to sell itself  
as a force for freedom and democracy  
is not a welcome sight in much of the  
world our aggressive posturing bullying  
and occupation has turned world opinion  
against the us armed forces over the

past few decades  
and it's not hard to see why when you  
think of a modern fighting force  
you typically think of tanks fighter  
jets humvees drones and aircraft  
carriers  
but these giant death machines don't  
operate on their own  
the us military like any other relies on  
recruits  
americans willing to pick up arms and  
kill for their country  
in this episode we're going to take a  
look at the state of u.s military  
recruiting  
and the shady tactics used by the armed  
forces to rope in new soldiers  
before we begin let's take a second to  
discuss why the u.s feels like it needs  
such a massive military  
since the end of world war ii and  
certainly since the end of the cold war  
the united states has been the sole  
world superpower this has given the  
country the luxury of using that power  
to clamp down on the world's economy

with an iron grip  
the u.s relies on other countries  
relying on it  
if another country doesn't feel the need  
to grovel for u.s assistance and trade  
deals  
the u.s military will often be called in  
to create an environment  
that forces that country to re-evaluate  
if crippling sanctions aren't enough  
boots on the ground certainly will be  
but if the united states already has  
such a stranglehold on the rest of the  
world  
why does the military budget keep  
increasing a large part of it is to feed  
the ravenous military-industrial complex  
and deliver lucrative contracts to  
companies like boeing  
lockheed and raytheon but more recently  
u.s officials have cited the possibility  
of a great power conflict with china  
that kind of talk should alarm us the  
last great power conflict  
though it never devolved into outright  
war was the cold war with the soviet

union

during which time we almost caused  
nuclear annihilation on multiple

occasions

before that it was world war ii if u.s  
officials are gearing up to start  
another war of this magnitude

the world is in for a very bad time with  
this aggressive rhetoric becoming more  
common

the u.s military has been adamant about  
maintaining a fighting force of 500 000  
soldiers

and this requires an intense recruiting  
program

so how does the world's largest military  
entice the next generation of soldiers  
well these days it seems to be with  
cartoons that appropriate inclusive  
language

video games and taking advantage of  
those in poverty

let's start with the video games i'm  
sure you're all familiar with twitch  
if somehow you're not twitch is the  
largest live streaming platform in

operation right now  
they bring in insane numbers of both  
streamers and viewers averaging roughly  
3 million concurrent viewers at any  
given time  
who watch a total of around half a  
billion hours of content per week  
that's a huge audience and a lot of time  
spent on individual streams  
which can run for hours as far as  
demographics go  
the audience skews young and male with  
about 65 percent of viewers being male  
41 between the ages of 16 and 24 and 73  
between the ages of 16 and 34. to  
military recruiters twitch is a dream  
come true  
you have a captive audience of young  
impressionable viewers who tend to  
develop parasocial relationships with  
the streamers they watch  
it's the perfect medium for young  
charismatic recruiters to pitch the  
military to the next generation  
and they know this in 2018 the us army  
launched its own twitch channel as part

of its new more modern approach to  
recruitment

the navy followed suit shortly after in  
the first six months of 2020  
the military had bagged 13 000 new  
recruiting

leads from twitch alone keep in mind  
that many twitch users are underage  
as you only have to be 13 years old to  
make an account

so you have young incredibly malleable  
children watching trained army and navy  
recruiters play games like cod and  
fortnite for hours on end  
while they surreptitiously try to  
convince their viewers to join the  
military

if this sounds incredibly shady and  
predatory that's because it is  
and it gets worse early in their  
streaming endeavors

the army esports mods would ban users  
for asking about u.s war crimes  
until they were eventually forced to  
unblock those people after accusations  
of first amendment violations

then there's the navy claiming that  
their streamers aren't recruiters  
despite the fact that they're required  
to take the same training courses as  
navy recruiters before they're  
considered for the role  
the army even went so far as to just  
straight up lie and put up a link to a  
fraudulent xbox giveaway  
which when clicked instead took you to  
an army recruitment information form  
this was later taken down by twitch  
hassan [ \_\_ ]

one of the most popular leftist  
streamers rightly accused these  
recruitment practices as being predatory  
shout out to hassan by the way thanks  
for boosting my videos you should all go  
watch him if you don't already  
now twitch is just one cog in the modern  
military recruitment machine  
another shameful practice is  
specifically targeting poor students who  
have few opportunities  
back in the 70s the new york times ran a  
story about how

sergeant hard times is the best  
recruiter in the world  
rightly pointing out the fact that in  
times of economic precarity  
people are driven to latch on to  
whatever opportunities they can find  
this is still very much the case today  
when job or life prospects are lacking  
recruiters can weaponize that fear and  
uncertainty to press young people into  
service  
one recent program offers the perfect  
example of how the military targets  
those in precarious conditions  
in what's been dubbed focus 22 the  
pentagon has selected 22 cities which  
have large black and latino populations  
recruiters descend on these cities like  
buzzards stationing themselves in  
schools and public places to try to  
ensnare as many young people as possible  
some cities like baltimore have allowed  
the military to install their  
march to success software on all the  
city's public computers  
this software is meant to look like a



study aid but it also collects user data  
so that recruiters can track down  
anyone who uses it if keeping a database  
of a city's young people sounds bad  
just wait till you hear about the  
jammers database jammers  
or the joint advertising market research  
study is a billion dollar database that  
catalogs the data of over 30 million  
americans between the ages of 16 and 25.  
this database was classified as top  
secret until 2005.

preying on the poor isn't new militaries  
throughout history have used their poor  
as cannon fodder while the rich  
those benefiting from the wars never  
have to send their children to die  
it's a hideous practice and it reflects  
very poorly on this nation that so many  
people feel like they have no  
alternative

so we've seen soldiers trying to ensnare  
underage gamers to become pawns in their  
death machine

and government programs to collect the  
peasants and ship them off to blow up

their fellow human beings on the other  
side of the world  
but there's one more aspect of the  
military's recruitment initiative that  
we should discuss  
and in a surprising twist it's probably  
the one that's gotten the most bad press  
for as long as we've had a military  
there have been propaganda campaigns to  
try to convince citizens to enlist  
for the last couple decades recruitment  
ads have generally looked like something  
out of blackhawk down or call of duty  
big scary guys driving amphibious  
vehicles rappelling out of helicopters  
and running around shooting at bad guys  
we never see  
but in this most recent attempt at  
winning over gen z  
the army has taken a page out of the  
cia's book and appropriated diverse  
inclusive language as a way to say  
hey we're modern and cool we're not just  
a bunch of trigger-happy barbarians  
we're just like you in a five-part ad  
series titled the calling

the army shares what are supposedly  
genuine stories from enlisted soldiers  
but because the military knows that all  
them young people care about is cartoons  
they also animated the ads in a few  
different styles

let's take a look at a few highlights  
from the series

one time i snuck out and stayed three  
days at a friend's place  
when i came home mom wanted to teach me  
to appreciate the life i had by sending  
me to the dominican republic to stay  
with relatives for a year

[Applause]

one day at school i came upon an army  
recruiter

and told him about my goals he took me  
through all their different careers  
and that's when it hit me the army is an  
army of good people

pay close attention to how seemingly  
innocuous statements are phrased  
i was bad so my mom sent me to another  
country to see how bad it is compared to  
the united states

when i came back i realized that the us  
is the best country on earth and the  
army is good because america is good  
so as soon as i turned 17 i asked for my  
dad's blessing to enlist  
but having served in the army during the  
vietnam era  
responding to civil unrest he said no  
he had his reasons i hope his reasons  
were recognition of the fact that the  
vietnam war was  
just one long string of u.s war crimes  
during which period we massacred  
innocent people  
dropped more bombs than during the  
entire second world war  
riddled the land with millions of mines  
rained fire down on civilian populations  
and used chemical weapons which are  
still causing cancer and birth defects  
to this day  
all for a conflict we never should have  
initiated in the first place  
of course by the end of the ad dad is  
proud of his little girl for joining  
anyway

but it was one day during a 9 11

ceremony

i started seeing the army in a new light

over 3 000 students lined the walls and

the balconies of my school

my whole community was there including

firefighters and service members

from every military branch the silent

show of respect for this country

was stephanie i was now determined to

defend

this nation that i called home to not

only be a citizen

but a soldier as well this is another

common tactic

hey remember that bad thing that

happened look how strong it made us

look how respectful everyone is of the

flag and our country i'm gonna join the

army

of course there's no mention of the fact

that 911 was used as justification to

start an unjustifiable war

which claimed over a million lives

destabilized an entire region for

decades

and dragged on for so long that  
americans who enlisted back then  
have now been able to watch their  
children go off to murder the children  
of the people they didn't manage to kill  
the us military-industrial complex is  
very skilled at using the symbology of  
the flag as a way to deflect blame  
promote a victim complex and play up the  
american exceptionalism myth all at the  
same time  
for many people this kind of ad can be  
quite effective  
but the one that got the most attention  
and we'll explore why afterwards  
is this one this is the story of a  
soldier who operates your nation's  
patriot missile defense  
systems  
it begins in california with a little  
girl  
raised by two moms  
i like to think i've been defending  
freedom from an early age  
i needed my own adventures my own  
challenge

and after meeting with an army recruiter  
i found it  
a way to prove my inner strength and  
maybe shatter some stereotypes  
along the way if you take a look at this  
ad on youtube  
or any of them really you'll see that  
they got absolutely eviscerated by the  
viewers  
the like to dislike ratio is among the  
worst i've ever seen  
and of course the comments are turned  
off because there likely wouldn't be a  
single positive one  
why did these ads flop so hard the army  
managed to outsmart itself and alienate  
all of their potential recruits those on  
the political right are all up in arms  
over the woke language  
and outraged at the idea that the army  
is trying to appeal to people who  
clearly don't belong in the military  
though it is funny to watch these  
reactionary losers have their little  
meltdown  
what's more important is why the ads

fell flat for their target audience  
younger more progressive members of gen  
z trying to be more inclusive is good  
acknowledging the validity of all sorts  
of quote non-traditional backgrounds  
is important but it shouldn't be  
surprising that gen z  
the most anti-war anti-capitalist  
generation in decades  
sees right through the propaganda i like  
to think i've been defending freedom  
from a young age  
come on young people know what the us  
military gets up to  
they live on the internet they can find  
plenty of evidence of the mountains of  
war crimes the u.s commits  
they're aware of past military policies  
against gay and trans service members  
but more than that they're aware that  
being allowed to serve in the military  
isn't some great victory for the lgbt  
community  
because no one should want to invade  
other countries and oppress their fellow  
human beings



no matter how hard the military tries to  
rebrand itself as a woke force for good  
freedom and democracy  
no matter how cute they try to make  
missile launchers most young people  
won't fall for it  
they know they're being targeted with  
short eye-catching animated propaganda  
of course these ads will appeal to some  
young people  
and they'll soon find themselves in a  
situation that is nothing like what's  
been presented to them  
and that's a shame it's despicable that  
the military has to steal data corrupt  
underage stream viewers  
target the poor and desperate and try to  
sell a lie to meet their quota of cannon  
fodder for a great power conflict the  
united states so clearly wants  
the military always has and always will  
use shady  
predatory tactics to fill their ranks  
the best we can do is be aware of it  
provide truthful information about what  
joining the military really means

and work towards building a society that  
doesn't funnel the poor  
and the impressionable young into the  
imperialist war machine  
without soldiers to fly their drones  
fire their rockets and drop their bombs  
the military can't function it can't  
bully the rest of the world  
and that sounds pretty good

[Music]

if you'd like to see what great power  
conflict looks like to truly understand  
the horror  
of world war i highly recommend you  
check out apocalypse world war  
ii on curiosity stream it's an  
incredible six-part series about the  
chaos and destruction of the second  
world war  
and it's so important that people  
realize just how capable humans are of  
destroying ourselves  
curiosity stream is an established  
streaming platform with a solid track  
record of caring about great educational  
content

and the financial security of those who  
produce it they've got thousands of  
non-fiction titles from some of the best  
filmmakers in the game

as you probably know youtube doesn't  
treat its creators very well

that's why some of my youtuber friends  
and i teamed up to build nebula  
so we don't have to worry about  
demonetization as

educational creators ourselves we love  
curiosity stream

so we've worked out a deal where if you  
sign up for curiosity stream at the link  
below

you'll also get access to nebula 100  
free that's less than 15 bucks a year  
for both curiosity stream and nebula  
which in my humble opinion is a pretty  
great deal since most of us are still  
waiting for the vaccine

why not spend some time learning about  
fascinating topics on curiosity stream  
or check out nebula's original content  
including my upcoming series on the  
resurgence of fascism

you can also watch all my videos as they  
were intended ad free  
there really is something for everyone  
and by signing up at the link below  
you're helping us produce more content  
without the fear of demonetization  
give curiosity stream a shot and get  
free access to nebula when you sign up  
using the link below  
it really does help support my channel  
and educational creators all across  
youtube if you enjoyed this video and  
you'd like to see more like it  
consider subscribing to stay up to date  
with my latest episodes if you hated it  
go ahead and drop a thumbs down you can  
check out my previous episodes by  
clicking the links on your screen  
thanks for watching and i'll see you  
next week  
[Music]