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## **A Guide to PMC Contracting**

There seems to be one question asked repeatedly in many of the social media groups that never is answered to the satisfaction of those seeking the information, "How do I find, get and keep overseas contract work with a PMC?" Additionally, many articles written on the subject seem to be more 'fluff' than any real information and written by those who do not have any clue as to how to find, get and keep overseas contracts. The purpose of this article is to provide meaningful and effective guidance with the aim of satisfying that request for information, similar to the [Guide to Contracting & Subcontracting Security Services](#) article.

Below, I have reached out to many who have both direct and current experience with contracting overseas who have been generous enough to offer their time to provide much needed insight and guidance on the subject, covering How to Find Open Contracts, How to Find and Connect with Recruiters, Steps to Ensure Application Compliance, Successful Training Tips, Successful Deployment Tips and Coming Back Home/Maintaining Readiness.



"Breaking into the WPS program is both easier and harder than previously. In the old days, you were required to have a SOF background, SWAT Experience or time as an 11B or 0311 with combat experience. Now the requirements have gone down, but the market is flooded with qualified applicants." - [Eric Parker, Trade-Craft Consulting, Inc.](#)

## **-How to Find Open Contracts**

Networking, Social Media groups, company websites...

- SOC: <http://www.soc-usa.com/careers/>
- Global: [www.globalgroup.com](http://www.globalgroup.com)
- Academi: <https://www.academi.com/pages/careers>
- Triple Canopy: <http://www.triplecanopy.com/careers/>
- Aegis: <http://www.aegisworld.com>
- Blue Hackle: [www.bluehackle.com](http://www.bluehackle.com)
- Garda World Gov Services: [www.gwgs-careers.com](http://www.gwgs-careers.com)

"The WPS contract world is huge, there are several companies always actively seeking contractors and there are always guys leaving, ending contract or getting fired. Each company advertises open slots on their specific sites. Constellis Group owns Academi, TC, Olive Group etc. but the individual companies still run their specific recruiting. Aegis and Global are the two companies that are currently, aggressively recruiting, TC and Academi are hard to get into, because they seem to keep the same guys and have a good pool." - [Jaime Marmolejo, Opacus Tactical](#)

"Relationships are key in this business, you need to maintain good communication with recruiting personal, home office staff etc. Even if you are on contract, it pays to know recruiters who are still filling slots for other Task Orders, if not for yourself (if your TO ends) for your friends that you can trust YOUR reputation with. The trust in this dynamic IS a two-way street however, a recruiter needs to be able to trust that you say you are who your paper says you are, that you can do the job that they need filled and that you will be able to go downrange and get that job done. If you barely make it through a “vetting” course, end up down range and fail your first quarterly weapons qualifications than you have done a huge disservice to yourself, the company and the client. In the end you will end up as the “last to pull” card member and stay on the bench NOT getting paid." - [N. Ackerman - Current High Threat Contractor. \(Kurdistan, Baghdad, Africa\)](#)

## **-How to Find and Connect with Recruiters**

Contact directly through the company's website or search for them online, such as on LinkedIn.

"I have found there are numerous ways to get in touch with recruiters. What I have seen the most is word of mouth. Friends I have worked with on other contracts having info on new and/or upcoming opportunities. The more contracts worked...the bigger that network becomes. Social media as well. I'm on my current contract because a recruiter contacted me through LinkedIn and asked if I would be interested in a WPS-DDM position in a location other than the Middle East." - [Chris Sramek, PSS/DDM at Special Operations Consulting, LLC](#)

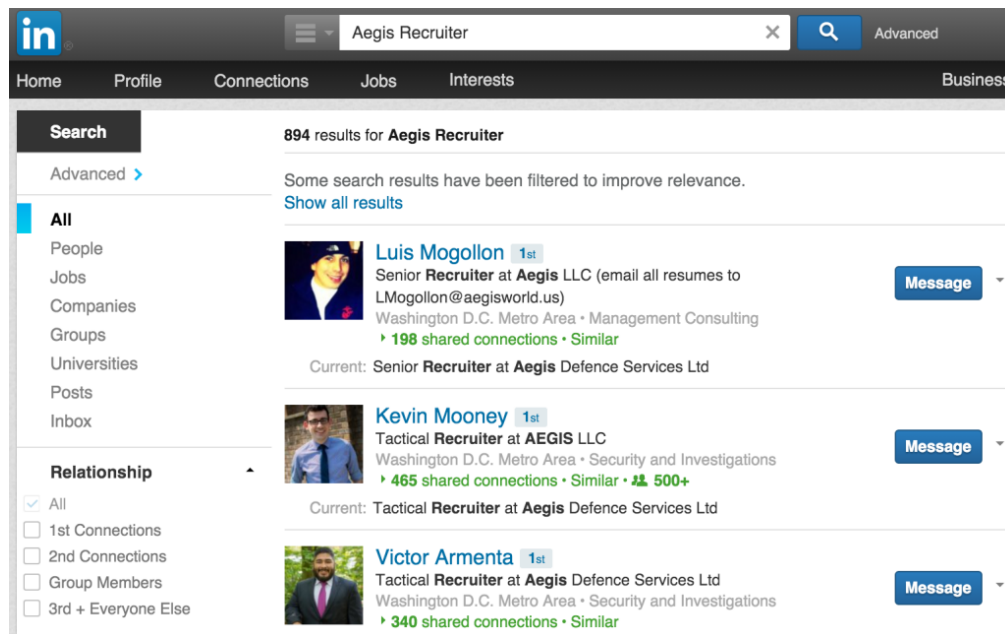
"As far as finding contracts, first find out who is authorized to bid and work a DOS WPS Contract, as not everyone is permitted to even bid on one. The larger legitimate companies are Academi (Working Afghanistan & Israel), and Triple Canopy (Baghdad), and Global in (Basrah). Dyn did have northern Iraq in Irbil, but not sure if that is still open. These are the companies holding movement (PSD) Teams. A few years back when WPPS became WPS, they merged the guard force contracts in with the PSD contracts and one company may hold one and not the other. So find out what the company has, or you may be stuck on a gate. Other companies that have the Guard Force Contracts are SOC and Aegis, these are two that come off the top of my head." - [Eric Parker, Trade-Craft Consulting, Inc.](#)

"Each company website typically has an email for a recruiter..." - [Jaime Marmolejo, Opacus Tactical](#)

"Best form of finding a contract for a first-timer is to get a reference from someone currently working with a company, recruiters rely heavily on this and it bodes well for the team on the ground as a whole when their people on the ground get the type of professionals that THEY have worked for or can vouch for. When contacting recruiters, it is a very fine line between keeping in contact and not keeping up with them during the recruitment process. They are often processing hundreds of applicants at the same time in multiple positions so they can have their applicants "slip" thru the cracks occasionally. It's prudent to keep in contact, follow up, finish paperwork promptly, health exams and whatever else as quickly as you can. Also FSO's (Facility Security Officers) who are responsible for the security clearance process need to be kept in the loop as well. I've known many applicants who have missed a training date, a deployment date because they simply didn't keep up with the paperwork trail. If it's a job worth having, then it's worth making sure all your administration details are taken care of. The PMC world doesn't have time for a boot private who can't complete simple tasks. If you can't keep up than another will fill your training slot and ultimately your deployment slot." - [N. Ackerman - Current High Threat Contractor. \(Kurdistan, Baghdad, Africa\)](#)

"Using LinkedIn as a source to track down recruiters is great. Another option to find positions are sites such as ShooterJobs, BlackIce, SecureAspects etc. They will at least get you on the right

track if not a paying member, once you find the job posting on a non-paid site, apply and then begin your search for the recruiter if you want to try and expedite the process. For non-standard contracts such as Maritime Security etc., the Internet and social media is the best place to find information. Online military forums etc. Sometimes it's hard to find information on a company, but it's easier to find somebody who has worked for them and can share their experience." - Dominic Stam, Former Overseas Contractor



*Searching LinkedIn for recruiters may provide the results you are looking for.*

## **-Steps to Ensure Application Compliance**

Have everything you need ready to go, such as your DD214 and all of your military school certificates, have a valid passport, etc. See the supporting documents below for more info.

"The application process usually starts with a submitting a resume and your DD214. It will be reviewed by a recruiter and if you meet the requirements then will send you a DOS Bio to fill out. This is where you will expand on your experience. Applying for positions such as Shift Leader or Detail Leader, it will have you highlight leadership experience and have a minimal number of years in that capacity. All bio's are sent to DOS for approval. You are also required to

obtain a SECRET security clearance, so if you have a criminal record, you probably aren't the best candidate." - [Eric Parker, Trade-Craft Consulting, Inc.](#)

"First and foremost, READ the requirements of the position(s) you are applying for. Fact check your experience, DD214, and have the certifications for any additional training you have undergone on hand and available to present to your recruiter or company POC in addition to your resume. If you do not meet the requirements for a specific position, do not apply. Time is money to recruiters and it's very simple for them to ensure your future applications for other positions go to the junk mail folder." - Axel Engelhardt-Parales, Contractor at Aegis Defense Services



### **-Successful Training Tips**

"As far as training tips...I would advise people to lose the attitude. The WPS courses are filled with seasoned veterans who have "been there, done that." Unfortunately, I have noticed that some of them feel they can't be taught anything else. It has hurt some in the long run by "labeling" them and, in some cases, not even being picked up by the company that sent them to the training in the first place. It goes back to the basic concept of being a team player. Everyone will be placed in a leadership role during training, and the no brainer is being physically fit. WPS

contracts have physical fitness standards that vary based on the client, they are not hard, though. I've seen a lot of individuals fail out due to failing simple physical fitness standards." - [Chris Sramek, PSS/DDM at Special Operations Consulting, LLC](#)

"The train up is a vetting process, and they will send you home if you are not making the cut. If you do not pass the range on a certain weapons platform, you go home. To include qualifying with Iron sites on an M4, to Eotech, to ACOG with a standard 15.5" barrel. Then do it all over again with a 10" barrel. Driving doesn't usually get anyone cut as everyone as it is more instructional. CQB and PRE portions will get you sent home if you do not seem proficient with your weapon are start flagging everyone in the shoot house. And when you are doing PRE's, do not shoot the Principal when you enter the room. (I've seen that happen). The shoot/No shoot scenarios are critical during the training. Also make sure you are a team player, you can also be peered out by other students. As far as deploying, you will be issued all equipment and gear. You are no longer allowed to use your personal gear, but they are issuing pretty good stuff these days." - [Eric Parker, Trade-Craft Consulting, Inc.](#)

"The training is a "vetting" course it is around a month long and done at several different facilities approved by DOS. The length of the course depends on if weekend training is available and not just MON-FRI, most of the training now a days is with weekends included. Locations are at Academi and a few others. There is a PT test, which is "sometimes" done at the company headquarters to ensure they don't send guys to the training that cannot pass the min-standards. The core minimum standards are the PT test, firearms tests, normal "KPA" Knowledge, Performance & Attitude, which are graded daily and then of course the final FTX performance. In short, the training is not hard, what drops most guys is some of the weapons quals and more specifically the belt-feds, even more specifically the SAW. If you pass the PT test and all the weapons quals, you are in." - [Jaime Marmolejo, Opacus Tactical](#)

"Attitude is huge, having the correct attitude is vital to surviving as well as networking within the contracting community. Whether you did your 4 years and got out, or if you're retired out of SOF, everyone is there for one reason and everyone there met quals to be there." - Dominic Stam, Former Overseas Contractor

"Always have an open mind, even if what you are being taught is something you already know and have done. There is nothing wrong with reinforcing the fundamentals and skills you have acquired over the years. Training should be fun and in the end is what you make of it; you can make it worthwhile or complain. A positive attitude always helps. Also, do yourself a favor and stay physically and mentally prepared. Go to the gym and go over any military pubs you may



have that will help refresh your memory. I still have my 0311 manual from SOI. Never hurts go over once in a while." - Axel Engelhardt-Parales, Contractor at Aegis Defense Services

"Definitely training can vary from company to company. I've had both experiences where a certain company approached training from a very blasé and almost lethargic attitude and another company treated their training course as a true vetting course. To give you an idea of how serious the latter was I started with a training class of around 60 highly paper qualified individuals who all had the required experience, yet at the end only around 30 some odd individuals ended up graduating the almost 3 months long "training" course. Some were SOF operators who were told to leave because they couldn't work well with others, others were guys who simply were not in shape any more, and many were just failing weapons qualifications or training evolutions. While in training you just need to be able to think on your feet, be in good shape, know how to utilize your weapons effectively and work with the team you have been given. If you can do all of that than you are doing all that will be in YOUR power to move to the next level earning that deployment paycheck and working with the team downrange." - [N. Ackerman - Current High Threat Contractor. \(Kurdistan, Baghdad, Africa\)](#)

### **-Successful Deployment Tips**

"Deployment tips...The client is in charge. You piss off the wrong person and you could be on a plane the next day. Also, it is not like the military, most contracts do not have any mail service, so pack accordingly based on deployment time." - [Chris Sramek, PSS/DDM at Special Operations Consulting, LLC](#)

"As of right now, the rotations are 105/35 meaning you work 105 days, then get 35 days off. It is not really favored by anyone and there is talk about going back to 90/30's when the new task order comes out." - [Eric Parker, Trade-Craft Consulting, Inc.](#)

"Most of the guys should have done some tours overseas and at least 1yr of protection work "on paper" so deployments should not be hard for them. WPS runs a 105 days on, 30 days off rotation. 80% of the training in the WPS course, you will not do operationally. (WPS 1.2 is coming out soon and is way overdue on tactics and procedures) what remains the same are the communications within the teams and to the TOC. That way any guy can go on any WPS contract anywhere in the world and most of the procedures stay the same. Each specific team/site will have their own team SOPs, for example, SOC has a team in Africa which operates differently then the TC teams in Baghdad. My biggest tip: SAVE YOUR MONEY, don't go

home and buy the Harley and Ford Raptor. If you get injured, you are done, these are contracts not full time jobs with benefits." - [Jaime Marmolejo, Opacus Tactical](#)

"Keep in mind that not all contracts are WPS (DOS). For example, gear - some provide gear, some allow you to bring our own. Rotation as well - some contracts require a full year overseas with only 3 weeks of R&R while others offer a flexible schedule that allow for 60-90 day trips with 30-60+ days at home." - Dominic Stam, Former Overseas Contractor

"Stay up to date on trends from terrorist/criminal organizations within your area of operations, also knowing what holidays have an impact in your area and how that impacts your day to day activities. It doesn't look good when your client is pressed on time and you did not know that it was an important holiday in your AO and now streets are shut down or traffic is jammed and you have no answer for your client. Most smaller contracts now a days that are not in the Middle East require some sort of knowledge or fluency of the language and will sometimes make or break you obtaining the job. Lastly what is important in some of the contracts that are unarmed due to specific laws in those countries the most important thing you can have and train on is your verbal judo, communication under pressure and sticking to your cover will not only save you a lot of money but will make you look like a rockstar with your client that you diffused a situation that escalated quickly by just simply talking your way out of it." - [Victor Lira, Project Security Manager for Control Risks](#)

"Once deployed on contract, be professional - a point that cannot be stressed enough. Just like the military, you will still see those that complain about everything and good idea fairies. Differentiate yourself by being someone who can be counted upon to do the job, give a tactful opinion but ready to support those in charge after a decision is made. However, know the difference between right and wrong. The following reasons 'I was just following orders' or 'I was just doing what I was told' will not be sufficient for such things as violations of the Law of Armed Conflict and company/client policy. Additionally, put everything in writing from resignation notices to issues within your chain of command. Via email is the best way. After all, it's not what you know but what you can prove." - Axel Engelhardt-Parales, Contractor at Aegis Defense Services

"Some of the templates for the new Task Orders coming out has the rotation schedule like the one in Africa with an 84 day on/42 day off rotation schedule. Almost all contracts have no mail service unless you are lucky enough to end up with a DOD/APO address. So bringing all your items that you know you want/need will involve a through thought process regarding how much luggage you can bring. Buying certain items off the local economy might be an advantage, just



be sure of what is available and what isn't available locally." - [N. Ackerman - Current High Threat Contractor. \(Kurdistan, Baghdad, Africa\)](#)



## **-Coming Back Home and Maintaining Readiness**

Deployment readiness, tax preparedness, what to do with your income, etc.

"My regimen for maintaining readiness while I'm home is staying physically active, maintaining weapons proficiency, and spending as much time with my family as I possibly can. I believe that the latter is most important to me simply because they are the reason I do what I do...to give them a better way of life and ensure that we are well off." - [Chris Sramek, PSS/DDM at Special Operations Consulting, LLC](#)

"Some companies will reimburse students for outside training they receive while on leave. I know Global does. However, it is getting harder to do your requals as some of the areas do not have ranges anymore. So part of your time on leave might have you knocking out your requal stateside at where ever your company resides at. And last but not least, invest your money, avoid the urge to live like a rock star." - [Eric Parker, Trade-Craft Consulting, Inc.](#)

"Shoot on your time off and maintain physically fit, not just for yourself but for your team mates. Remember that this is a JOB, not the military; stay safe by avoiding stupid or dangerous

things, like going out on the road when it is not safe to, or intel suggests you do not; try not to make the client happy at the detriment of security." - [Jaime Marmolejo, Opacus Tactical](#)

"Additional things to keep in mind when accepting a contract, are type of employment...are you going to be an Intermittent Employee on a W2 or are you going to be a1099? These things come into play when it comes time for taxes and how much money you actually bring in for the year."  
- Dominic Stam, Former Overseas Contractor

"Be prepared for when it comes to an end. Nobody should be thinking that their time on WPS is going to have their way into lucrative EP work back home... Coca Cola doesn't have a QRF and AS Solution isn't hiring gate guards. Save your money, don't think you're suddenly going to be a stock picking genius (you're not) and don't trust the shysters who want to "manage" your money. Leave it in the bank, invest in low cost index funds or, if you must, use a fee only planner whose compensation has nothing to do with selling you products or churning your assets. Check <https://www.napfa.org/> for someone in your area. If these terms may as well be the local language you haven't learned a word of, this advice is for you. Have a realistic plan for when you get home. School, a job, something. Don't be the guy sitting around pissing through money in his palatial home he can't afford to heat. Don't buy a Lamborghini you can't afford to service, which has actually happened. I personally bought a small condo, a reasonable car which I'm still driving now and went directly into school on the GI Bill. Not having high overhead allowed me to live off savings and the GI Bill while working a little bit here and there with no pressure to pay the bills." - Matt, Former Overseas Contractor

## **Supporting Documents:**

[Candidate Info Sheet](#)

[Tactical Recruiting Pre-Screen Questionnaire](#)

[WPS BIO Format](#)

[PSS Example Bio Military](#)

[WPS-Counseling](#)