



JOINING THE U.S. MILITARY

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OVERVIEW

- ACTIVITY: Myth vs. Reality
- Learn the Differences Between Each Branch:
 - Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard
- Ways to Enter the Military
- Service Options/Commitments
- Choosing a Job
- Recruiting Process
- Benefits of Service
- Life After the Military
- Resources

MYTH VS. REALITY

MYTH: All military service-members will be deployed to combat/war zones.

REALITY: The military does deploy to combat zones, like Iraq and Afghanistan, but this isn't the case for everyone. Depending on your unit, and job title, you may deploy to other countries in Asia, Europe, and/or South America.

MYTH: There are only combat jobs available in the military.

REALITY: Each branch offers a variety of jobs in areas such as engineering, medicine, culinary, legal, administration, maintenance, tech support, intelligence, combat support, special forces, and infantry.

MYTH: The military is a last resort.

REALITY: Many people join the military with college degrees and various skillsets which can be used in your service.



MYTH VS. REALITY

MYTH: The military is lonely.

REALITY: Being in the military is like being part of a family. You meet people from all over the world that you get to spend time with (in and outside of work) and grow with. You may form some of the closest relationships in the military because you go through so much together.

MYTH: Joining the military will mean putting my life on hold.

REALITY: There are many opportunities to develop your skills, expand your knowledge, and further your education and career while serving in the military.

MYTH: The military is very physically demanding.

REALITY: Yes, the physical fitness requirements are designed to challenge you, but they are not impossible. Each branch has different requirements. Additionally, the standards vary between males and females and will also change as you move across different age brackets.



WHICH BRANCH SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?



When choosing between branches, it's important to know the differences between them. With the exception of the Coast Guard, all military branches belong to the Department of Defense.

AIR FORCE

- Serves to protect and defend the U.S. and its interests through air, space, and cyber space.
- Responsible for all military satellites and controls strategic nuclear ballistic missiles.

ARMY

- Main ground force of the U.S. military.
- Serves to protect and defend the U.S. and its interests with ground troops, armor, artillery, and weapons.

NAVY

- Serves to protect and defend the U.S. and its interests at sea and in the air.
- Support Naval aircraft.
- Transports Marines to combat locations.

WHICH BRANCH SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?



MARINE CORPS

- Serves to protect and defend the U.S. and its interests through amphibious operations; also conduct combat operations.
- Have their own aviation platforms.
- Work with Navy for logistical, administrative, and medical support.

COAST GUARD

- Unlike the other branches, the Coast Guard belongs to the Department of Homeland Security.
- Serves to provide law enforcement, boating safety, sea rescue, and illegal immigration control at sea.

WHICH BRANCH SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?



There are many factors to consider when deciding which branch is right for you:

- Mission of the branch
- Jobs
- Pay
- Locations
- Operational tempo
(deployments/rotations)
- Quality of life



AIR FORCE

LOCATIONS:

The Air Force has many locations throughout the U.S., Europe, and Northwest Asia. Their bases are probably most spread out across the country than the bases of other branches.



OPERATIONAL TEMPO (DEPLOYMENTS/ROTATIONS):

Probably have the lowest op-tempo of all the branches. Airmen who have jobs outside of being a pilot or aircrewmember spend a majority of time at “home” (where they are stationed).

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Air Force has the best quality of life of all the branches. Many of their bases are larger, with shopping centers and amenities that liken it to its own town. Many of the barracks and lodging can be compared to 4- and 5-star hotels. When the Air Force does deploy, they deploy to airfields with higher quality of life, which are similar to the bases within the U.S. Air Force does most of their physical training (PT) on their own time.

ARMY

LOCATIONS:

The Army has bases in 25 states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Korea. Their bases are located in areas where there is a lot of land available for field training and exercises.



OPERATIONAL TEMPO (DEPLOYMENTS/ROTATIONS):

Higher op-tempo, which means soldiers spend more time away from home on deployments or training for deployments. During this time, it is not likely they are able to take leave (vacation) to visit family, unless there is a medical emergency (i.e. Death in the immediate family). Deployments can last up to 18 months.

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Barracks and lodging facilities on base are on the lower scale. Army soldiers typically spend a lot of time conducting field training where they sleep in tents on the ground. Soldiers also PT every morning and have mandatory formations.

NAVY

LOCATIONS:

Most assignments will be on a vessel at sea or along the coast. There are bases in California, Virginia, Washington, and along the Gulf Coast (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas). There are also bases overseas in Spain, Italy, Greece, Japan, etc.



OPERATIONAL TEMPO (DEPLOYMENTS/ROTATIONS):

Sailors can be assigned to sea duty or shore duty. On sea duty, sailors will deploy on vessels or with aviation squadrons for 6 months-1 year. On shore duty, sailors will spend most of their time at home, but also have opportunities to deploy with other units.

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Higher quality of life on bases. Barracks and lodging, as well as dining facilities, are usually nicer. Sailors generally PT on their own time but can also be required to PT with their unit or work center.

MARINE CORPS

LOCATIONS:

Most Marines are stationed in California, North Carolina, Hawaii, the Washington D.C. area, or Japan.



OPERATIONAL TEMPO

(DEPLOYMENTS/ROTATIONS):

Like the Army, Marines have a higher op-tempo than other branches. Most of their time will also be spent on deployment or training for deployment. Deployments usually last anywhere from 9-18 months.

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Again, like the Army, Marines have a lower quality of life, when it comes to barracks and lodging, and field and training conditions. Marines spend a lot of time sleeping in tents or on the ground outside. They also PT and have formations every morning.

COAST GUARD

LOCATIONS:

Like the Navy, most assignments in the Coast Guard will be on a vessel at sea or along the coast.



OPERATIONAL TEMPO

(DEPLOYMENTS/ROTATIONS):

The Coast Guard is primarily concerned with providing protection within U.S. territorial waters, but also have cutter ships that can deploy internationally when necessary. On deployments, Coast Guardsmen will spend months out on sea (usually 2-6 months).

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Quality of life in the Coast Guard is similar to that of the Navy, with comfortable barracks and lodging.

WAYS TO ENTER THE MILITARY

ENLISTED

Basic Training

Air Force

- 8.5 weeks / San Antonio, TX

Army

- 10 weeks / Locations vary by job (Fort Benning, GA; Fort Jackson, Columbia, SC; Fort Knox, Louisville, KY; Fort Leonard Wood, Waynesville, MO; Fort Sill, Lawton, OK)

Navy

- 8 weeks / Great Lakes, IL

Marine Corps

- 12 weeks / Locations vary by place of entry (Parris Island SC; San Diego, CA)

Coast Guard

- 8 weeks / Cape May, NJ

WAYS TO ENTER THE MILITARY

OFFICER

- ❑ Officer Candidate School (OCS) – Upon completion of a 4-year degree. Can also attend as early as Junior year in college
 - ❑ **Air Force** – 9.5 weeks / Montgomery, AL
 - ❑ **Army** – 12 weeks / Fort Benning, GA
 - ❑ **Navy** – 12 weeks / Newport, RI
 - ❑ **Marine Corps** – 10 weeks / Quantico, VA
 - ❑ **Coast Guard** – 17 weeks / New London, CT
- ❑ ROTC (College)
 - ❑ Potentially receive a scholarship to complete your college degree, earning your commission upon completion of your degree.
- ❑ Military Academy
 - ❑ Graduate with a 4-year degree and officer commission
- ❑ Direct Commission – after earning professional degree
 - ❑ Ex. doctors, lawyers, chaplains

SERVICE OPTIONS/COMMITMENTS

ACTIVE DUTY

- Servicemembers on active duty will serve full-time.
 - Receive full active duty pay
 - Possibly receive BAH (housing allowance) and BAS (food allowance) if you live off base
 - Receive full medical benefits through TRICARE
 - Deployments (6 months-18 months)
 - Detachments (anything up to 6 months)
 - Opportunities to receive specialty pay on deployments or when stationed in certain locations.

SERVICE OPTIONS/COMMITMENTS

RESERVE/NATIONAL GUARD

- Each branch has a reserve force that allows you to serve part-time.
- Complete one drill weekend per month and two weeks of annual training per year.
- Hold a full-time career outside of the military.
- Opportunities for deployments are available, depending on current need, servicemember's military job and interest.

National Guard Only:

- There are two National Guard forces: Army National Guard and Air National Guard.
- Community-based forces that protect during times of conflict or natural disaster.



CHOOSING A JOB (MOS/RATE/AFSC)

- ❑ It's a common misconception that there are only combat-related jobs in the military.
- ❑ Each branch has several jobs—known as an MOS, rate, or specialty code—in fields of combat, artillery and weaponry, medicine, engineering, aviation, mechanics, culinary arts, technology, communication, linguistics, administration, legal, meteorology, oceanography, and logistics. For a complete list of jobs available in each branch, visit the branch website.
- ❑ Available jobs vary throughout the year. New jobs will become available every fiscal year (Oct. 1 of each year).
- ❑ Jobs you qualify for depend on your ASVAB score. Sometimes, you will have to meet certain medical and physical fitness standards, or qualify for a specific security clearance.
- ❑ Research jobs you're interested in and ask your recruiter about requirements and current availability of these jobs.

RECRUITING PROCESS

1. Do your research before visiting a recruiter. Learn about available jobs and decide which branch interests you and fits you best.
2. Find your local recruiting office by visiting the branch's official website.
3. Meet with one of the recruiters in the office. It is very important that you feel comfortable with your recruiter. Many of them are knowledgeable and helpful. There are some that may try to rush the process or persuade you to select a specific job that you may not have had any interest in before. Remember, they are there to recruit you; they can't do that without you, so you hold the power. You do not have to work with the first recruiter you meet with, especially if you do not feel comfortable.
4. Ask specific questions. Recruiters may answer questions indirectly, so it is always best to be direct and to never make assumptions about the information they provide.

RECRUITING PROCESS

5. Take the ASVAB if you haven't already. Your ASVAB scores determine job opportunities. The higher the score, the more jobs that become available to you. Take practice tests if you can.
6. Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) – If you have not taken the ASVAB prior to visiting a recruiter, the recruiter may drive you to the nearest MEPS location to take the test. Here, you will also get your physical/medical screening done to determine eligibility for service. You will also select your job at this point.
7. OPTIONAL: Delayed Entry Program (DEP) – Some branches may have a waiting list to go to basic training (depending on availability of the job you want) and will hold you in the DEP until your date of entry (day you go to basic training). In this program, you may have weekly meetings at the recruiting office and/or meet with the others in DEP for physical training.
8. On the day you leave for basic training, you will revisit your local MEPS to conduct your official enlistment (i.e. “swear in” by reciting Oath of Enlistment).

MEPS



BENEFITS OF SERVICE

JOB SECURITY

The U.S. military is not going away. Service members rarely lose their jobs, except in the case of a medical separation or dishonorably discharged (i.e. being kicked out for doing something illegal).

STEADY PAYCHECK

Salary is dependent on the service member's rank. They will receive a paycheck on the 1st and 15th of each month. Service members living off base will also receive a monthly housing allowance (dependent on base location).

HEALTH CARE

Active duty service members are enrolled in TRICARE for full medical, dental, and vision care. Reserve/part-time service members can still be enrolled in TRICARE, but for a small monthly fee.

EDUCATION BENEFITS

All service members have access to either the Post 9/11 GI Bill or Montgomery GI Bill, which can be used upon an honorable separation from active duty. While on active duty, service members can pursue college degrees using Tuition Assistance.

VACATION/LEAVE TIME

Earn 2.5 days of paid time off per month. Receive time off for federal holidays.

BENEFITS OF SERVICE

TRAVEL

Each military branch has bases all over the world, giving service members opportunities to be stationed at any one of these locations (ex. U.S. Japan, Korea, Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain, Australia, etc.). Deployments also provide service members to travel to many countries and explore other cultures.

VALUABLE WORK EXPERIENCE

Learn and develop valuable skillsets, including leadership skills, discipline, effective communication, time management, and many other career-related skills. Log military qualifications to cross-over to the civilian side.

MILITARY DISCOUNTS

Enjoy discounts at many of your favorite shops and restaurants. Free checked luggage, TSA Pre-check, and full access to the USO in airports when travelling. Stores on military bases are all tax-free.

RETIREMENT

After 20 years of active duty service, service members can collect retirement immediately.

LIFE AFTER THE MILITARY

- ❑ Transition from Active Duty to Reserve/National Guard.
- ❑ Use your military training to serve in similar career fields in the civilian sector.
 - ❑ United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP) – provides members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard with opportunity to register for apprenticeships which can be used after their military service.
- ❑ Use your GI Bill to complete a college degree.
- ❑ Change your career field – many of your military skills will crossover to other career fields outside of your experiences.





U.S. AIR FORCE



RESOURCES

Air Force

<https://www.airforce.com>

Army

<https://www.goarmy.com>

Navy

<https://www.navy.com>

Marine Corps

<https://www.marines.com>

Coast Guard

<https://www.gocoastguard.com>



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

ASVAB PRACTICE TESTS

- ❑ 4TESTS: <https://www.4tests.com/asvab>
- ❑ ASVAB Practice Test Online:
<https://asvabpracticetestonline.com/>
 - ❑ Provides breakdown of ASVAB scoring and minimum requirements for each branch.

MILITARY JOBS

- ❑ Operation Military Kids:
<https://www.operationmilitarykids.org/>
 - ❑ Provides list of jobs for every branch of the military, with minimum ASVAB scores for each job

PHYSICAL READINESS

- ❑ The Balance Careers:
<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/us-military-fitness-test-requirements-4117065>
 - ❑ Provides physical fitness standards for each branch of service

REMEMBERING THE OATH



LOCAL RECRUITING OFFICES



ARMY, NAVY, MARINE CORPS

Alderwood Mall

18415 33rd Avenue W, Suite D
Lynnwood, WA 98037
424-778-5929

AIR FORCE

Everett

1203 SE Everett Way Mall , Suite L
Everett, WA 98208
425-355-1966

COAST GUARD

SEATAC – Tukwila Shopping Center

640 Strander Boulevard
Tukwila, WA 98188
425-203-3058