

## TRAINING PIPELINE

Following Basic Military Training, you'll begin Sensor Operator training, which is conducted in three phases. The fast-paced regimen is quite difficult and takes a significant amount of self-motivation. If you study, apply yourself and work hard you'll successfully master the training requirements.

While in the Basic Sensor Operator Course you'll receive your orders for the aircraft you'll be assigned to and the base where you'll undergo Initial Qualification Training. Once you successfully complete that portion of the training, you'll then be assigned to your permanent duty station where you'll complete Mission Qualification Training.

### PHASE 1 UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING

- Aircrew Fundamentals Course  
1 week— JBSA-Lackland, Texas
- Basic Sensor Operator Course  
6 weeks — JBSA-Randolph, Texas

### PHASE 2 INITIAL QUALIFICATION TRAINING

- **MQ-9**  
25 weeks — Holloman AFB, New Mexico
- **RQ-4**  
20 weeks — Beale AFB, California
- **RQ-4**  
20 weeks — Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota

### PHASE 3 MISSION QUALIFICATION TRAINING

Training is conducted at unit specific locations and typically takes up to three months to complete.



## CAREER FIELD BENEFITS

As a Sensor Operator you'll receive benefits including:

- Stable assignments with little or no deployments
- Additional pay such as flight pay and special duty assignment pay
- 30 days vacation with pay each year
- Up to 100 percent college tuition assistance
- Comprehensive medical and dental care
- Tax-free food and housing allowances



## SENSE OF PRIDE

We need Airmen who understand the gravity of the mission and what's expected in the name of national security. You won't be able to talk about what you do or what you see due to the security classification of your work. However, you'll gain a huge sense of pride knowing your efforts are directly helping to protect the men and women on the battlefield, our nation and allies against terrorists and are helping to shape U.S. foreign policy.

Due to requirements of this career field, Sensor Operators incur a six-year enlistment commitment.

For more information about becoming a Sensor Operator, contact your local Air Force recruiter or call 1-800-423-USAF. Also visit [AIRFORCE.COM](http://AIRFORCE.COM).



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**UNITED STATES  
AIR FORCE**

**RPA SENSOR OPERATOR**





“  
 The best part about my job is being able to support the troops on the ground and supporting worldwide operations, While also having the ability to be home with my family.  
 ”  
 - RPA Sensor Operator

## WATCHFUL EYES

Our enemies operate at night trying their best to hide and evade our watchful eyes. They fear us. They know we're near but are unable to see us and they're never certain if we're watching them. They only become aware of our presence at the crucial last minute, just before explosions light up the nighttime skies.

Remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) are vital to the defense of our nation and have quickly become one of the most effective weapon systems in the Air Force. They conduct real-time intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike capabilities on the battlefield and are the number one requested aircraft by ground forces commanders.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Being an Air Force Sensor Operator carries an enormous amount of responsibility. You sit next to the pilot in a ground control station flying the aircraft that may be located half way around the world while also operating top-secret equipment.

You control the camera on the aircraft to see what's happening on the ground from high above. Your ability to process multiple sources of information and interpret data quickly is critical to mission success.

It's not a 9-5 job and the days can be long and intense. All RPA crews rotate schedules from days to swings to mids.

Also, no two days are ever alike. You may observe and record the actions of enemy forces one day while the next day you conduct combat operations by firing hellfire missiles or dropping bombs onto those enemy targets. You're the one responsible for guiding all weapons released from the aircraft.

Although Sensor Operators have traditionally been assigned to RPAs such as the MQ-9 Reaper and the RQ-4 Global Hawk, the Air Force most recently added Sensor Operators to the AC-130 Gunship. It's one of the most powerful artillery firing aircraft in the world that provides close air support and armed reconnaissance to U.S. and allied forces.



# NEVER-CEASING VIGILANCE

REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SENSOR OPERATOR