

Job Opportunities in the Armed Forces

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Significant Points

- Opportunities should be good in all branches of the Armed Forces for applicants who meet designated standards.
- Most enlisted personnel need at least a high school diploma, while officers need a bachelor's or an advanced degree.
- Hours and working conditions can be arduous and vary substantially.
- Some training and duty assignments are hazardous, even in peacetime.

Nature of the Work

Maintaining a strong national defense encompasses such diverse activities as running a hospital, commanding a tank, programming computers, operating a nuclear reactor, or repairing and maintaining a helicopter. The military provides training and work experience in these and many other fields for more than 2.5 million people. More than 1.4 million people serve in the active Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, and more than 1.1 million serve in their Reserve components, and the Air and Army National Guard. The Coast Guard, which is also discussed in this *Handbook* statement, is now part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The military distinguishes between enlisted and officer careers. Enlisted personnel, who make up about 85 percent of the Armed Forces, carry out the fundamental operations of the military in areas such as combat, administration, construction, engineering, health care, and human services. Officers, who make up the remaining 15 percent of the Armed Forces, are the leaders of the military, supervising and managing activities in every occupational specialty of the Armed Forces.

The sections that follow discuss the major occupational groups for enlisted personnel and officers.

Enlisted occupational groups

Administrative careers include a wide variety of positions. The military must keep accurate information for planning and managing its operations. Both paper and electronic records are kept on personnel and on equipment, funds, supplies, and other property of the military. Enlisted administrative personnel record information, type reports, maintain files, and review information to assist military officers. Personnel may work in a specialized area such as finance, accounting, legal affairs, maintenance, supply, or transportation. Some examples of administrative specialists are recruiting specialists, who recruit and place qualified personnel and provide information about military careers to young people, parents, schools, and local communities; training specialists and instructors, who provide the training programs necessary to help people perform their jobs effectively; and personnel specialists, who collect and store information about individuals in the military, including information on their training, job assignments, promotions, and health.

Combat specialty occupations refer to enlisted specialties, such as infantry, artillery, and special forces, whose members operate weapons or execute special missions during combat. Persons in these occupations normally specialize by the type of weapon system or combat operation. These personnel maneuver against enemy forces and position and fire artillery, guns, and missiles to destroy enemy positions. They also may operate tanks and amphibious assault vehicles in combat or scouting missions. When the military has difficult and dangerous missions to perform, they call upon special-operations teams. These elite combat forces maintain a constant state of readiness to strike anywhere in the world on a moment's notice. Team members from the special-operations forces conduct offensive raids, demolitions, intelligence, search-and-rescue missions, and other operations from aboard aircraft, helicopters, ships, or submarines.

Construction occupations in the military include personnel who build or repair buildings, airfields, bridges, foundations, dams, bunkers, and the electrical and plumbing components of these structures. Enlisted personnel in construction occupations operate bulldozers, cranes, graders, and other heavy equipment. Construction specialists also may work with engineers and other building specialists as part of military construction teams. Some personnel specialize in areas such as plumbing or electrical wiring. Plumbers and pipefitters install and repair the plumbing and pipe systems needed in buildings and on aircraft and ships. Building electricians install and repair electrical-wiring systems in offices, airplane hangars, and other buildings on military bases.

Electronic and electrical equipment repair personnel repair and maintain electronic and electrical equipment used in the military. Repairers normally specialize by type of equipment, such as avionics, computer, optical, communications, or weapons systems. For example, electronic instrument repairers install, test, maintain, and repair a wide variety of electronic systems, including navigational controls and biomedical instruments. Weapons maintenance technicians maintain and repair weapons used by combat forces; most of these weapons have electronic components and systems that assist in locating targets and in aiming and firing the weapon.

The military has many *engineering, science, and technical occupations*, whose members require specific knowledge to operate technical equipment, solve complex problems, or provide and interpret information. Enlisted personnel normally specialize in one area, such as space operations, emergency management, environmental health and safety, or intelligence. Space operations specialists use and repair ground-control command equipment having to do with spacecraft, including electronic systems that track the location and operation of a craft. Emergency management specialists prepare emergency procedures for all types of disasters, such as floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes. Environmental health and safety specialists inspect military facilities and food supplies for the presence of disease, germs, or other conditions hazardous to health and the environment. Intelligence specialists gather and study information by means of aerial photographs and various types of radar and surveillance systems.

Health-care personnel assist medical professionals in treating and providing services for men and women in the military. They may work as part of a patient-service team in close contact with doctors, dentists, nurses, and physical therapists to provide the necessary support functions within a hospital or clinic. Health-care specialists normally specialize in a particular area—emergency medical treatment, the operation of diagnostic tools such as x-ray and ultrasound equipment, laboratory testing of tissue and blood

samples, or maintaining pharmacy supplies or patients' records, among others.

Human resources development specialists recruit and place qualified personnel and provide the training programs necessary to help people perform their jobs effectively. Personnel in this career area normally specialize by activity. For example, recruiting specialists provide information about military careers to young people, parents, schools, and local communities and explain the Armed Service's employment and training opportunities, pay and benefits, and service life. Personnel specialists collect and store information about the people in the military, including information on their previous and current training, job assignments, promotions, and health. Training specialists and instructors teach classes and give demonstrations to provide military personnel with the knowledge they need to perform their jobs.

Armed Forces personnel in *machine operator and production occupations* operate industrial equipment, machinery, and tools to fabricate and repair parts for a variety of items and structures. They may operate engines, turbines, nuclear reactors, and water pumps. Often, they specialize by type of work performed. Welders and metalworkers, for instance, work with various types of metals to repair or form the structural parts of ships, submarines, buildings, or other equipment. Survival equipment specialists inspect, maintain, and repair survival equipment such as parachutes and aircraft life support equipment. Dental and optical laboratory technicians construct and repair dental equipment and eyeglasses for military personnel.

Media and public affairs occupations deal with the public presentation and interpretation of military information and events. Enlisted media and public affairs personnel take and develop photographs; film, record, and edit audio and video programs; present news and music programs; and produce graphic artwork, drawings, and other visual displays. Other public affairs specialists act as interpreters and translators to convert written or spoken foreign languages into English or other languages.

Protective service personnel include those who enforce military laws and regulations, provide emergency response to natural and human-made disasters, and maintain food standards. These personnel normally specialize by function. For example, military police control traffic, prevent crime, and respond to emergencies. Other law enforcement and security specialists investigate crimes committed on military property and guard inmates in military correctional facilities. Firefighters put out, control, and help prevent fires in buildings, on aircraft, and aboard ships. Food service specialists prepare all types of food in dining halls, hospitals, and ships.

Transportation and material handling specialists ensure the safe transport of people and cargo. Most personnel within this occupational group are classified according to mode of transportation, such as aircraft, motor vehicle, or ship. Aircrew members operate equipment on board aircraft during operations. Vehicle drivers operate all types of heavy military vehicles, including fuel or water tank trucks, semi-trailers, heavy troop transports, and passenger buses. Quartermasters and boat operators navigate and pilot many types of small watercraft, including tugboats, gunboats, and barges. Cargo specialists load and unload military supplies, using equipment such as forklifts and cranes.

Vehicle and machinery mechanics conduct preventive and corrective maintenance on aircraft, ships, automotive and heavy equipment, heating and cooling systems, marine engines, and powerhouse station equipment. These workers typically specialize by the type of equipment that they maintain. For example, aircraft mechanics inspect, service, and repair helicopters and airplanes. Automotive

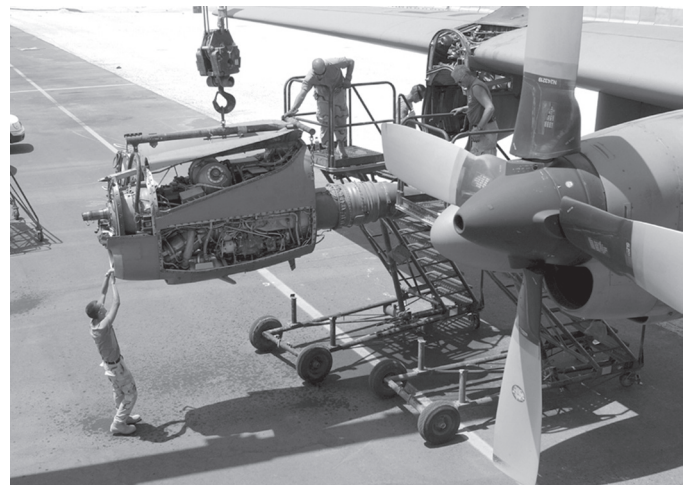
and heavy-equipment mechanics maintain and repair vehicles such as jeeps, cars, trucks, tanks, self-propelled missile launchers, and other combat vehicles. They also repair bulldozers, power shovels, and other construction equipment. Heating and cooling mechanics install and repair air-conditioning, refrigeration, and heating equipment. Marine engine mechanics repair and maintain gasoline and diesel engines on ships, boats, and other watercraft. They also repair shipboard mechanical and electrical equipment. Powerhouse mechanics install, maintain, and repair electrical and mechanical equipment in power-generating stations.

Officer occupational groups

Combat specialty officers plan and direct military operations, oversee combat activities, and serve as combat leaders. This category includes officers in charge of tanks and other armored assault vehicles, artillery systems, special operations forces, and infantry. Combat specialty officers normally specialize by the type of unit that they lead. Within the unit, they may specialize by the type of weapon system. Artillery and missile system officers, for example, direct personnel as they target, launch, test, and maintain various types of missiles and artillery. Special-operations officers lead their units in offensive raids, demolitions, intelligence gathering, and search-and-rescue missions.

Engineering, science, and technical officers have a wide range of responsibilities based on their area of expertise. They lead or perform activities in areas such as space operations, environmental health and safety, and engineering. These officers may direct the operations of communications centers or the development of complex computer systems. Environmental health and safety officers study the air, ground, and water to identify and analyze sources of pollution and its effects. They also direct programs to control safety and health hazards in the workplace. Other personnel work as aerospace engineers to design and direct the development of military aircraft, missiles, and spacecraft.

Executive, administrative, and managerial officers oversee and direct military activities in key functional areas such as finance, accounting, health administration, international relations, and supply. Health services administrators, for instance, are responsible for the overall quality of care provided at the hospitals and clinics they operate. They must ensure that each department works together to provide the highest quality of care. As another example, purchasing and contracting managers negotiate and monitor contracts for



An Air Force mechanic maintains an aircraft.



An Army x-ray technician works with sophisticated equipment.



Navy dentist providing dental care.

the purchase of the billions of dollars worth of equipment, supplies, and services that the military buys from private industry each year.

Health-care officers provide health services at military facilities, on the basis of their area of specialization. Officers who assist in examining, diagnosing, and treating patients with illness, injury, or disease include physicians, registered nurses, and dentists. Other health-care officers provide therapy, rehabilitative treatment, and additional services for patients. Physical and occupational therapists plan and administer therapy to help patients adjust to disabilities, regain independence, and return to work. Speech therapists evaluate and treat patients with hearing and speech problems. Dietitians manage food service facilities and plan meals for hospital patients and for outpatients who need special diets. Pharmacists manage the purchase, storage, and dispensation of drugs and medicines. Physicians and surgeons in this occupational group provide the majority of medical services to the military and their families. Dentists treat diseases and disorders of the mouth. Optometrists treat vision problems by prescribing eyeglasses or contact lenses. Psychologists provide mental health care and also conduct research on behavior and emotions.

Media and affairs officers oversee the development, production, and presentation of information or events for the public. These officers may produce and direct motion pictures, videotapes, and

television and radio broadcasts that are used for training, news, and entertainment. Some plan, develop, and direct the activities of military bands. Public information officers respond to inquiries about military activities and prepare news releases and reports to keep the public informed.

Protective service officers are responsible for the safety and protection of individuals and property on military bases and vessels. Emergency management officers plan and prepare for all types of natural and human-made disasters. They develop warning, control, and evacuation plans to be used in the event of a disaster. Law enforcement and security officers enforce all applicable laws on military bases and investigate crimes when the law has been broken.

Support services officers manage food service activities and perform services in support of the morale and well-being of military personnel and their families. Food services managers oversee the preparation and delivery of food services within dining facilities located on military installations and vessels. Social workers focus on improving conditions that cause social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, racism, and sexism. Chaplains conduct worship services for military personnel and perform other spiritual duties covering the beliefs and practices of all religious faiths

Officers in *transportation occupations* manage and perform activities related to the safe transport of military personnel and material by air and water. Officers normally specialize by mode of trans-

Table 1. Military enlisted personnel by broad occupational category and branch of military service, June 2003

<i>Occupational Group - Enlisted</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Coast Guard</i>	<i>Marine Corps</i>	<i>Navy</i>	<i>Total, all services</i>
Administrative occupations.....	15,175	25,674	1,775	8,642	21,225	72,491
Combat specialty occupations.....	104,876	253	745	33,070	3,316	142,260
Construction occupations.....	15,340	6,261		5,145	5,397	32,143
Electronic and electrical repair occupations.....	14,035	37,155	3,530	16,082	52,094	122,896
Engineering, science, and technical occupations.....	63,531	43,422	720	35,237	41,003	183,913
Health care occupations.....	26,660	17,108	685		23,818	68,271
Human resource development occupations.....	16,202	12,715		6,784	5,510	41,211
Machine operator and precision work occupations.....	4,528	7,783	2,079	1,710	23,485	39,585
Media and public affairs occupations.....	4,552	5,921	131	1,556	5,255	17,415
Protective service occupations.....	24,831	29,516	893	6,086	10,630	71,956
Support services occupations.....	13,687	1,535	1,213	3,704	11,570	31,709
Transportation and material handling occupations.....	54,140	33,835	6,423	23,908	39,272	157,578
Vehicle machinery mechanic occupations.....	48,043	48,433	5,654	18,473	50,266	170,869
Total, by service.....	405,600	269,611	23,848	160,397	292,841	1,152,297

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center East

Table 2. Military officer personnel by broad occupational category and branch of service, June 2003

<i>Occupational Group - Officer</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Coast Guard</i>	<i>Marine Corps</i>	<i>Navy</i>	<i>Total, all services</i>
Combat specialty occupations.....	18,306	5,422	2	3,990	5,626	33,346
Engineering, science, and technical occupations.....	17,368	15,902	1,715	3,044	15,413	53,442
Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations.....	10,139	9,579	388	2,398	8,234	30,738
Health care occupations.....	9,775	9,247	10		6,531	25,563
Human resource development occupations.....	1,369	2,406	247	23	3,807	7,852
Media and public affairs occupations.....	177	503	15	131	932	1,758
Protective service occupations.....	2,174	1,838	172	174	855	5,213
Support services occupations.....	1,500	836		40	1,654	4,030
Transportation occupations.....	12,612	19,710	3,244	6,258	12,679	54,503
Total, by service.....	73,420	65,443	5,793	16,058	55,731	216,445

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center East

portation or area of expertise, because, in many cases, they must meet licensing and certification requirements. Pilots in the military fly various types of specialized airplanes and helicopters to carry troops and equipment and to execute combat missions. Navigators use radar, radio, and other navigation equipment to determine their position and plan their route of travel. Officers on ships and submarines work as a team to manage the various departments aboard their vessels. Ships' engineers direct engineering departments aboard ships and submarines, including engine operations, maintenance, repair, heating, and power generation.

Employment

In 2003, more than 2.5 million people served in the Armed Forces. More than 1.4 million individuals were on active duty in the Armed Forces—about 490,000 in the Army, 377,000 in the Navy, 368,000 in the Air Force, and 179,000 in the Marine Corps. In addition, more than 1.1 million people served in their Reserve components, and the Air and Army National Guard. In addition, 38,000 individuals served in the Coast Guard, which is now part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Table 1 shows the occupational composition of the 1.2 million active-duty enlisted personnel in 2003; table 2 presents similar information for the 216,000 active-duty officers.

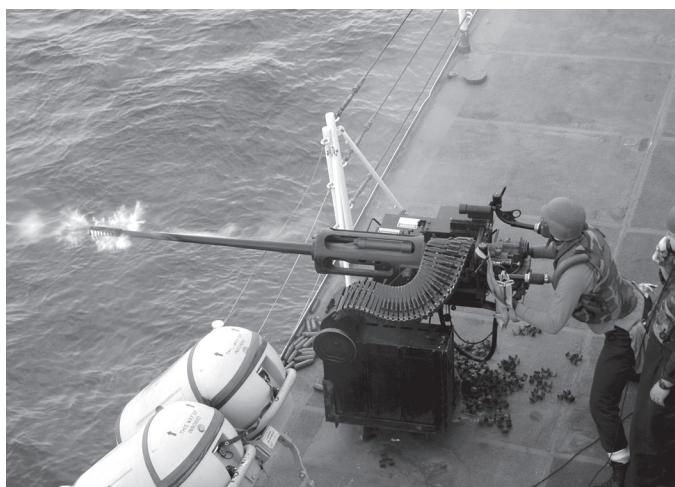
Military personnel are stationed throughout the United States and in many countries around the world. More than half of all military jobs are located in California, Texas, North Carolina, Virginia,

Florida, and Georgia. About 395,000 individuals were stationed outside the United States in 2002, including those assigned to ships at sea. Approximately 104,000 of these were stationed in Europe, mainly in Germany, and another 85,000 were assigned to East Asia and the Pacific area, mostly in Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Qualifications, Training, and Advancement

Enlisted personnel. In order to join the services, enlisted personnel must sign a legal agreement called an enlistment contract, which usually involves a commitment to 8 years of service. Depending on the terms of the contract, 2 to 6 years are spent on active duty, and the balance is spent in the reserves. The enlistment contract obligates the service to provide the agreed-upon job, rating, pay, cash bonuses for enlistment in certain occupations, medical and other benefits, occupational training, and continuing education. In return, enlisted personnel must serve satisfactorily for the period specified.

Requirements for each service vary, but certain qualifications for enlistment are common to all branches. In order to enlist, one must be between 17 and 35 years old, be a U.S. citizen or an alien holding permanent resident status, not have a felony record, and possess a birth certificate. Applicants who are aged 17 must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian before entering the service. Coast Guard enlisted personnel must enter active duty before their 28th birthday, whereas Marine Corps enlisted personnel must not be over the age of 29. Applicants must both pass a written exami-



The Coast Guard is the Nation's leading maritime law enforcement agency.



The Marine Corps embarks on many dangerous missions.

nation—the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery—and meet certain minimum physical standards, such as height, weight, vision, and overall health. All branches of the Armed Forces require high school graduation or its equivalent for certain enlistment options. In 2003, nearly 9 out of 10 recruits were high school graduates.

People thinking about enlisting in the military should learn as much as they can about military life before making a decision. Doing so is especially important if you are thinking about making the military a career. Speaking to friends and relatives with military experience is a good idea. Find out what the military can offer you and what it will expect in return. Then, talk to a recruiter, who can determine whether you qualify for enlistment, explain the various enlistment options, and tell you which military occupational specialties currently have openings. Bear in mind that the recruiter's job is to recruit promising applicants into his or her branch of military service, so the information that the recruiter gives you is likely to stress the positive aspects of military life in the branch in which he or she serves.

Ask the recruiter for the branch you have chosen to assess your chances of being accepted for training in the occupation of your choice, or, better still, take the aptitude exam to see how well you score. The military uses this exam as a placement exam, and test scores largely determine an individual's chances of being accepted into a particular training program. Selection for a particular type of training depends on the needs of the service, your general and technical aptitudes, and your personal preference. Because all prospective recruits are required to take the exam, those who do so before committing themselves to enlist have the advantage of knowing in advance whether they stand a good chance of being accepted for training in a particular specialty. The recruiter can schedule you for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery without any obligation. Many high schools offer the exam as an easy way for students to explore the possibility of a military career, and the test also affords an insight into career areas in which the student has demonstrated aptitudes and interests.

If you decide to join the military, the next step is to pass the physical examination and sign an enlistment contract. Negotiating the contract involves choosing, qualifying for, and agreeing on a number of enlistment options, such as the length of active-duty time, which may vary according to the option. Most active-duty programs have first-term enlistments of 4 years, although there are some 2-, 3-, and 6-year programs. The contract also will state the date of enlistment and other options—for example, bonuses and the types of training to be received. If the service is unable to fulfill any of its obligations under the contract, such as providing a certain kind of training, the contract may become null and void.

All branches of the Armed Services offer a “delayed-entry program” by which an individual can delay entry into active duty for up to 1 year after enlisting. High school students can enlist during their senior year and enter a service after graduation. Others choose this program because the job training they desire is not currently available, but will be within the coming year, or because they need time to arrange their personal affairs.

Women are eligible to enter most military specialties; for example, they may become mechanics, missile maintenance technicians, heavy-equipment operators, and fighter pilots, or they may enter into medical care, administrative support, and intelligence specialties. Generally, only occupations involving direct exposure to combat are excluded.

People planning to apply the skills gained through military training to a civilian career should first determine how good the prospects are for civilian employment in jobs related to the military spe-

cialty that interests them. Second, they should know the prerequisites for the related civilian job. Because many civilian occupations require a license, certification, or minimum level of education, it is important to determine whether military training is sufficient for a person to enter the civilian equivalent or, if not, what additional training will be required. Other *Handbook* statements discuss the job outlook, training requirements, and other aspects of civilian occupations for which military training and experience are helpful. Additional information often can be obtained from school counselors.

Following enlistment, new members of the Armed Forces undergo recruit training, better known as “basic” training. Through courses in military skills and protocol recruit training provides a 6- to 12-week introduction to military life. Days and nights are carefully structured and include rigorous physical exercise designed to improve strength and endurance and build each unit's cohesion.

Following basic training, most recruits take additional training at technical schools that prepare them for a particular military occupational specialty. The formal training period generally lasts from 10 to 20 weeks, although training for certain occupations—nuclear power plant operator, for example—may take as long as a year. Recruits not assigned to classroom instruction receive on-the-job training at their first duty assignment.

Many service people get college credit for the technical training they receive on duty, which, combined with off-duty courses, can lead to an associate degree through programs in community colleges such as the Community College of the Air Force. In addition to on-duty training, military personnel may choose from a variety of educational programs. Most military installations have tuition assistance programs for people wishing to take courses during off-duty hours. The courses may be correspondence courses or courses in degree programs offered by local colleges or universities. Tuition assistance pays up to 75 percent of college costs. Also available are courses designed to help service personnel earn high school equivalency diplomas. Each branch of the service provides opportunities for full-time study to a limited number of exceptional applicants. Military personnel accepted into these highly competitive programs—in law or medicine, for example—receive full pay, allowances, tuition, and related fees. In return, they must agree to serve an additional amount of time in the service. Other highly selective programs enable enlisted personnel to qualify as commissioned officers through additional military training.

Warrant officers. Warrant officers are technical and tactical leaders who specialize in a specific technical area; for example, Army aviators make up one group of warrant officers. The Army Warrant Officer Corps constitutes less than 5 percent of the total Army. Although the Corps is small in size, its level of responsibility is high. Its members receive extended career opportunities, worldwide leadership assignments, and increased pay and retirement benefits. Selection to attend the Warrant Officer Candidate School is highly competitive and restricted to those with the rank of E5 or higher (table 3.)

Officers. Officer training in the Armed Forces is provided through the Federal service academies (Military, Naval, Air Force, and Coast Guard); the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program offered at many colleges and universities; Officer Candidate School (OCS) or Officer Training School (OTS); the National Guard (State Officer Candidate School programs); the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences; and other programs. All are highly selective and are good options for those wishing to make the military a career. Persons interested in obtaining training through the Federal service academies must be single to enter and graduate, while those seeking training through OCS, OTS, or ROTC need not

be single. Single parents with one or more minor dependents are not eligible to become commissioned officers.

Federal service academies provide a 4-year college program leading to a bachelor-of-science degree. Midshipmen or cadets are provided free room and board, tuition, medical and dental care, and a monthly allowance. Graduates receive regular or reserve commissions and have a 5-year active-duty obligation, or more if they are entering flight training.

To become a candidate for appointment as a cadet or midshipman in one of the service academies, applicants are required to obtain a nomination from an authorized source, usually a member of Congress. Candidates do not need to know a member of Congress personally to request a nomination. Nominees must have an academic record of the requisite quality, college aptitude test scores above an established minimum, and recommendations from teachers or school officials; they also must pass a medical examination. Appointments are made from the list of eligible nominees. Appointments to the Coast Guard Academy, however, are based strictly on merit and do not require a nomination.

ROTC programs train students in about 950 Army, approximately 70 Navy and Marine Corps, and around 1,000 Air Force units at participating colleges and universities. Trainees take 2 to 5 hours of military instruction a week, in addition to regular college courses. After graduation, they may serve as officers on active duty for a stipulated period. Some may serve their obligation in the Reserves

or National Guard. In the last 2 years of a ROTC program, students receive a monthly allowance while attending school, as well as additional pay for summer training. ROTC scholarships for 2, 3, and 4 years are available on a competitive basis. All scholarships pay for tuition and have allowances for subsistence, textbooks, supplies, and other costs.

College graduates can earn a commission in the Armed Forces through OCS or OTS programs in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and National Guard. These officers generally must serve their obligation on active duty. Those with training in certain health professions may qualify for direct appointment as officers. In the case of persons studying for the health professions, financial assistance and internship opportunities are available from the military in return for specified periods of military service. Prospective medical students can apply to the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences, which offers free tuition in a program leading to a doctor-of-medicine (M.D.) degree. In return, graduates must serve for 7 years in either the military or the U.S. Public Health Service. Direct appointments also are available for those qualified to serve in other specialty areas, such as the judge advocate general (legal) or chaplain corps. Flight training is available to commissioned officers in each branch of the Armed Forces. In addition, the Army has a direct enlistment option to become a warrant officer aviator.

Table 3. Military rank and employment for active duty personnel, June 2003

Grade		Rank and title			Total Employment
Army		Navy and Coast Guard	Air Force	Marine Corps	
Commissioned officers:					
O-10	General	Admiral	General	General	35
O-9	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	126
O-8	Major General	Rear Admiral Upper	Major General	Major General	282
O-7	Brigadier General	Rear Admiral Lower	Brigadier General	Brigadier General	446
O-6	Colonel	Captain	Colonel	Colonel	11,884
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	28,565
O-4	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Major	Major	44,501
O-3	Captain	Lieutenant	Captain	Captain	69,184
O-2	1st Lieutenant	Lieutenant (JG)	1st Lieutenant	1st Lieutenant	29,416
O-1	2nd Lieutenant	Ensign	2nd Lieutenant	2nd Lieutenant	28,597
Warrant officers:					
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	504
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	2,082
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	4,385
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	6,118
W-1	Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer	—	Warrant Officer	2,603
Enlisted personnel:					
E-9	Sergeant Major	Master Chief Petty Officer	Chief Master Sergeant	Sergeant Major	10,869
E-8	1st Sergeant/Master Sergeant	Senior Chief Petty Officer	Senior Master Sergeant	Master Sergeant/1st Sergeant	26,545
E-7	Sergeant First Class	Chief Petty Officer	Master Sergeant	Gunnery Sergeant	100,002
E-6	Staff Sergeant	Petty Officer 1st Class	Technical Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	175,281
E-5	Sergeant	Petty Officer 2nd Class	Staff Sergeant	Sergeant	251,122
E-4	Corporal/Specialist	Petty Officer 3rd Class	Senior Airman	Corporal	268,606
E-3	Private First Class	Seaman	Airman 1st Class	Lance Corporal	218,219
E-2	Private	Seaman Apprentice	Airman	Private 1st Class	83,423
E-1	Private	Seaman Recruit	Airman Basic	Private	53,211

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense

Each service has different criteria for promoting personnel. Generally, the first few promotions for both enlisted and officer personnel come easily; subsequent promotions are much more competitive. Criteria for promotion may include time in service and in grade, job performance, a fitness report (supervisor's recommendation), and the passing of written examinations. People who are passed over for promotion several times generally must leave the military. Table 3 shows the officer, warrant officer, and enlisted ranks by service.

Job Outlook

Opportunities should be good for qualified individuals in all branches of the Armed Forces through 2012. Many military personnel retire with a pension after 20 years of service, while they still are young enough to start a new career. More than 365,000 enlisted personnel and officers must be recruited each year to replace those who complete their commitment or retire. Since the end of the draft in 1973, the military has met its personnel requirements with volunteers. When the economy is good and civilian employment opportunities generally are more favorable, it is more difficult for all the services to meet their recruitment quotas. By contrast, it is much easier to do so during a recession.

America's strategic position is stronger than it has been in decades. Despite reductions in personnel due to the elimination of the threat from Eastern Europe and Russia, the number of active-duty personnel is expected to remain roughly constant through 2012. However, recent conflicts in other countries and the resulting strain on the Armed Forces may lead to an increasing number of active-duty personnel. The Armed Forces' current goal is to maintain a sufficient force to fight and win two major regional conflicts at the same time. Political events, however, could cause these plans to change.

Educational requirements will continue to rise as military jobs become more technical and complex. High school graduates and applicants with a college background will be sought to fill the ranks of enlisted personnel, while virtually all officers will need at least a bachelor's degree and, in some cases, an advanced degree as well.

Earnings

The earnings structure for military personnel is shown in table 4. Most enlisted personnel started as recruits at Grade E-1 in 2003; however, those with special skills or above-average education started as high as Grade E-4. Most warrant officers had started at Grade W-1 or W-2, depending upon their occupational and academic qualifications and the branch of service of which they were a member, but warrant officer is not an entry-level occupation and, consequently, these individuals all had previous military service. Most commissioned officers started at Grade O-1; some with advanced education started at Grade O-2, and some highly trained officers—for example, physicians and dentists—started as high as Grade O-3. Pay varies by total years of service as well as rank. Because it usually takes many years to reach the higher ranks, most personnel in higher ranks receive the higher pay rates awarded to those with many years of service.

In addition to receiving their basic pay, military personnel are provided with free room and board (or a tax-free housing and subsistence allowance), free medical and dental care, a military clothing allowance, military supermarket and department store shopping privileges, 30 days of paid vacation a year (referred to as leave), and travel opportunities. In many duty stations, military personnel may receive a housing allowance that can be used for off-base housing. This allowance can be substantial, but varies greatly by rank and duty station. For example, in July 2003, the housing allowance for an E-4 with dependents was \$505 per month; for a comparable in-

Table 4. Military basic monthly pay by grade for active duty personnel, June 1, 2003

Years of service

Grade	Less than 2	Over 4	Over 8	Over 12	Over 16	Over 20
O-10	—	—	—	—	—	\$11,874.90
O-9	—	—	—	—	—	10,563.60
O-8	\$7,474.50	\$7,927.20	\$8,468.70	\$8,868.90	\$9,238.20	10,008.90
O-7	6,210.90	6,739.20	7,120.80	7,559.40	8,468.70	9,051.30
O-6	4,603.20	5,388.9	5,641.20	5,672.1	6,564.30	7,233.30
O-5	3,837.60	4,678.50	4,977.00	5,403.00	5,991.90	6,329.10
O-4	3,311.10	4,145.70	4,637.70	5,201.40	5,471.10	—
O-3	2,911.20	3,883.50	4,273.50	4,623.30	—	—
O-2	2,515.20	3,410.00	—	—	—	—
O-1	2,183.70	2,746.80	—	—	—	—
W-5	—	—	—	—	—	5,169.30
W-4	3,088.10	3,420.60	3,733.50	4,044.60	4,356.00	4,664.40
W-3	2,747.10	3,017.70	3,281.70	3,580.50	3,915.60	4,201.50
W-2	2,416.50	2,763.00	2,993.10	3,264.00	3,453.90	3,705.90
W-1	2,133.90	2,501.10	2,782.20	3,006.90	3,203.40	3,409.50
E-9	—	—	—	3,645.00	3,687.00	4,180.80
E-8	—	—	2,975.40	3,141.30	3,342.00	3,625.50
E-7	2,068.50	2,428.20	2,667.90	2,838.30	3,066.30	3,182.70
E-6	1,770.60	2,117.10	2,400.90	2,562.30	2,663.10	2,709.60
E-5	1,625.40	1,903.50	2,151.90	2,283.30	2,283.30	—
E-4	1,502.70	1,749.30	1,824.00	—	—	—
E-3	1,356.90	1,528.80	—	—	—	—
E-2	1,290.00	—	—	—	—	—
E-1 4mos+	1,150.80	—	—	—	—	—
E-1 <4mos	1,064.70	—	—	—	—	—

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense — Defense Finance and Accounting Service

dividual without dependents, it was \$353. The allowance for an O-4 with dependents was \$961 per month; for a person without dependents, it was \$836. Other allowances are paid for foreign duty, hazardous duty, submarine and flight duty, and employment as a medical officer. Athletic and other facilities—such as gymnasiums, tennis courts, golf courses, bowling centers, libraries, and movie theaters—are available on many military installations. Military personnel are eligible for retirement benefits after 20 years of service.

The Veterans Administration (VA) provides numerous benefits to those who have served at least 2 years in the Armed Forces. Veterans are eligible for free care in VA hospitals for all service-related disabilities, regardless of time served; those with other medical problems are eligible for free VA care if they are unable to pay the cost of hospitalization elsewhere. Admission to a VA medical center depends on the availability of beds, however. Veterans also are eligible for certain loans, including loans to purchase a home. Veterans, regardless of health, can convert a military life insurance policy to an individual policy with any participating company in the veteran's State of residence. In addition, job counseling, testing, and placement services are available.

Veterans who participate in the New Montgomery GI Bill Program receive educational benefits. Under this program, Armed Forces personnel may elect to deduct up to \$100 a month from their pay during the first 12 months of active duty, putting the money toward their future education. Veterans who serve on active duty for more than 2 years or who put in 2 years' active duty plus 4 years

in the Selected Reserve will receive \$528 a month in basic benefits for 36 months. Those who enlist and serve for 2 years will receive \$429 a month for 36 months. In addition, each service provides its own contributions to the enlistee's future education. The sum of the amounts from all these sources becomes the service member's educational fund. Upon separation from active duty, the fund can be used to finance educational costs at any VA-approved institution. Among those institutions which are approved by the VA are many vocational, correspondence, certification, business, technical, and flight-training schools; community and junior colleges; and colleges and universities.

Sources of Additional Information

Each of the military services publishes handbooks, fact sheets, and pamphlets describing entrance requirements, training and advancement opportunities, and other aspects of military careers. These publications are widely available at all recruiting stations, at most State employment service offices, and in high schools, colleges, and public libraries. Information on educational and other veterans' benefits is available from VA offices located throughout the country.

In addition, the Defense Manpower Data Center, an agency of the U.S. Department of Defense, publishes *Military Career Guide Online*, a compendium of military occupational, training, and career information designed for use by students and jobseekers. This information is available on the Internet: <http://www.todaysmilitary.com>