



Military Career Feature

Government Military Jobs

United States government jobs in the military comprise a vast number of jobs. They not only include **military officers** and personnel, but military staff such as chaplains, contractors, physicians, and cooks. This article will hone in on military officer jobs, though it is noteworthy that any job in the government military demands a series of physical and intelligence exams, as well as thorough background checks. Each test screens for the ablest candidates to serve the government and to help ensure national security.

Those who want to embark on a **military career** first enlist in government-run training programs. Each military branch has recruiting offices scattered widely throughout all fifty states. It is a good idea for any person pondering a **military** career to visit a recruiting office to learn more about the commitment demanded by the military. To enlist, military applicants consult with recruiters to learn the parameters of the enlistment contract, which legally binds the applicant to about eight years of military service. This eight-year commitment is halved into about four to six years of active-duty service and two to four years of National Guard or Reserves service. This contract often includes a compensation package made up of health insurance, cash bonuses, occupational training, and adult education.

To become a military officer, candidates must have a bachelor's degree. Officer applicants typically apply to either the United States Military Academy (also known as West Point), or to an Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program located at many colleges and universities. These programs allow students to supplement their bachelor's degree with **military training**. Many officer candidates opt for these collegiate study programs because their ROTC admission qualifies them for merit-based scholarships and other financial aid. Moreover, ROTC graduates achieve officer status directly after graduation. Competition for admission to West Point is stiff to the point that recommendation by a U.S. senator or representative is the determining factor for a candidate's acceptance. However, those who graduate from West Point immediately earn commissions as Second Lieutenants.

College graduates who have not graduated from an ROTC program and want to become military officers may apply to Officer Candidate School (OCS) or Officer Training School (OTS). These programs last for several weeks and specially train students to become military officers. In these programs, candidates first undergo nine weeks of Basic Training, an intensive program that stretches candidates to their physical

and mental limits. It is intended to introduce students to standard military situations and prepare them for the rigors of being Army officers.

After graduation from Basic Training, officer candidates attend both classroom and field courses at Fort Benning, GA. There they are broken up into squads and pass through three progressive phases. They train under leaders who give them constructive feedback on their development. This candidate program culminates in a final fifteen-day training mission on the field, whereby they gain their candidacy and receive their officer commissions based on their skills profiles. It is part of their commitment to OCS that they serve their commissions on either an Active-Army or Army-Reserve basis for a number of years.

Newly commissioned officers are often Second Lieutenants. Second Lieutenant is the first rank above a Private, the rank received by newly enlisted military members. A Second Lieutenant is a **military officer** eligible to lead a platoon (each consisting of sixteen to forty-four soldiers) into battle, in both the Army and the Marine Corps. In the Air Force, the Second Lieutenant acts as a flight commander for a group of flights. In the Navy, the Second Lieutenant is called an Ensign, though their authority status does not vary.

After eighteen to twenty-four months of service, the Second Lieutenant will usually receive promotion to First Lieutenant. This position does not significantly expand leadership, but makes him or her eligible for higher pay. However, leadership responsibilities increase with the ranking of Captain, which designates the commanding of a company-sized group of soldiers (seventy-five to two hundred soldiers). In the Navy, the rank of Captain denotes the more senior responsibility of commanding an entire ship.

Following the Captain ranking, officers can respectively advance to the ranks of Major, Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, Brigadier General, Major General, Lieutenant General, and



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General. The Air Force and the Marine Corps both share these rankings, though the Navy uses different names to connote greater or lesser responsibility. Naturally, advancement to the higher ranks is reserved to those who prove their mettle in battle, with Generals achieving their ranking by the President of the United State's personal appointment.

In return for serving their country at mortal risk, military officers enjoy not only a steady source of income but free lodgings (when they are on-base), along with free health and dental insurance. They are also given shopping bonuses, thirty days of paid vacation per year (military leave), and housing allowances for when they live off-base. Furthermore, they are eligible for the Veterans Association (VA) after serving twenty-four consecutive months. The VA provides them with free medical care in VA hospitals around the country if they are seriously injured or disabled. In addition, military personnel may receive insurance benefits and job placement services to help them readapt to non-military life.

Payment for military officers depends entirely on their rank and military career. A Private makes about \$1,200 per month for the first two years of service, while a Second Lieutenant makes about \$2,500 per month for that same period. For each increase in rank after Second Lieutenant, a military officer receives about a \$500 per month raise. Moreover, each additional two years of service adds another \$500 of pay.

Military job outlook is extremely favorable in the U.S. military. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that job growth will remain steady through 2016. Naturally, a sudden eruption of warfare could induce a spike in military hiring. On the other hand, military job growth may stall when the economy is thriving and there is less urge for people to seek stable jobs in the military. Military jobs are also expected to become more competitive due to new requirements in technical knowledge.

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