

Military Officer

Lead service members, take legal responsibility for them and for the mission, and sign away years of your own choices to do it.

TYPICAL PAY

\$63,979

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$48k to \$94k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Bases in the United States and overseas, ships, aircraft, headqua...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Grades, fitness and a clean record. Academy and scholarship applications look at leadership and sport as hard as they look at your transc...
- 2 Pick your route** Senior year
A service academy, a ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program at a normal university, your own degree followed by Officer Candid...
- 3 Earn the degree** 4 years
Any bachelor's degree works for most branches. Academy and scholarship students do military training alongside classes all four years.
- 4 Commissioning** 0 to 3 months
Academy and scholarship students commission at graduation. Everyone else goes through Officer Candidate School, about 12 weeks, then...
- 5 Branch or specialty school** 3 months to 2 years
Training for the job you were assigned: infantry, logistics, cyber, intelligence, flight school. A few months to well over a year.
- 6 First unit** Ongoing
You arrive responsible for a platoon, a division on a ship or a section, usually in your early twenties.

Pros and cons

- + Real responsibility in your early twenties that no civilian job offers
- + A degree that can be free, and a pension after 20 years
- + Health care, housing allowance and paid graduate school
- You cannot resign. You serve out the obligation you signed
- Deployment, danger and time away from everyone you love
- The service decides where you live and moves you every few years

Optional boosts

Flight school. Cyber and intelligence branches. Special operations selection. Funded graduate school.

Good to know

Pay is public, and identical across branches

The basic pay table is published by the Department of Defense and applies to the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force and Coast Guard alike. You can look up what any officer of any rank earns...

The academies pay you to attend

There is no tuition at West Point, Annapolis or the Air Force Academy, and cadets and midshipmen receive a stipend of more than \$10,000 a year. Admission runs through a congressional nomination as well as a...

Where these numbers come from

O*NET OnLine: Military Officer Special and Tactical Operations Leaders, All Other (55-1019.00)

United States Army: money and pay charts

United States Army: become an officer

Military OneSource: military pay guide

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/military-officer>



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