



State of California – Military Department  
California Cadet Corps

# CURRICULUM ON CITIZENSHIP

Strand C3: College & Careers

Level 11

This Strand is composed of the following components:

- A. College
- B. Military Careers**
- C. Civilian Careers & Jobs



*Unlocking a door to the future*

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## B. Military Careers

### OBJECTIVES

#### **DESIRED OUTCOME (Followership) / PRACTICUM B**

*90% of Unit Cadets understand the opportunities available for a career (short or long-term) in the U.S. military services, enlisted or officer, and can make an informed decision about pursuing those opportunities. Understand their options and how best to attain the desired career.*

1. Discuss the career opportunities offered by the military and know where to find career information.
2. Discuss how to join the military and list the major requirements an enlistee will have to meet.
3. Understand the realities of dealing with a military recruiter.
4. List the five US military academies and discuss the process of applying for admission.
5. Discuss ROTC as a commissioning option for an active or reserve military career and how the ROTC programs work in the timing of your college degree.
6. Know where to find ROTC information.
7. Discuss the option of a reserve component military career.
8. List the benefits and drawbacks of the reserves.
9. Discuss how to enlist or attain a commission in the reserves.

## B1. Careers in the Military

The purpose of this lesson is not to orient you to all the careers in the military. That would take too long and we would not be able to keep it up to date. There is an abundance of information available to someone joining the military and the careers available. We will discuss military careers in a more general way, and point cadets who are interested in pursuing a military career to the right resource.

In 2017, Department of Defense databases listed 24 broad career fields throughout the U.S. armed services, within which there are hundreds of specialties and thousands of different jobs. The table below breaks down the career field opportunities:

<b>Accounting, Budget &amp; Finance</b>	<b>Arts, Communications, Media &amp; Design</b>	<b>Aviation</b>
<b>Business Administration &amp; Operations</b>	<b>Combat Operations</b>	<b>Communications Equipment Technicians</b>
<b>Construction, Building &amp; Extraction</b>	<b>Counseling, Social Work &amp; Human Services</b>	<b>Cyber</b>
<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>Engineering &amp; Scientific Research</b>	<b>Environmental Health &amp; Safety</b>
<b>Health Care Practitioners</b>	<b>Human Resources Management &amp; Services</b>	<b>Information Technology, Computer Science &amp; Mathematics</b>
<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>International Relations, Linguistics &amp; Other Social Sciences</b>	<b>Law Enforcement, Security, &amp; Protective Services</b>
<b>Legal Professions &amp; Support Services</b>	<b>Mechanic &amp; Repair Technicians</b>	<b>Medical &amp; Clinical Technicians</b>
<b>Naval &amp; Maritime Operations</b>	<b>Personal &amp; Culinary Services</b>	<b>Transportation, Supply &amp; Logistics</b>

There are two major career divisions in the military – officer and enlisted personnel. The Army also has warrant officers as a third category. About 18% of those in the military are officers, and 82% are enlisted. Enlisting in the military is quite different from obtaining a commission to be an officer. We will cover both in Lessons B2, B3, B4, and B5. It is important to understand the military systems and the factors that influence them, otherwise you are much more likely to end up doing a job you don't really want to do in a place you don't really want to be!

The military service is, with the addition of its civilian workforce, a self-sustaining entity similar to society at large. Not every civilian career is represented in the military, but many are. The military can be a great way to get initial training and experience in a field you are interested in. You can then decide

to continue serving in the military, or take your experience to a civilian employer. Not every job in the military translates to a job in the civilian workforce – there is not much call for infantry or field artillery experience on a jobsite. But even those jobs give you skills, like leadership, dependability, reliability, and good work ethic. Many employers consider these more important than direct experience.

**EXPLORE YOUR MILITARY CAREER OPTIONS:**

- **ARMY:** <https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/help-choosing-a-career-job/army-career-explorer.html>
- **NAVY:** <https://www.navy.com/careers.html>
- **AIR FORCE:** <https://www.airforce.com/careers>
- **MARINE CORPS:** <http://www.militaryspot.com/marines/marine-corps-jobs>
- **COAST GUARD:** <https://www.goastguard.com/Careers>

The military accesses people into its ranks – enlisted and officer – through the recruiting services. Although a tremendous amount of information is available online, you should eventually talk with a recruiter from the branch of service you are interested in. Do your homework before you talk to a recruiter. Understand the system. Know what you want and what they have to offer, and know what questions to ask.

While there are thousands of jobs in the military services, not all are available to you. Some jobs have too many qualified service members in that position, or the job is being phased out. Some jobs are in need of qualified personnel, and may even offer a bonus if you are willing to do the work. There are some career fields with relatively few positions available, and there may be no openings when you want to enlist. And some jobs are not available to you until you reach a higher rank, so you have to compete for them after you join the military.

The size of the branch of service and their overall mission play a large role in the career fields and jobs that are available. It's obvious that if you want to serve on ships, you don't talk to an Army or Air Force recruiter! But there are flying opportunities in all branches of service. If your desire is to be a pilot or crew chief, don't assume you have to join the Air Force.

The Army is the largest of all the branches of service, boasting 37% of all active duty personnel throughout the military. The Air Force and Navy are next, with about 23% active duty personnel each. The Marine Corps claims 14% of all active duty personnel ("The few, the proud"), and the Coast Guard makes up only about 3% of active duty personnel. So why do these numbers matter? They correlate to a larger number of career fields available in the Army, down to less available in the Coast Guard. And within each of those services the number of positions available in the career fields is greater in the larger components. That does not mean being accepted into the Army is easier than the Coast Guard, but the Army has a greater variety of positions and a more spots available within each position. In the smaller services you may have to wait longer for a particular career field to open, or they may not even offer what you want.

## B2. Joining the Military

The military can be a great career! There are many different jobs and places to work. There's something for everyone as long as you are willing to be a cog in a very big machine. If you want to work for yourself, don't enter the military. But if you want to be a part of something bigger, serve your country, and travel the world (or parts of it, anyway), then a military career may be ideal for you.

The goal of this lesson is not to sell you on the military; the goal is to discuss actually JOINING the military and provide you information that will help you do just that.

When you consider the military as a career, the best place to start is research. What are your medium and long-term goals? Does a military career help you reach those goals? Are you considering a commission as an officer in the military? If so, how will reach that goal? You can apply to any or all of the U.S. military academies: West Point, the Air Force Academy, Annapolis, and the Coast Guard Academy. Or you can enroll in ROTC while in college, or you can enter Officer Candidate School (OCS) after you enlist. Even if becoming a commissioned officer is out of reach to you now as you graduate high school, is it still a long-term goal? Or maybe you are focused on an enlisted career. Do you want to enter the active military or pursue a career in the Reserves or National Guard? You can leave your options open for a short while, but eventually you will have to know your priorities and narrow your choices to the final few.

If you are interested in the joining the ROTC in college, then read through Lessons B3 and B4. For the remainder of this lesson, we will address the enlisted option.

The key to enlisting in the military is your recruiter. You can do your own research – as well you should – but in the end you must see a recruiter to enlist. The recruiter will assist you through the decision-making process, and will help you meet the requirements for enlisting. The major requirements encompass:

- Citizenship status
- Medical fitness, including weight
- Taking the **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)** test
- Background check or security clearance
- Tattoos
- Parental status
- Educational status



So yes, there are a lot of requirements just to join the military, and we will address each of them. Keep in mind; you may be able to get a waiver for one or more of the requirements. That depends on your situation and on timing. When the military needs recruits, for example when the United States is in the midst of war, the standards are lowered. That may a good time to join if you don't meet the standards during non-war times. Don't give up if you fall short of the standards. A lot depends on WHY you don't qualify, and if the standards change during that time.

#### *Requirements:*

**Citizenship.** To enter the military, you must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or have a green card. There are programs that speed up the citizenship process for military members. If you have your green card, the military may be a way to become a citizen faster.

**Medical Fitness.** You must pass a physical exam. There are medical conditions that will bar you from military service, but if you're young and physically fit, you will likely qualify or can work through issues that arise from your physical exam. For more information on military medical standards, check out Army Regulation 40-501, Chapter 2 for all branches of services. Weight is also an issue in the military. You must meet published weight standards, which either means be under a maximum weight for your height or have a body fat percentage less than the maximum published.

**Age.** As a cadet, this is not a big issue. There is a maximum age for enlistment and maximum ages for commissioning as an officer as well. Be aware of this, as you could be planning on fulfilling your dream later in life and then be disappointed. The maximum age changes, increasing as the military needs people and decreasing as quotas are met. Joining between the ages of 17-34 is a good bet, but joining after age 34 varies depending on timing.

**ASVAB.** The ASVAB tests your aptitude for various vocations and determines what jobs you qualify for in the military. You can retake the test if needed, but there is a waiting period between tests. It would be a good idea to prepare for the ASVAB if you do not perform well on tests. You can find prep courses on line and books that will help you (e.g. ASVAB for Dummies). Bear in mind that the ASVAB is not testing knowledge, it tests aptitude. Understanding how the test works and the types of questions asked will help you perform better, not memorizing any kind of information.

- [Take a sample ASVAB test \(https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab\)](https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab)

**Background.** The military does not want recruits who have a propensity for getting in trouble. Any record of arrests or jail, felonies, or domestic abuse will likely disqualify you. Many military jobs require a security clearance. They will conduct a background check with national or state databases, and may even interview people who know you. This ensures you are not a threat to national security if you are granted access to classified information. Having filed for bankruptcy or having secrets in your life can also make you vulnerable to blackmail or other similar situations, so that can disqualify you as well. Credit checks may also be performed. If you are having financial difficulties now, you are not likely to



overcome those at an entry level pay grade. The point is that they are looking for applicants of good moral character.

**Tattoos** have become popular, but the military frowns on them depending where they are and what they portray. As long as they do not symbolize hate groups, racism, sexism, or gangs, and if wearing a Class A uniform covers them, then you may be okay. Any tattoos above the T-shirt neckline or on the hands or wrists will be a problem. If you have tattoos, check the branch of service you plan to join for their current tattoo policy. Each branch of service may have different rules, and the rules do change (once again, relaxing when there is a need for people). In addition to tattoos, body mutilation may be a disqualifier. Scarification, tongue bifurcation or ear gauging greater than 1.6mm is prohibited.



**Parental Status.** Single parents with custody rights may have a problem enlisting, even without having physical custody of your child. Talk to a recruiter to discuss your situation and the current rules, but be aware that this is an issue for the military.

**Educational status.** This is another requirement that changes depending on the need for recruits. Generally, high school graduates have a better chance of enlisting than dropouts, or even those with a GED. The military may take some recruits with a GED, but the number is small. Stay in school and graduate. If you want to join the military, the best advice we can give you is to do your homework! Know what you want to do and, if you qualify for it, be ready to walk away if they do not offer that vocation to you. Know the requirements and do everything to ensure you meet them without waivers. Find a recruiter you trust. There are many of them out there. If you are not comfortable with the first recruiter you talk to, find another one. Ensure that what you think they are promising you is **IN WRITING IN YOUR CONTRACT.**

#### *Recruiters:*



“Caveat Emptor!” “Let the Buyer Beware!” That old saying definitely applies to military recruiting. Recruiters are selling a product, and some will go to great lengths to get you to buy. They are under a tremendous amount of pressure to meet their assigned quota, so they may pressure you to commit to alternatives you may not want. Most recruiters will not lie to you, but they might stretch the truth. They may even give you answers that sound much more definitive than they actually are. Remember, it’s not a promise until the recruiter puts it in writing.

That being said, recruiters are professionals and they believe in their product. If you are a quality recruit (and as a Cadet, you likely are), they want you to join THEIR branch of service. They want you to have the career you want, and serve our country. If they can do it, they will. However, there are many constraints within their systems, and it will benefit you greatly by knowing them.

Avoid seeing a recruiter toward the end of the month, or at the end of their fiscal year (September). If the recruiter has not met their quota, then they may be desperate for your accession. They may talk you into something else, and then you will have to wait longer to get a particular career field. Of course, the recruiting process is not immediate; you don't walk into a recruiter's office and walk out a member of the military. You have to take and pass the ASVAB and the physical exam, undergo a background check, and fit into an existing requirement. And all of that takes time.

The best thing you can do is know the standards and ensure you meet them. If you intend to join the military, stay out of trouble and avoid a law enforcement record. Don't drive while intoxicated (alcohol or drugs) and don't get involved with domestic violence (good advice even if you don't plan on joining the military!). If needed, start a weight reduction program to bring you down to standards before you even speak with a recruiter. Keep a healthy lifestyle (always a good recommendation no matter what career you intend to pursue) and stay physically fit. If you do have medical issues, talk to your doctor about how they might be resolved. Now may not be a good time to start a family – being a single parent can disqualify you, and starting a military career can be very difficult on a young family.

More than anything else, DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO. If you walk into a recruiter's office without a plan for yourself, you will get what they want. There is a good reason they need people in some jobs – they are not great jobs! It is far better to know which jobs you really want and insist on waiting until one is available, than to sign up for a job you really don't want or that doesn't help you achieve your goals. Stick to your guns about not enlisting until they can give you the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) you want. Be willing to walk away and wait a while – sometimes months or even more – until they can give you what you want.

### **20 Questions to Ask a Recruiter:**

<https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/military-recruiter-twenty-questions.html>

1. How long do I have to enlist for? What's the minimum commitment?
2. Am I eligible for any special enlistment programs or bonuses?
3. What do I have to score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test to qualify?
4. What are the major differences in pay, benefits and job opportunities between services?
5. Do you have films or literature about military life and particular jobs
6. How long is basic training? Where is it? What is it like?
7. What physical fitness requirements must I meet to enter the military and succeed in basic training?
8. What jobs are available?
9. What are the possibilities for remote or overseas duty stations?
10. What are the training and advancement opportunities for jobs that I'm eligible for?
11. What would pay be like?
12. Do I get paid while in training?
13. How much money can I get for college?
14. Can I take college courses or other training programs while in the military?
15. Are there any upcoming military events in the area, such as airshows, fleet weeks, etc.?
16. Can a friend and I go to basic training together?
17. What are the haircut or other appearance standards that will apply to me?

18. What's the delayed entry program?
19. What are the next steps?
20. How can I get more information?

### B3. Applying to US Military Academies



This lesson will answer some basic questions about how to apply to military academies should you decide to become a commissioned officer.



Figure 1: West Point Academy Graduates

The Military Academy at West Point (Army), Naval Academy at Annapolis, Air Force Academy, and Coast Guard Academy all offer an excellent educational experience, and are the premier source of commissioning for each of the military branches. For those who continue with a full military career, academy graduates are more likely to attain a higher rank and position than their peers who commissioned in other programs. Keep in mind, though, that personal competence and job choice is likely to be more successful than just having an academy ring. The education is, for the most part, paid for by the service reducing the need for student loans. You are a cadet for four years, and it is not all academic. The academies offer awesome training programs during the summer, enabling you to join the service as a lieutenant or ensign who is well prepared to function as an officer. The academies also offer a long line of former graduates who will provide support to you throughout the rest of your military career.

The military academy admission requirements are very different from other undergraduate institutions, especially the physical and medical requirements. But there are similarities which are highly valued, such as the significance of academic GPAs, standardized test scores, and class ranking. Military academies also look at participation in extracurricular activities, team sports, and work or volunteer experience. Excellent character and positive personality traits are one of the largest factors military academies consider.

There are some basic requirements for military academies that are considered for students who attend regular secondary schools. For military academies, students must be a United States citizen, between



Figure 2: Naval Academy Midshipman March



Figure 3: Merchant Marines

the ages of 17 and 23, and not married, pregnant, or legally obligated to support any children. Students who wish to apply to military academies should complete four years of English (with an emphasis on composition, grammar, literature, and speech), four years of math (including algebra, geometry, intermediate algebra, and trigonometry), two years of a foreign language, two years of a laboratory science, and one year of US history. Classes like pre-calculus, calculus, and computing are also recommended.

Unlike other colleges, military academies require their applicants to complete the Physical Aptitude Examination. This test consists of five events: pull-ups for men and a flexed-arm hang for women, a basketball throw from a kneeling position, the standing long jump, a 300-yard shuttle run, and a two-minute period of pushups. Students are only allowed to take the test once, so they must pass the first time. Students are also mandated to complete and pass a medical examination proving they are physically able to take on the challenges of attending a military academy.

Four of the five military academies (the Coast Guard Academy being the lone exception) require students to obtain a nomination from a United States Congressman or Senator to be considered for admission. This recommendation serves as a reference that vouches for the student's character and ability to handle military training and service. The nominations are extremely competitive with about 10 applicants vying for one nomination. With so many admission requirements, be sure to present yourself as a well-rounded student who will flourish at their academies and serve as a promising officer for that branch of service.



Figure 4: Air Force Academy Cadets

Officers who graduate from the academies incur a five-year service obligation. Certain jobs that incur a long training time (like pilots) have a long commitment. If a cadet leaves the academy without graduating, they may be required to serve on active duty in an enlisted status for a period of time.

Getting into any of the academies is difficult. Acceptance rates at West Point and Annapolis are 9 to 10% of applicants, 15% for the Air Force Academy, and about 20% for the Coast Guard and Merchant Marine Academies. Successful applicants have high GPAs, high SAT/ACT scores, have taken difficult academic classes in high school, and are active in their school and community.



Figure 5: Coast Guard Cadet Richard Salinas

**Nominations.** To be considered for admission to all the academies (excluding the Coast Guard), you need to be nominated. There are two types of nominations:

the ***Congressional Nomination*** and the ***Service-Connected Nomination***. After meeting the basic requirements to become a cadet, you should seek nominations. The nomination application process is described in the Admissions section of all the academies' web pages, and is available from your senators' and congressman's office as well.

What to Do:

- **Apply for every nomination for which you are eligible.** At minimum, send a request to the two U.S. senators from your state, your congressional representative in the House of Representatives and the Vice President.
- **Seek nominations in the spring of your junior year**, or as soon as you apply to the academies. Do not delay! The nomination deadlines vary, but they are deadlines, not suggested or preferred dates. If you miss a deadline, there are no exceptions. Applicants must complete the online Vice President Nomination application during the application period of March 1 to January 31 proceeding the year of entrance to the academy. Don't take a chance on missing a deadline. Start early!
- **Sons and daughters of "career military personnel"** (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard) are also eligible for nominations. This includes active and reserve component personnel with at least eight years of continuous service, or children of service members who have died while in service. Check the nomination instructions for application in this category.

**Assistance.** The various academies and congressional offices have people assigned to assist you through the application process to the military academies. Depending on the academies you are applying to, there are liaison officers who will help you. Take advantage of these individuals who can help you to not miss important aspects of your application, and help you take advantage of the programs the schools have to offer.



Figure 6: Liaison Officers are here to help

**Prep Schools.** If your grades or scores fall short of the standards needed for academy admission, consider attending a prep school. Some of the academies run their own prep school, while others have programs in military schools throughout the country (for example, New Mexico Military Institute or Marion Military Institute). Prep schools offer classes and training that will either bring you up to speed with requirements prior to attending an academy, or give you more instruction in areas you need. Their military program will orient you to the culture of a military school and prepare you for success at the academy. Attending a prep school is not a guarantee that you will be admitted to an academy, but it is an alternative to give you the skills and tools to be successful when you would not have otherwise been able to make the grade. If your heart is set on an academy education and you are not accepted, seriously consider a prep school – it really is a good path into the academies.

#### B4. ROTC

The Army, Navy, and Air Force offer Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs at colleges throughout the nation. In addition to schools that have an ROTC program, they have agreements with thousands of other schools where cadets may be enrolled in one school and take their ROTC class at another (called cross-enrollment). ROTC is a two- to four-year program that leads to a commission as a

Second Lieutenant or Ensign in the Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marine Corps. Cadets receive a stipend as a contracted ROTC member and are paid for the duty they perform during the summer and required training events.

The government offers scholarships to ROTC cadets to pay for tuition, books, and miscellaneous fees.



Figure 7: Air Force ROTC Logo

ROTC graduates are generally commissioned as reserve officers, as opposed to academy graduates who receive a 'regular' commission. As a reserve officer, you are still required to attend required officer training courses. You may even be required to serve on active duty for a number of years after commissioning. Reserve officers on active duty can apply for a regular commission and stay on active duty for a full career, or they can leave active duty and serve in a Reserve or National Guard position.

ROTC consists of a class and a lab that earns college credits. Cadets study a curriculum of subjects that prepares them to be officers in the service they choose. Depending upon the program, they serve in leadership positions and practice leading other cadets, much like you do in the California Cadet Corps.

ROTC was originally designed as a four-year program that was taken concurrently with the rest of your college classes. The first two years are open to anyone and do not incur an obligation to continue on to commissioning or any military service, it is treated just like another college class. The last two years are focused on making you an officer. You actually sign a contract with the military, receive pay and may incur a service obligation if you fail or drop out.

There is a required summer training event in all of the ROTC programs, and they all differ slightly. The Navy has two summer cruise requirements. The Air Force has a 24-day training exercise at Maxwell AFB, AL. The Army has a six-week training camp between the junior and senior year; for cadets who have no prior enlisted service who want to enter the two-year program, there is a six-week initial entry training camp at Fort Knox prior to the junior year.

It may be possible for you to receive a commission after just two years of college. Each branch of service has different policies. It is possible to contract as a college freshman and to commission at the end of your sophomore year. New Mexico Military Institute, a junior college, offers this option. In these cases, you are assigned to a Reserve unit and participate in reserve training. You do not attend your basic officer training until you graduate college.

ROTC is a great way to earn your commission as a Second Lieutenant or Ensign, while still enjoying a 'normal' college experience, living where you want, and getting on with your life. Unlike attending a military academy, your entire existence is not wrapped into your college experience. You come out of ROTC on an equal footing with the lieutenants and ensigns who commissioned through the military academies. However, one can argue that the opportunities for a higher level of success are better for academy graduates. If you want to be the Army Chief of Staff or Marine Corps Commandant, then you should attend West



Figure 8: Army ROTC Logo

Point or Annapolis. But if you choose to stay on active duty past your statutory commitment, you have just as much chance as your peers at attaining rank and securing the right job to be successful in your service. Your choice of vocation and branch of service, and how well you perform, will have a greater impact on your promotions than the source of your commission. If you want to be a general officer, enter the Army or Marine Infantry Division, be a pilot in the Air Force, or a surface warfare officer in the Navy. These core military specialties are more likely to position you for higher rank as long as your performance is above average.



Figure 9: Navy / Marine Corps ROTC Unit

Check on line to find schools in your area that offer ROTC programs and cross-enrollment agreements with ROTC. The same general requirements apply for ROTC as other commissioning sources: you have to pass a physical exam, be of high moral character (no felonies, bankruptcies, etc.), meet the age requirements, meet the weight standards, and be enrolled in college while you are in ROTC.

## B5. National Guard and Reserves

We reviewed different ways to join the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard either in an enlisted or officer status. What about the Reserves or National Guard? Is that a separate service? In the Navy Reserve, you are considered in the Navy, just not necessarily on active duty. We'll explain in this lesson how that works.

Our Reserves and National Guard exist essentially as an economic way to maintain a large military, but without paying the full cost of a large full-time military force. Reservists (the term is valid in referring to National Guardsmen as well) are on duty less than active duty service members. Their units generally do not have all the equipment as an active duty unit so their overall costs are much less. This has been national policy ever since the Revolutionary War; a small standing army augmented by militia and reserve regiments served only for designated periods of duty.

Today, our military Reserve components consist of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserves, and the Army and Air National Guard. Reserve status (not on active duty) is either active or inactive. An active reservist is assigned to a unit and will train with their unit one weekend a month and two weeks a year. An inactive reservist no longer trains with a unit, but can be recalled to active duty at any time.



When you enlist or obtain a commission, you incur an eight-year obligation with a certain amount of time required to be active duty, depending on your contract. You may serve three or four years on active duty and then “get out”, but you are not fully “out” until the end of your eight-year commitment. You may continue in a Reserve or National Guard unit and be paid for your service, or be part of the non-paid Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) where you are available if the military needs you.

If you leave active duty and enter a Reserve or National Guard unit, you may not be required to complete further qualification training if you transfer to a position in which you are already qualified. For example, if you are a Security Policeman in the Air Force and then enter a Security Police unit in the Air National Guard, you are fully qualified and trained to do your job. But if you no longer want to be a Security Policeman or no Security Police Squadron is available in your area, then you might sign up to serve in a different job. In that case, you will need to attend a military school that qualifies you in the new job. This could take you away from your employment or school for several months – something to consider before committing to that change.



For many years the Reserves and National Guard trained and prepared but were not used by the military for what they are designed to do – fight our nation’s wars. The Vietnam War did not use Reserve units; they relied on active duty units, along with the draft, for fighting. Rarely, Reserve or National Guard units were called up for peacekeeping missions or to backfill active units that deployed to danger areas. Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1991 was the first time since the Korean War that Reserve and National Guard units were called up and deployed to combat, and that was a very short war. Most units were deployed for six months or less. After 9/11, Reservists and National Guardsmen were surprised to have their units called up for a year or more to serve mostly in the Middle East. After several years of war, the military began to rely more and more on the Reserves and National Guard. It became routine that every three to five years, these units would deploy to a combat zone for a year at a time. The nature of the reserve components changed. They now had considerable combat experience embedded in their leaders, and people who joined the reserves knew the likelihood of deployment was pretty high. They became an operational force, and the Department of Defense poured money into their budgets to enable them to be truly ready to go to war when called.

As we left Iraq and downsized US military operations in Afghanistan, the military called on the reserves less and less. Reserve and National Guard units still deploy throughout the world, but not at the rate as from 2001 through 2011. The reserves struggle to stay “operational” without the experience of multiple deployments, and without funding for equipment and extra training days that came during the height of the deployments. It is likely that if you join a Reserve or National Guard unit, you will not deploy during your tour of duty. But you need to be ready to do that if the national situation changes.



The Reserves or National Guard is a great option for those who desire to serve their country but do not want that service to completely rule their life. You get the same training every Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Airman, or Coastie gets, but you can still have a civilian career, go to college, and live where you want. The Reserves and National Guard is a part-time job that pays well and gives you many of the same benefits as an active duty member. There are even some jobs in Reserve units that allow you to serve full-time without moving to another part of the world. A downside to serving in the reserves is the



potential conflict with your civilian career. Not all employers understand when you are called to war for a year or more. There are laws that protect your employment, but employers can often find a reason.

To join the National Guard and Reserves is much like joining the active military. There are recruiters for each of the services' reserve components, and for the Army and Air National Guard. The requirements are the same – age, medical, weight, background, tattoos, etc. Your job options are more limited because you are tied to joining a unit within commuting distance from your home. If you enter the reserves from the active military, the process is much the same. There are Reserve and National Guard representatives on active duty bases, and as you process out you speak with them about potentially transferring to a reserve unit. They can tell you what type of units are within your geographical area. If you want to transfer to another service, you may have to find a recruiter for that service (i.e. if you leave the Army and want to enter the Navy Reserve, find a Navy Reserve recruiter).

#### B6. Officer Candidate School (OCS)

If you have a bachelor's degree, you may be able to get your commission by attending OCS. There are commissioning options for enlisted personnel on active duty and in the Reserve and National Guard as well. If you are enlisted and want to get commissioned, enquire from your personnel representatives about attending Officer Candidate School to receive a commission.

Once you qualify, the Army's OCS is at Fort Benning, GA for 12 weeks. Air Force Officer Training School is 10 weeks at Maxwell AFB, AL. Navy OCS is 12 weeks at Newport, RI. You can get a commission in the Marines during college by attending Platoon Leader Course in two six-week increments over two summers. In the Army National Guard, OCS generally takes place in several phases, either over a series of weekends (once a month for about 18 months) plus two two-week exercises, or all together in about eight weeks.



*Figure 10: National Guard OCS Candidates Receive their Commission*