



Answers for Parents

This document contains information gathered from the For Parents section on GoArmy.com. It's designed to address your toughest questions and most pressing concerns by delivering honest answers and straight facts from the Army.

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If you have more questions about the U.S. Army or want to contact a Recruiter, call 1-800-USA-ARMY, ext. 181. Or visit GoArmy.com.

Service Options

WHAT ARE THE ENLISTMENT OPTIONS FOR MY SON OR DAUGHTER?

Your son or daughter has several options when enlisting to become a Soldier. Yet no matter which option he or she chooses, your young adult will be an important part of the world's most powerful Army.

ACTIVE DUTY OR ARMY RESERVE

Active Duty is similar to working at a full-time, civilian job. There are hours when Soldiers must be training or performing their jobs and then there are off-hours when Soldiers can do what they like. In Active Duty, terms of service range from two to six years.

Army Reserve enables your son or daughter to keep a civilian career while continuing to train near home. Service ranges from one to six years—depending on the job and Army Reserve Center location. Many professionals and college students are also Army Reserve Soldiers.

During times of need, Army Reserve Soldiers may be called up to Active Duty.

ENLISTED SOLDIER OR OFFICER

Enlisted Soldiers put plans into action. Much like employees at a company, they perform specific job functions and have the training and knowledge that ensures the success of their unit's current mission within the Army.

Warrant Officers are highly specialized experts and trainers. They remain single-specialty Officers whose career track is oriented toward progressing within their field rather than focusing on increased levels of command and staff duty positions.

Commissioned Officers are the managers, problem-solvers, key influencers and planners of the Army. They have the leadership skills, training and character needed to inspire and encourage others. One of the best ways for your son or daughter to become an Army Officer is to join Army ROTC as a college student.

Training

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING WILL MY SON OR DAUGHTER RECEIVE?

Training is what makes your son or daughter into a Soldier. It prepares your young adult for the solid career you've always hoped he or she would achieve. It also helps protect their safety. After all, success depends on preparedness. That's why no Soldier is ever put into a situation before he or she has been trained to handle it.

Army training is comprehensive—and ongoing. From the nine weeks of Basic Combat Training to learning valuable job skills at Advanced Individual Training to developing character and confidence, training is a constant.



BASIC COMBAT TRAINING

Basic Combat Training (BCT) is a nine-week program designed to introduce discipline, develop mental and physical strength, improve endurance, teach a variety of skills and build camaraderie and self-confidence. In other words, BCT turns civilians into Soldiers in the U.S. Army—the best fighting force in the world.

Here are some of the things covered in BCT:

- Week 00: Physical Fitness
- Week 01: Core Army Values
- Week 02: Map Reading and Land Navigation
- Week 03: Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Training
- Week 04: Basic Rifle Marksmanship
- Week 05: Field Training Exercises
- Week 06: U.S. Weapons Familiarization
- Week 07: Hand-to-Hand Combat
- Week 08: Team Building and Leadership Training
- Week 09: Army Life After Graduation

ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

After your son or daughter completes Basic Combat Training, he or she is ready for the next step. Advanced Individual Training (AIT) is where a Soldier learns the skills to perform an Army job.

At one of the many diverse AIT schools, hands-on training and field instruction makes your young adult an expert in his or her specific career field. He or she will gain the discipline and work ethic necessary for whatever path lies ahead. Many AIT schools even offer certifications for civilian jobs.

SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS

For Soldiers who want to advance even further, Specialized Schools are available to those who meet the right criteria. These schools will develop your son or daughter personally and professionally, providing the skills to help in an Army career and beyond. From language and management training to advanced leadership and survival skills, the knowledge received at these schools will help prepare Soldiers for nearly any mission in life.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Leadership is crucial to the success of the U.S. Army. The most effective leaders “lead from the front”—they lead by example in thought, word and deed. Soldiers who choose Leadership Training are making it clear that they wish to take on more responsibility and thus rise in rank. The Army provides many opportunities for Soldiers to learn how to improve their leadership and teamwork skills.

Job Opportunities

WHAT KINDS OF JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?

No matter what your son or daughter’s career aspirations, chances are we offer a job and the training that will help them realize their potential. And if they don’t have any career aspirations yet, we can help guide them in a positive direction.



CHOOSING AN ARMY JOB

The strength of the U.S. Army comes from creating a team of talented, dedicated and well-trained Soldiers performing over 100 equally important and very specialized jobs. The Army must always have these roles filled. Once that's achieved, the Army looks at each individual's career goals and interests to assist in placement.

You and your young adult get a say in what Army job he or she has. But several factors are considered when assigning a job or Military Occupational Specialty (MOS):

- Current and anticipated needs of the Army
- Career aspirations
- Skills and qualifications

The final factor is the Soldier's score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), which tests your son or daughter's skills and how they apply to jobs in the Army.

ARMY JOB SPECIALTIES

The Army offers a broad range of opportunities in these categories:

- **Administrative Support**
Financial Management Technician | Human Resources Specialist | Administrative Specialist
- **Arts & Media**
Broadcast Journalist | Multimedia Illustrator | Band Officer
- **Combat**
Special Forces Medical Sergeant | Fire Support Specialist | Air Defense Artillery Officer
- **Computers & Technology**
Information Technology Specialist | Intelligence Analyst | Signal Support Systems Specialist
- **Construction & Engineering**
Technical Engineer | Carpentry & Masonry Specialist | Bridge Crewmember
- **Intelligence & Combat Support**
Chemical Operations Specialist | Psychological Operations Officer | Cryptologic Linguist
- **Legal & Law Enforcement**
JAG Corps Attorney | Paralegal Specialist | Criminal Investigations Special Agent
- **Mechanics**
Light-Wheel Vehicle Mechanic | Watercraft Engineer | CH-47 Helicopter Repairer
- **Medical & Emergency**
Dental Specialist | Firefighter | Animal Care Specialist
- **Transportation & Aviation**
Aviation Officer | Bradley Fighting Vehicle System Maintainer | Parachute Rigger

Army job training not only prepares your young adult for a career in the Army, but it carries over into a civilian career as well. This will give your son or daughter an enormous advantage for life after the Army. Prospective employers recognize just how valuable Army experience is on a résumé.



Money for College & More Benefits

WHAT KINDS OF BENEFITS DOES THE ARMY PROVIDE?

There are many benefits to joining the Army. Like earning money for college, earning college credits and learning critical job skills. Your son or daughter will also receive full medical coverage, 30 days paid vacation and, if he or she lives on Post, free housing—all while building a better future and developing solid career opportunities.

EDUCATION BENEFITS

If your son or daughter is planning to go to college, the Army offers several ways to help you afford it.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL (MGIB) & ARMY COLLEGE FUND (ACF)

Depending on how long your son or daughter enlists in the Army, he or she can earn up to \$70,000 to help pay for college.

CHOOSE ARMY RESERVE AND GIVE YOUR MGIB A “KICKER”

The Army Reserve always needs to fill certain positions at certain locations. If your son or daughter qualifies and takes one of these jobs, he or she can earn up to \$350 extra per month.

RESERVE OFFICERS’ TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) SCHOLARSHIP

Is your young adult college bound or already attending a university? Army ROTC teaches leadership skills for future Army Officers and offers competitive, merit-based scholarships to cover tuition and an allowance for books and fees.

COLLEGE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

Student loans are easier to pay off with the Army’s College Loan Repayment Program. To take advantage of this program, your son or daughter must enlist full time in the Army for three years or in the Army Reserve for six years.

MORE BENEFITS

There is a wide range of other benefits for a Soldier in the Army. These include medical coverage, recreation, travel and expert training in multiple disciplines that can translate into a rewarding career.

- Earn a salary while learning a skill
- High-quality medical and dental coverage
- Free or discounted meals and housing
- Earn college credits
- Specialized job training
- Vacation (30 days paid leave each year)



Personal Growth

IS THE ARMY A GOOD OPTION FOR MY YOUNG ADULT?

You've already developed your young adult into the solid individual he or she is today. The Army can help build on that.

Above all, Soldiers get things done. Protecting freedom. Building a better world. And building a brighter future for themselves by learning leadership skills and developing the kind of self-confidence and self-respect that comes from serving your country.

Your son or daughter will gain valuable interpersonal skills like teamwork, time management, problem-solving skills and professionalism. He or she will be challenged to accept a new sense of discipline and responsibility.

Army training can turn your young adult into a Soldier. Fueled by honor, pride, ability and strength, he or she can achieve great things.

LIVING THE ARMY VALUES

Your son or daughter will also learn the Seven Core Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage. Taught in Basic Combat Training and reinforced throughout an Army career, a Soldier lives these values in everything he or she does. Whether on the job or off, your young adult will forever live up to this higher standard.

In the end, your son or daughter will become someone you've always pictured—an honorable citizen with a successful career. Someone who will truly make you proud.

The Army provides a remarkable environment for personal growth and should be viewed as an exceptional starting point, a stepping-stone in one's life or as a rewarding career in itself.

Deployment

WHAT HAPPENS DURING DEPLOYMENT?

Deployment is when an Active Duty or Army Reserve unit is sent to a specific area of operations, usually on foreign soil—most recently in Afghanistan, Kuwait and Iraq. Yet a common misperception is that a deployed unit is automatically sent to a war zone. Oftentimes, units are deployed to non-combat regions, including Hawaii, Italy, Germany and South Korea. Or they are utilized for humanitarian efforts, such as helping civilians rebuild their lives after a natural disaster.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN ARMY RESERVE SOLDIER IS DEPLOYED?

Once activated and deployed, Army Reserve Soldiers receive the same pay as Soldiers of the same rank on Active Duty. Additional types of pay, including Incentive, Special Pays and a Family Separation Allowance, are available to those who qualify. Federal law also protects the civilian jobs of deployed Army Reserve Soldiers serving their country.



A GREATER COMMITMENT

The U.S. Army has taken a lead role in the fight against terrorism—a threat that affects each and every one of us. The global war on terror is part of an international, long-term action to secure peace for all nations. This mission relies on the great strength and commitment of American Soldiers.

A Soldier's job comes with a certain level of risk. Because of this, safety is a major priority within the Army—during training, on the job and on a mission. Recent technological advances have also improved safety and preparedness.

Some Soldiers are asked to serve in dangerous situations. However, Soldiers are always fully prepared before deployment. Every Soldier in every unit goes through extensive training exercises that closely resemble what they will experience in the field. Depending on the reason and the needs of the Army, deployment can last up to two years.

Daily Life

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY ON POST LIKE?

When stationed in the U.S., your son or daughter can live on or off Post, depending on marital status. Single Soldiers must live on Post; married Soldiers have more options. Either way, he or she will have access to Post facilities like gyms, stores and restaurants.

On any given day, the life of a Soldier is a lot like someone working at a full-time job. When your son or daughter is done with the day's work or training, the rest of the day is theirs to do whatever they like: work out, shop, do laundry, go to a movie or hang out with friends, just to name a few.

POST HOUSING

The housing on an Army Post varies by rank and family situation. For those single Soldiers starting out, it's similar to a clean, modern and comfortable apartment complex. For Soldiers with spouses, housing options on Post vary from location to location.

POST FACILITIES

Army Posts are a lot like small towns that have everything your son or daughter will need. Since it's an Army installation, there is tight security, but Soldiers are free to come and go as they please. Post facilities may include:

- Satellite college campuses
- Grocery stores
- Libraries
- Auto shops
- Parks and pools
- Riding stables
- Computer labs
- Retail shops
- Recreation centers
- Restaurants
- Movie theaters
- Places of worship



Keeping in Touch

HOW WILL I COMMUNICATE WITH MY SON OR DAUGHTER?

It may take time for an individual and his or her family to adjust to Army life. To make the transition a smooth one, Soldiers have several ways to communicate with and see their families.

TELEPHONE

Every Soldier has access to telephones on their Army Post and can use cell phones to make personal calls during free time, except during Basic Combat Training.

INTERNET

Most Army Posts offer free access to computers and the Internet to check email and do research online. Soldiers living on Post also have the same opportunity as you to sign up to receive Internet service.

MAIL

Every Post has regular postal service with daily deliveries.

PERSONAL VISITS

Soldiers get 30 paid days leave a year and discounted travel rates, as well as a Family Day after Basic Combat Training.

Please note: During training—or while stationed overseas—there may be unavoidable limits to the amount of communication your son or daughter will be able to have with you.

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