

MILITARY SERVICE

The United States Military has seven major branches: the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard and their Reserve, the Air National Guard and the Army National Guard. They offer many job training, educational, scholarship and career opportunities for high school graduates of all ability levels. One of the military's biggest selling points to high school students is the opportunity to earn a free college education through military service. The military recruiters who visit BDHS often will explain how you earn this and other benefits through their branch.

The military culture is not as prevalent in Beaver Dam as it is in some other parts of the country, and it may be easy to overlook the opportunities within the Armed Forces despite the frequent presence of recruiters at school. The military may be a good or even an excellent match for students who:

- Want to work with cutting-edge technology.
- Are good team players.
- Are attracted to specific jobs or careers in the military.
- Enjoy travel and the opportunity to live in different places throughout the country and the world.
- Are qualified for college, but have little or no financial resources to pay for college.
- Enjoy physical fitness and work that is physically challenging.
- Value service to country and the role the U.S. military plays in the world.
- Have a family legacy of military service.

If you are interested in the military but are unsure of where you might best fit in, consider taking the ASVAB Career Exploration Test described in the TESTS chapter. Check with the Student Services Office or Career Center and listen to announcements, as to the date it will be given.

The U.S. Military operates a world-class job-training network, which includes over 300 schools teaching over 10,000 vocational and technical courses. These careers relate to some of the hottest civilian jobs. Today's military is also more computerized than ever, offering many more high-tech occupations than in the past.

We recommend that students who are considering the military exercise caution before signing up, for the following reasons:

- Programs vary between the seven branches of the service. Do not assume that the features and benefits of a program in one branch are the same as in another. Do all you can to find out about the specific program you are considering. Do your *research*.
- Students *must* be aware that the military requires a time commitment to service in exchange for the benefits provided. (There are a few minor exceptions to this.) Once you are in, it is very difficult to get out until your service requirement is completed. Be sure you understand this commitment before signing up.
- The military lifestyle, with its emphasis on order, discipline, rank and strenuous physical exercise, is, to say the least, a jolt to the average high school student. Learn all you can about this lifestyle, and give some serious thought about how you might adapt.

- Finally, when you agree to serve in the military, you ultimately agree to put yourself in harm's way should your country call you to do so. In today's world, there is no way to predict the likelihood of this happening. As you consider the financial benefits of military service, please keep this fact in mind.

Military Service Before/Without College: Enlistment

The Armed Services offer high school graduates a wide variety of job-training programs to fill positions within the military. These programs vary in length, difficulty, and service requirement. Educational benefits, bonuses, and other options also differ, depending on the need for the position. The Military Careers Guide, www.todaysmilitary.com/app/tm/careers, describes the 152 enlisted and officers' occupations.

All recruits begin their military service with several weeks of basic training at their chosen branch's training center. Basic training emphasizes physical conditioning and military fundamentals. After completion of basic training, enlistees are transferred to another location for job training. Once trained, enlistees are assigned to a third location where they begin advanced training and/or work in their field. Enlistees are paid for their first day of basic training.

Some military jobs are exclusive to the military, but most have application in the civilian world. Enlistees may choose to make the military their career and re-enlist after completion of their initial tour of duty. Others leave the military to apply their job skills in a civilian setting.

Educational opportunities and tuition assistance are available to enlistees both while on active duty and after they leave the service.

High school students may enlist in the Armed Forces anytime after graduation. However, students also may enlist before graduation, through the ***Delayed Entry Program***. In Delayed Entry, the students enlist up to one year before finishing high school, completing the physical fitness and aptitude tests, and selecting his/her job or Military Occupation Specialty. The student then returns to high school to graduate. In return, the military branch guarantees that the selected job, training, and options will be there when the student reports for duty following graduation. *The guarantee is good only if the student qualifies for the job and a vacancy exists.*

Local recruiters can provide more detailed information on specific training and assignments. Recruiters visit BDHS frequently throughout the school year. Listen to the announcements and check with the Guidance Office or Career Center as to their schedule.

Prerequisites:

- U.S. Citizen or proof of lawful entry for permanent resident
- Parental consent for applicants under 18
- Physical examination at Military Entrance Processing Station (provided at government expense)
- High School diploma highly preferred
- The Delayed Entry Program is for seniors on track to graduate with their class

Testing:

- Enlistment Screening Test
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program

Cost:

- No financial cost to enlistees. Service men and women are paid a salary, receive room and board, and job training. They may receive other financial benefits as well, including educational benefits.
- Enlistees do agree to serve a minimal amount of time in the military. The time commitment ranges from two to six years, depending on the enlistee's job. Usually, the more training is required, the longer the service requirement.

Location:

Varies depending on the program. Military personnel generally train in the continental United States, but afterwards may be stationed anywhere in the world.

Web sites:

- www.todaysmilitary.com
- www.goarmy.com
- www.navyjobs.com
- www.airforce.com
- www.marines.com
- www.uscg.mil

Military Options with College:***1. National Guard/Military Reserve Program***

The National Guard and Military Reserves are two similar programs that act as a support force to the regular military. Serving in the Guard/Reserves is similar to serving in the regular Armed Forces except that the work hours are closer to that of a part-time job. After nine weeks of basic training and an average of 10 weeks of advanced (job) training, Guard members/Reservists work one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer.

The major difference between the National Guard and the Military Reserves is that the Guard is a state program and the Reserves is a federal program. Both programs are open to non-college bound students, but their benefits – part-time job and tuition reimbursement - dovetail with the needs of many college-bound students, and recruiters target them.

Students may join the Guard/Reserves in either the junior or senior year of high school. Students who join as juniors spend the summer between the junior and senior year in basic training. During the senior year, they attend drills one weekend per month at a local Guard/Reserve unit. The summer following graduation, they spend approximately 10 weeks in advanced training, learning their Guard/Reserve job. College-bound students are usually free to attend school by the start of their fall semester. They serve one weekend per month during the academic year along with other Guard members/Reservists.

Students who enlist as seniors attend drills one weekend per month during the senior year and spend the summer following graduation in basic training. Then they must choose whether to immediately proceed to advanced training or postpone it until the following summer. Enlistees who go directly to advanced training after basic will not be able to begin college in the fall semester due to the overlap of the academic year with the advanced training schedule. Guard members/Reservists who postpone advanced training until the following summer still serve one weekend per month during the academic year.

Service members in the Guard/Reserves are required to serve six years from the day they join. Any Guard/Reserve unit may be called to full-time duty during a national emergency, e.g. Desert Storm.

Guard members/Reservists are eligible for the following financial benefits:

- Enlistment bonuses
- Educational benefits (minimum \$263/month) under the Montgomery G.I. Bill while enrolled as a full-time student. *Note: Students are not eligible for Montgomery G.I. benefits until the completion of advanced training.*
- Reimbursement of up to \$20,000 for educational expenses through the Student Loan Repayment Program. (The amount varies depending on the demand for the Guard member/Reservist's job.)
- In addition to the above, Wisconsin National Guard members are eligible for the Wisconsin 100% Tuition Reimbursement Program. Tuition is reimbursed up to the cost of UW-Madison. Reimbursement is made after each semester.
- Pay for time worked: training, weekend and summer drills. The pay varies depending on the job.

Prerequisites:

- Age 17 or older
- High school graduate or on track to graduate with class
- Physical exam at Military Entrance Processing Station
- No felony conviction

Note: College admission is the student's responsibility.

Testing:

- ASVAB required
- Student is responsible for college admissions testing requirements

Note: ACT/SAT I fees are free to Guard members/Reservists if taken on date selected by the recruiting unit.

Cost:

- No monetary cost. Reservists receive a variety of financial benefits as described above.
- Six-year inactive duty of one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer. Following completion of initial six-year tour of duty, the Guard member/Reserve is put on the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) for two years.

Degree/Certification:

- Most schools give college credit for military service.

Location:

Varies. Basic training and advanced training are done throughout the continental United States. Following advanced training, a Guard member/Reservist may be assigned to the local Guard/Reserve unit of his/her choice.

Resources:

- www.goarmy.com/careers
- wisconsin Guard.com

2. ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps)

ROTC is an officer-training program for college students. The Army, Air Force, and Marines offer ROTC programs aimed at teaching college students the leadership and management skills required of military officers. (The Marines have the Navy ROTC program.)

ROTC programs are offered at select college campuses throughout the United States. Students take a four-year sequence of ROTC classes as electives, earning college credit for them while pursuing a traditional college major. Upon graduation from college, the student is commissioned as an officer in the military branch with his/her respective ROTC program.

Anyone can enroll in an ROTC course. However, many ROTC students attend college on ROTC scholarships. Scholarship amounts vary. ROTC scholarship applications may be requested between March 1 and November 1 each year. The scholarship application deadline is November 15 for the following academic year. Scholarship information is available on each branch's web site listed previously.

Prerequisites:

- ROTC students are responsible for obtaining admission to a college that offers the ROTC program of their choice.
- No prerequisites for taking an ROTC course.
- Medical pre-screening required for admission to advanced (third and fourth year) program.
- Scholarships are merit-based and may be tied to a major, such as nursing. Check the web site of each ROTC branch for scholarship minimum requirements.

Testing:

- ASVAB Career Exploration Program
- ACT and/or SAT as required by college

Cost:

- Non-scholarship ROTC students pay regular college tuition
- Scholarship students have all or a portion of their tuition, fees and books covered by their scholarship. In addition, they receive \$150/month allowance during the school year that may be used towards their living expense.
- Non-scholarship students may participate in ROTC classes for up to two years without incurring a military obligation.

- Scholarship students incur a military commitment after one year in the program. The time of the commitment varies depending on the requirements of the branch. The average is four years.
- ROTC students may be required to attend training sessions during the summer months between college semesters. Students are paid a stipend during training periods.

Degree/Certification:

- Bachelor's degree
- Officer's commission

Location:

ROTC programs are offered at a variety of state and private colleges. Check the website listed below for ROTC locations.

Resources:

www.usrotc.com

3. Service Academies

The United States Service Academies – Military, Naval, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine – offer a four-year, integrated military and college education to high-achieving young men and women, preparing them for leadership positions in the Armed Forces.

The service academies are highly selective schools that rank among the top academic institutions in the nation. All students at service academies attend on full scholarship.

Prior to the start of their first academic year, academy students participate in basic training not unlike their counterparts in the regular military. During their four years of college, they combine military and academic studies, pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in the major of their choice. Summers are spent in additional training, often at a different military site. Upon graduation, cadets and midshipmen are commissioned as officers in their respective branches of service. Academy graduates are obligated for an active-duty period of five years or more depending on their choice of assignment.

Most service academy applicants must have a political nomination to be considered for an appointment. Members of the U.S. Congress make most academy nominations. Each member of Congress may sponsor up to five students at each academy at one time. (There is one exception. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy does not require a nomination or an appointment; it makes its selection directly.) High school students may begin the nomination process by completing a pre-candidate questionnaire available at the academy's web site. BDHS students may request a nomination from their Congressional Representative or U.S. Senator. Each congressional office sets its own nomination deadline, usually by November 1st of the senior year. Contact the congressional offices for their specific deadlines.

Some prospective candidates may be eligible under other nominating categories, particularly if they have a parent who has performed military service. Check an academy web site for further description of the other nominating categories.

The procedure for obtaining an academy appointment can be lengthy. Students are advised to start early, in the spring of the junior year, if possible.

Prerequisites:

- At least 17 years of age (but not older than 22) by July 1 of the year of entrance
- U.S. citizen
- Single
- No legal obligation to support dependents
- Good moral character
- Successful high school academic record
- Evidence of leadership and physical fitness
- Physical fitness test and medical exam after nomination

Testing:

- SAT/ACT (Check academy web site for average scores and ranges.)

Cost:

- All service academy students attend on scholarship. In addition, they receive medical care and a stipend of approximately \$558/month for personal expenses. First-year students are charged an initial fee of approximately \$2,500 for expenses such as uniforms and a computer.
- After the second year, all academy students incur a military obligation of at least five years after graduation.

Degree/Certification:

- Bachelor's degree
- Officer's commission

Location:

- Army: *West Point, New York*
- Navy: *Annapolis, Maryland*
- Air Force: *Colorado Springs, Colorado*
- Coast Guard: *New London, Connecticut*
- Merchant Marine: *Kings Point, New York*

Resources:

- Army: www.usma.edu
- Navy: www.nadn.navy.mil
- Air Force: www.usafa.af.mil
- Coast Guard: www.cga.edu
- Merchant Marine: www.usmma.edu

ASVAB

The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is the standard pre-enlistment screening test used by all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The ASVAB measures math and verbal ability and inventories personal preferences and vocational interests. The test links student's abilities and interests to specific military occupations. ASVAB results are used by the military to determine which training programs military applicants are qualified to enter.

The ASVAB is required of all military enlistees and ROTC candidates. It is recommended for any student interested in obtaining more career-planning information. *(Note: ASVAB results are accepted for military enlistment for two years after test date.)* Taking the ASVAB does not obligate a student to join the military.

Measurement and Scoring:

A score of 31 is required for enlistees and high scores may earn enlistment bonuses. Beyond that, ASVAB test results are personalized to guide students toward careers that best match their abilities and interests. Score results include national comparisons to others students at the same grade level.

Registration:

Students may take the ASVAB test at the high school in December during school hours. Listen to the announcements and check with the Guidance Office for the date and times. Prospective enlistees can also arrange to take the ASVAB through their local recruiter.

Cost:

No cost.

Preparation:

The web site www.march2success.com will prepare students to take the ASVAB. Students will register and be able to use this site at any internet-ready computer.