

Enlisting in the Military is the second article in the series on alternatives to college for high school graduates.

Enlisting in a branch of the United States military is a time-honored tradition for some families and can be a wise investment in service to one's country and one's future. There are multiple benefits to high school graduates who are unsure of what direction is best for their future. The benefits begin with the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. This test is required of everyone who enlists. In addition to being used to determine the eligibility of a potential recruit, it is also used to determine in which vocational posting the recruit will best succeed. This is called the military occupational specialty, or MOS. Based on this determination, a recruit can choose which job he or she will enlist to perform in the military. Recruits are offered choices among the MOS's for which they qualify. If chosen wisely, the MOS can translate into a career in the military or solid job opportunities after leaving the military. Certain MOS's carry re-enlistment bonuses, because it is cheaper for the US government to retain already trained individuals than to train new recruits. ¹

Also, being a veteran, someone who has served honorably in the armed forces, gives the individual a boost when looking for jobs later on. For example, when applying to work for state and federal government positions, testing is required. Veterans' scores are augmented because they have served in the Armed Forces.

The GI Bill offers educational benefits, access to low cost health insurance for veterans, transitional services² for those who leave the military, access to lower interest mortgage loans, and many others³. Many individuals have built a career on the training obtained in the military, while others have used their service in the military to pay tuition and living expenses to attend college and other post-high school training programs. The military has worked with institutions of higher learning to obtain college credit for MOS training programs. Some individuals, upon leaving military service, already have associates' or even bachelor degrees upon which they can pursue further training using the educational benefits to assist with costs. In addition, many colleges participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program which allows some veterans to attend expensive, private colleges at a greatly reduced tuition.

"The U.S. military has five branches of service: the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. The requirements to join are similar for all five. The main differences are in age limits, test scores, and fitness levels. Men and women meet different fitness standards. Besides the requirements listed here, a branch may have other requirements. You must be at least 17

¹Enlistees are encouraged to get a signed contract with their MOS specified on it before actually "signing on the dotted line". If this is not done, the enlistee can be put in any MOS, regardless of preference or testing results. Generally speaking, the longer the training period for the MOS, the more likely the individual will be recruited to remain in the military.

² Help with finding a job post-military, etc.

³ For more information about veterans' benefits see <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>

to enlist in any branch of the active military.”⁴ Home educated graduates may also enlist in the military just as any publicly educated student and are able to enlist in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP).

Individuals who want to enlist must take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The score achieved is used to determine for which branches of the military the individual qualifies, each branch sets its own lowest score. The ASVAB is also used to determine for which jobs the individual qualifies. There are preparation programs (books and websites) if an individual is interested.

Requirements for enlisting include having earned a high school diploma and a minimum score on the ASVAB. Currently, any home educated student with an average ASVAB score⁵ should be permitted to enlist in any branch of the service. However, documentation of high school graduation will be required as well as demonstrating that the student’s home education program was conducted in compliance with the homeschooling requirements of the state of residence. For Pennsylvania students, that means that

1. An affidavit was filed each year the student was educated at home.
2. End of year documentation was submitted to the school district superintendent (the evaluation).
3. The student completed all graduation requirements as demonstrated on a transcript.
4. The student possesses a diploma.

The service branch into which someone wishes to enlist may require copies of the student’s evaluations for each year of education as well. From the research and experience of the author, the Navy and the Air Force tend to look more closely into a recruit’s educational background. The Army and the Marines are less concerned with the educational background as long as the recruit has completed high school honorably. Since compulsory attendance in PA does not begin until age 8, and many students are in 3rd grade at age 8, the supervisor of the home education program may need to locate some documentation of the individual’s 1st through 2nd or 3rd grade educational programs in order to satisfy this request.

It is not recommended that homeschooled students obtain a GED to join the military. Potential recruits are ranked into three tiers:

- Tier 1: High school graduates
- Tier 2: GED recipients
- Tier 3: High School Dropouts.

⁴<https://www.usa.gov/join-military>

⁵ The average will change each year. It is calculated by combining the scores of everyone who takes the test and computing the average. The recruiter should be able to tell the potential enlistee whether his or her ASVAB score will qualify him or her for enlistment.

Since 2014, home educated graduates are to be treated as Tier 1, high school graduates, according to Federal law. If the individual holds a GED, however, enlistment in the military may be denied. The reason for this classification system is that the military spends a huge amount of money to recruit and train military personnel. It is in the best interests of the recruits and the military (as well as taxpayers!) that the contract entered into upon enlistment is honored. It has been demonstrated over many years that these three classifications, along with the ASVAB score, will fairly accurately predict retention rate, or the recruit's completion of his or her contract with the military.

Recruits must also pass medical and fitness exams. Each branch of the military has set its own requirements for these exams.

Websites that may be helpful:

<https://www.usa.gov/join-military>

<http://official-asvab.com/index.htm>

Recruiters in the Franklin County area:

Army:

Chambersburg Mall

3055 Black Gap RD STE 822

Chambersburg, PA 17201

717-264-2812

<https://www.goarmy.com/locate-a-recruiter.E-R-NA-17201.result.html#locate-a-recruiter>

Air Force:

MSgt Matthew Simpson

Enlisted Recruiter

4940 Ritter Rd , Ste 106

Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Office: 717-461-1791

Mobile: 717-461-1791

MATTHEW.SIMPSON.6@US.AF.MIL<mailto:MATTHEW.SIMPSON.6@US.AF.MIL>

<https://www.airforce.com/find-a-recruiter>

Navy:

<https://www.navy.com/local>

Please contact by phone, email or Facebook to get in touch with your nearest recruiter.

CONTACT US:

NavyJobsEnlisted_GreatLakes@navy.mil<mailto:NavyJobsEnlisted_GreatLakes@navy.mil>

PHONE 1: 315.288.0689

PHONE 2: 412.395.4643

Marine Corps:

Complete the form to receive contact information for a Marine Corps recruiter or Officer Selection Officer (OSO) in your area to discuss opportunities.

<https://rmi.marines.com/>

Coast Guard:

Forty West Plaza 6499 Baltimore National Pike

Catonsville, Maryland 21228-3904

(410) 747-3963

HQS-SMB-CGRC-ROBALTIMORE@uscg.mil<mailto:HQS-SMB-CGRC-ROBALTIMORE@uscg.mil>

<https://www.gocoastguard.com/about-us/find-recruiter>

Additionally, Members of Congress may nominate candidates for appointment to four of the five U.S. service academies: U.S. Military Academy (USMA), West Point, NY; the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), Annapolis, MD; the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), Colorado Springs, CO; and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA), Kings Point, NY. The fifth service academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA), New London, CT, does not require a congressional nomination for appointment.

To request a Military Academy Nomination, please contact your federal legislator and request information for obtaining his or her support in this.

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