



# FAQ

## **Army Nurse Corps Frequently Asked Questions**

## General Questions and Concerns:

**What is Army ROTC?** Army ROTC (AROTC) is an elective curriculum you take along with your required college classes. It prepares you with the tools, training, and experiences that will help you succeed in any competitive environment. Along with great leadership training, Army ROTC can pay for your college tuition, too. You will have a normal college student experience like everyone else on campus, but when you graduate, you will be an Officer in the US Army. An Officer earns nearly \$40,000 starting salary, free medical benefits, and 30 days paid vacation annually with unlimited sick days.

**How long do I serve as an Army Nurse Officer?** You can serve full-time in the Army for 3 years (4 years for scholarship winners). Selected Cadets may choose to serve part-time in the US Army Reserves or Army National Guard while pursuing a civilian career.

**Why join AROTC as a nursing student?** If you're considering an undergraduate Nursing degree, joining AROTC can enhance your leadership skills and critical-thinking abilities while providing financial support to help make your personal and professional goals a reality. You will also find pride in knowing you are preparing to serve your country as an Army Nurse Corps (ANC) Officer.

**Why join the Army Nurse Corps as a nurse?** Being a nurse in the Army provides you with opportunities not found in the civilian world. As an Army Nurse and Officer, you will have the respect of your peers and coworkers, as well as opportunities to train and serve in a variety of specialties. The autonomy to practice nursing as part of the Army Health Care Team is unlike most civilian health care facilities. Your professional judgment will be the driving force behind ensuring that all aspects of a patient's care are addressed, and you'll be responsible for initiating coordination of a patient's multidisciplinary care.

**What are my obligations to the Army?** Accepting an AROTC Nursing scholarship entails signing a contract. This commits you to a total of 8 years. In exchange for 2, 3, or 4 years of college tuition and stipend, the graduate nurse agrees to serve on active duty for at least 4 years. After the "obligation" phase, you may choose to stay on active duty or leave active service. If you choose to leave the service, you would have an additional obligation which can be fulfilled by:

- Army Reserves or National Guard
  - Monthly drills
  - 2 weeks annual training
- Individual Ready Reserve (IRR)
  - No monthly drills
  - Potential to participate in annual training
  - Available in case of national emergency (deployable)

## Education/Clinical Training Questions:

**What kind of degree must I obtain?** All Active Duty ANC Officers are graduates of an accredited BSN program and hold, a minimum, the degree of BSN. The US Army Reserves selects both AND/RNs and BSN/RNs into their service. Once you graduate you must have a full, unrestricted license from any of the 50 states or territories.

**What type of scholarship is available and how do I know if I qualify?** The AROTC program offers 2, 3, or 4 year scholarships for undergraduate Nursing students. Scholarships pay full tuition, \$1,200 annual book costs, and a monthly tax-free stipend, \$300, \$350, \$450, \$500, based on your academic year. The following criteria must be met to be eligible for scholarship consideration:

- Be a US citizen
- Be between ages 17 and 27 (must be 30 or younger when you graduate)
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Score a minimum of 920 on the SAT or 19 on the ACT
- Have a college GPA of at least 2.5 (must be competitive to progress within the school of nursing program)
- Meet physical standards (must pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT))
- Be medically qualified (must pass an Army physical)
- Agree to accept a commission and serve in the Army on Active Duty or in a Reserve Component (US Army Reserve or National Guard)

**What is the Nurse Summer Training Program?** The Nurse Summer Training Program (NSTP) is a paid, three-week “internship” designed to introduce you to the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) and to the roles and responsibilities of an ANC Officer. Under the supervision of an experienced ANC Officer in one of the Army’s hospitals throughout the US and Germany, you will obtain hands-on clinical experience that will allow you to hone your clinical skills, develop your problem-solving techniques, and become comfortable with developing your professional skills as a member of the US Army Health Care Team.

**What if I want to get my Master’s Degree?** The Army has a wonderful opportunity for those that wish to continue their educational training. Each year, Army nurses are selected to attend fully funded graduate training via the Long Term Health Education & Training Program. For 2005, 88 nurses were selected to attend either a Master’s or Doctoral program. Each nurse will continue to receive their full salary and benefits even though their job is to be a full-time student. The Army will also pay your tuition in full.

**What if I want to work in a clinical specialty?** The ANC has 6 clinical specialty training courses, in addition to the Master’s training programs offered through the Long Term Health Education & Training Program. These specialty courses are offered as 12-16 week, fully funded courses in the following areas: Intensive Care, Emergency, OB/GYN, Psychiatrics, Community Health, and Peri-operative Care.

## Education/Clinical Training Questions (Continues):

**How long is my orientation at the hospital?** A new program for Army Nurses who are recent college graduates will help bridge the gap between their academic training and the demands of the clinical environment and prepare them for deployment. The one-year Army Nurse Residency program begins Oct 2009 with more than 100 newly commissioned second lieutenants performing residency at 10 Army medical centers. The program is for new graduates with less than six months of acute care nursing experience. The new four-phase residency program begins with in-processing and a tour of the nurse's respective facility. Next, the nurse will learn organizational rules and information management programs. The last phases consist of clinical practice, working independently and learning deployment skills.

**When will I become a charge nurse or head nurse?** As soon as you complete orientation, you will begin your training to learn the skills required as a Charge Nurse. Most Army nurses will be able to function at that level by about 6 months of training. The opportunity to become a clinical head nurse varies greatly from hospitals to hospital throughout the Army and there is no set time for gaining this position. You can become a head nurse as early as 3 and as late as 12 years, but most hold the position at the 5-7 year mark and last anywhere from 1-3 years in each position.

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## Military Training Questions:

**Do I have to go to "Boot Camp?"** No. The AROTC program is an Officer commissioning program. "Boot Camp," or Basic Training, is an enlisted Soldier training program. All ANC Officers attend a specialized Officer Basic Leadership Course (OBLC). It is a 10-week school in San Antonio, Texas, where you learn the basics about how to be an Army Officer. There is a limited (3-4 day) field training exercise where you get your first chance to see what an Army Field Hospital looks like. This exercise is a hands-on experience of how medical care is delivered in a field setting. By attending AROTC, you will acquire considerable amounts of knowledge and experience that most Direct Commissioned Officers have not received, and during OBLC this experience will be noted by your leaders.

**Will I have to deploy?** Army Nurses are an integral part of a medical team that is dedicated to protecting the lives of those who safeguard America. As an Army Nurse, there are possibilities to deploy to areas around the world in support of military operations. These opportunities are sporadic and vary in nature from providing hurricane relief support in the Caribbean to supporting combat operations in Iraq. Even though the media focus on the large number of military members deployed around the world, there are actually very few Army Nurses that are currently deployed and, in a typical year, less than a hundred or so are deployed around the world at any given time.

An overwhelming majority of your time spent as an Army Nurse will be spent as a clinical nurse working in a large, state-of-the-art medical facility. During those rare times that you may be called upon to serve away from your hospital, it will be because it is absolutely essential to have the best medical care in the world available to those in need. Some examples of those needing our expertise are: children who live in a third world country, victims of a natural disaster, and the brave soldier that risk their lives to defend and support freedom.

## Military Training Questions (Continues):

**How much danger will I be in?** Although military operations can be extremely hazardous for those folks that are on the front lines, it is actually relatively safe for those supporting elements that are not directly involved in combat operations, such as a hospital. The Army takes great measures to ensure the safety of the medical facilities and personnel assigned to each unit. One Army Nurse was quoted as saying, “I’ve been an Army Nurse for 10 years. I have deployed overseas to combat areas on two separate occasions and, in my travels, have never felt that the Army has placed me in any more danger than when I drive my car, fly in an airplane or walk alone through downtown at night. There is, without a doubt, a need for medical personnel to be there in order to save lives. This overwhelming need far outweighs the unlikely chance of danger.”

**What is a “field hospital?”** A “field” hospital is what the Army uses as a deployable medical facility. They are basically tents that are moved via rail/ship/truck and set-up by the personnel assigned to each facility. They range in size from 296 to 500 beds and are fully equipped with lights, ac/heating units, running water, dining and laundry/bath facilities. These hospitals are capable of performing life-saving surgeries, emergency care, peri-operative care, intensive care, inpatient ward care, x-ray/CT scans, laboratory/blood bank services, dental repair, physical therapy, and pharmaceutical services. When these services are no longer necessary, the hospital is taken down, packed up, and returned to a storage facility until it is needed again.

**How often do I have to work out?** The Physical Training (PT) schedule is dependent on your ROTC department. PT is usually 3 times per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) and the schedule will be arranged around your clinical class schedule. Once on active duty, Army Nurses work in a hospital and have rotating days/night shifts that last 8 to 12 hours. Due to 24-hour operations, Army hospitals do not conduct organized PT on a regular basis. Organized PT sessions do occur in May and October each year so all staff can participate in the required Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). Therefore, your physical training and preparations for the APFT are done on an individual basis that best fits your work/sleep schedule.

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## Personal Life Questions:

**What if I want to get married? What happens to my spouse?** Many Army Nurses (about 67%) are married and have children. As an Officer, your family will be allowed to move with you to your duty assignment. Of our married Officers, many are married to other service members. If that is the case, there are Army programs available to ensure you and your spouse are located together at an Army post.

**Do I have to live in open barracks and use community showers?** No. As an Army Officer you will be able to afford comfortable housing, through your Basic Housing Allowance (BAH), either on or near the Army installation to which you are assigned.

**How often do I have to move?** As an Officer, you typically move every 3-4 years. The Army will take care of your moving expenses and provide additional funding for travel, lodging, and meal costs during your move. In addition, a contracted moving agency will come to your house, pack/ship your belongings, deliver them once you found your next home, and remove/unpack all packing materials.

## Personal Life Questions (Continues):

**Where will my first duty assignment be located?** There are 37 military hospitals throughout the US, Korea, and Germany. Most are located within the continental United States. During your senior year, you will request an assignment at the hospital that you would like to be assigned. The Army Nurse Corps works extremely hard to ensure all the new graduates receive one of their top 3 choices of location assignments.

**What if I don't want to move to where the Army wants to send me?** If you are assigned to an area that doesn't suit your needs, each Army Nurse has an ANC branch manager who works with each individual to find a location that will make him/her happy while providing the necessary opportunities for career advancement within the ANC and, also, meet the needs of the Army. Once you have met your active duty obligation incurred during AROTC, you have the option of resigning from active duty and either remaining where you are currently located or having the Army move you home.

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## Facts: Additional Incentives for all Nursing Cadets

- Reimbursement for 1 NCLEX review course (i.e. Kaplan)
- \$200 towards NCLEX testing fees (additional fees not included)
- Medical Equipment
  - Stethoscopes (worth \$250) to Juniors
  - PDA (worth \$250) to Seniors
- Nurses Summer Training Program (NSTP)
  - 3-4 week paid clinical experience with Active Duty Army Nurse
  - Available at Medical Centers (MEDCENs)
    - Landstuhl, Germany
    - Tripler, Hawaii
    - Walter Reed, Washington, DC
    - Womack, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina
    - Eisenhower, Ft. Gordon, Georgia
    - Darnall, Ft. Hood, Texas
    - Brook, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas
    - Beaumont, Ft. Bliss, Texas
    - Madigan, Ft. Lewis, Washington