United States Service Academy Opportunities
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US Armed Forces

- 1,430,000 active duty personnel serve in our military (<1% of Americans)
- There are 811,000 reserve and guardsman currently serving
- Women and minorities comprise 14-19% and 24-30% of the armed forces (active duty/reserve)
- Department of Defense responsible for the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps
- Coast Guard falls under the purview of the Department of Homeland Security
Officers

• Leaders and managers
• 10-20% of service personnel
• Must have a minimum of a BA/BS degree and have completed a commissioning program
• Usually a generalist but some are specialists
• Career examples: pilot, nurse, lawyer, civil engineer, accountant, logistician, infantry, etc.
• Ranks include LT or Ensign, Captain, Colonel, etc.
Career Paths

Every Job in the Civilian World Has a Military Equivalent

- Medical
- Administrative
- Scientific/Technical
- Etc.

Career field based on major, academic/athletic/leadership performance, medical requirements and service needs

- Emphasis on Technology, Leadership, Global Operations, and Humanitarian Missions
Officer Commissioning Sources
Army/Navy/Air Force

Coast Guard
Options: College Pre-Commissioning, CG Academy & OCS
What is a Service Academy?

• Federally funded military college designed to prepare leaders of character for a lifetime of service
• Graduates enter the armed forces as an officer, serving 5 years (active duty)
• Fully funded education, valued between $220,000-$425,000
• Highly competitive to enter (average 10% admit)
5 US Service Academies

• United States Military Academy (Army – West Point), West Point NY – 4,000 cadets
• United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs CO) – 4,200 cadets
  United States Naval Academy (Annapolis – Annapolis MD) – 4,300 midshipmen
• United States Coast Guard Academy (New London CT) – 1,200 cadets
• United States Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point NY) – 1,100 midshipmen
Eligibility

- US Citizen (upon entering the academy (not the prep school))
- At least 17 years old but no more than 23 the summer entering
- Unmarried, no dependents (while there)
Class Profile (2016 Cycle)

CGPA (out of 4.0), ACT Composite, SAT CR/M, Acceptance Rate

- Air Force 3.87, 30, 640, 670, 11.8%
- Navy 3.89, 31, 625, 655, 13%
- Army 3.7, 29, 634, 652, 11%
- Coast Guard 3.7, 27-28, 620, 657, 16%
- Merchant Marine 3.6, 28, 600, 626, 18%

(Rates comparable to Penn, Duke, Pomona, Johns Hopkins, Rice...
How is Life Different at a Service Academy?

Education and Training

• All students earn BS degrees
  – STEM emphasis
• Challenging course loads (ex. 18-19 credits each semester)
• Every student is a scholar athlete
• Train most of the year (including two-thirds of the summer)
• Military discipline and structure and leadership development
Athletics

- Air Force, Army, Navy Division 1 sports
- Merchant Marine and Coast Guard Division III athletics
- Club and Intramural sports (everyone participates)
  - Wide range of options on land, sea and in the air
Summer Career Orientation

Air Force/Army Aviation

Navy/CG/MMA Life at Sea

• Tactical training in a field environment

ALL: Overseas travel/language and humanitarian projects
Cadet Basic Orientation

Training begins in late June (“Beast, Cadet Basic, Plebe or Swab Summer”)
- Lasts until late summer
- Transition from individuals into a team
- Physical, mental, emotional challenges
- Survival and small arms training
- Leadership and teamwork emphasis
- Recognition as a cadet
Application Process

• Lengthy...students MUST be organized and proactive
• Lots of room for errors/missed deadlines
• High standards (fitness, medical)
• Easy to lose focus or motivation – complex for a reason

*These apps cannot be completed in 45 mins. or even a weekend*
Application Timeline

• Students can begin late junior year. Ideally they have already demonstrated interest and participated in summer programs and outreach events

• Each academy has different application start dates and deadlines. Typically students can begin submitting documents in late summer going into senior year. Files generally must be complete by late Dec/early Jan

• Some academies have rolling admissions, others board candidates throughout the year. Some publish notification dates, others don’t. Some offer EA. Schools with nominations can send LOA’s
Common Problems

• Fitness Assessments - candidates delay, get injured and run out of time to test

• Medically Disqualified – braces, acne medication, double vision, multiple concussions, medication for attention deficit, depression/anxiety, sleepwalkers

• Fail to receive a nomination – some areas are extremely competitive

_The solutions? Start early and have back-up plans!_
Application Steps

- Research your commissioning options
- Begin a pre-candidate questionnaire (preliminary application)
- Start the nomination applications to every source
- Complete the physical fitness exam (CFA)
- Submit teacher and counselor LOR’s
- Complete personal data form
- Construct essays (and resume), finish application components
- Forward transcripts and test scores
- Complete medical evaluation
- Reach out to local and regional admissions officers and prepare for interviews
Preparatory Schools

Academies Sponsor

• May be on campus or elsewhere
• Review of HS English, Math, and Science
• Military training, athletics, time management and study skills

Private Prep Schools

• Student may have Academy financial support or go on their own
• Choose from several military schools or PG programs
• Academics, athletics, some offer military training, test taking skills and career mentors
Academy Summer Opportunities

• Summer Seminar: HS Juniors apply in early winter. 1 week orientation to military careers and cadet life. Highly competitive

• Athletic Camps: Available to HS students. Open to the public

• SAME Engineering Camps: Career exposure to military opportunities. Competitive

• STEM Camp: 1 week (9th-11th grade). Competitive.
ROTTC (A Great Alternative)

- Reserve Officer Training Corps—a P/T program for F/T college students at civilian colleges
- Army, Navy/MC and AF offer it at colleges throughout the US
- Generally a 4 yr program

- Academic classes (electives) on military topics
- Leadership Labs (run by cadets/mids)
- Athletic training
- Career exposure
- Scholarship & career opps
Senior Military Colleges

- Primarily public 4 year colleges
- Active Corps of Cadets Program (military dorms, daily PT, leadership emphasis)
- Not all cadets will earn a commission

- Virginia Tech
- Texas A&M
- Norwich Univ
- Univ of No GA
- Citadel, VMI (military schools)
Academy Admissions Tips

- Admissions is a lengthy process – start preparing early! Sophomore or junior year is ideal
- Candidates evaluated on the “whole person” concept
- Integrity, character, moral background important (drugs, arrests a problem)
- Candidates need have a solid CGPA and strong test scores (SAT or ACT) for direct admission. Writing portion not required
- Every student is a scholar athlete. No athletics = no admission
- You must be medically and physically qualified (tests for both)
- Unusual experiences, language/travel, hardships, diversity (ethnicity, geographic, socioeconomic) important
- Most academies require a liaison officer interview(s)
- You must have a congressional nomination (exception: Coast Guard)
Final Points

• DEMONSTRATING INTEREST is HUGE
• FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Every interaction with your liaison, academy, or congressional office is an interview
• Apply to EVERY nominating source
• Again, start preparing early (summer programs, learn about the military, prepare academically, build your resume, etc.)
• Mock interviews are helpful
• Plan ahead to finish ahead of deadlines—there may be complications with medical exams or injuries that prevent students from meeting entrance requirements
• Each school has its own level of competitiveness
  • CG is extremely difficult, Navy and AF very challenging, MMA and Army are slightly easier

And lastly, HAVE ALTERNATIVE PLANS (ROTC, PREP SCHOOL, REAPPLY)
Who Thrives as an Officer?

Highly motivated leader of character

gives 110% adventurous selfless

hard working academically talented proactive

physically and mentally strong desire to be your best
Why the Academies?

• Some of our nation’s best and brightest young leaders

• Unparalleled opportunities for learning, research, career exploration, and cultural immersion

• For those students who want to serve and are ready for a challenge—not your ordinary college experience!
For More Information

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Academy websites
Individual military branch websites