

## ARMY NURSE CORPS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### GENERAL QUESTIONS:

**What is Army ROTC?** Army ROTC 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 Army who earns nearly \$40,000 starting salary, free medical benefits and 30 days paid vacation annually.

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

**Why join Army ROTC as a nursing student?** If you're considering an undergraduate Nursing degree, joining Army ROTC 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 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.

### EDUCATION/CLINICAL TRAINING QUESTIONS:

**What kind of degree must I obtain?** All Active Duty Army Nurse Corps officers are graduates of an accredited BSN program and hold, at a minimum, the degree of BSN. The United States' Army Reserves selects both ADN/RNs and BSN/RNs into their service.

**What type of scholarship is available and how do I know if I qualify?** The Army ROTC program offers two-, three- or four-year scholarships for undergraduate Nursing students. Scholarships pay up to \$20,000 annual tuition, \$900 annual book costs, and a monthly tax-free stipend b/w \$250-\$400, based on academic year. The following criteria must be met to be eligible for consideration:

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

**What is the Nurse Summer Training Program?** The Nurse Summer Training Program is a paid, three-week "internship" designed to introduce you to the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) and to the roles

and responsibilities of an Army Nurse Corps Officer. Under the supervision of an experienced Army Nurse Corps Officer in one of the Army's hospitals throughout the U.S. 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 U.S. Army Healthcare 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/benefits even though their job is to be a full-time student and they will have their tuition paid by the Army.

**What if I want to work in a clinical specialty?** The Army Nurse Corps has six 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, Labor & Delivery, Psychiatric, Community Health and Peri-operative Care.

**When will I become a charge nurse or head nurse?** All new Army nurses will receive some type of organized hospital orientation once they arrive at their first duty station. This orientation can range anywhere from 3-8 weeks, depending on your location and skill level. 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 hospital 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.

## **MILITARY TRAINING QUESTIONS:**

**Do I have to go to "boot camp"?** No. The Army ROTC program is an Officer commissioning program. "Boot camp", or Basic Training, is an enlisted Soldier training program. All Army Nurse Corps Officers attend a specialized Officer Basic Course. 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.

**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 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 that does not have the facilities or resources to provide such simple life saving measures as administering

immunizations or performing cleft lip/palate repair; victims of natural disasters that have no medical assets as the result of a hurricane, tornado or tsunami; and the brave Soldiers that risk their lives to defend and support freedom throughout the world who, once wounded in combat, require immediate trauma resuscitation and medical treatment to ensure a safe return home.

**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. As of today, January 1, 2005, there have been no fatalities within the Army Nurse Corps in any military operations conducted as part of the United States' War on Terror. 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-rays/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.

**How often do I have to do physical training?** The Physical Training, or PT, schedule is dependent on your ROTC department. PT is usually 3 times per week and the schedule will be arranged around your clinical class schedule. Once on active duty, Army nurses work in a hospital and have rotating day/night shifts that last 8 or 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, or APFT. Therefore, your physical training and preparations for the APFT are done on an individual basis that best fits your work/sleep schedule.

## **PERSONAL LIFE QUESTIONS:**

**What if I want to get married? What happens to my spouse?** Many Army Nurse Corps Officers (about 67%) are married and have children. As an Officer in the Army, 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 either on or near the Army installation to which you are assigned.

**How often do I have to move?** As an officer in the Army, you typically move from one duty location to another every 3-4 years. The Army will take care of your moving expenses and provides additional funding for travel, lodging and meal costs during your move. In addition, a contracted moving agency will come to your home, pack/ship your belongings, deliver them once you've found your next home and unpack/remove all unwanted packing materials from your home.

**Where will my first duty assignment be located?** There are 37 military hospitals throughout the U.S, 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 three 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 Army Nurse Corps 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 Army Nurse Corps and, also, meet the needs of the Army. Once you have met your active duty obligation incurred during ROTC, you have the option of resigning from active duty and either remaining where you are currently located or having the Army move you home.