

# THE ARMY NURSE PROFESSIONAL

## A VITAL MEMBER OF THE ARMY HEALTH CARE TEAM

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As officers and leaders, Army nurses are given a great deal of responsibility beginning with their first assignment. They supervise a variety of professional and paraprofessional health care providers at Army health care facilities, are responsible for making decisions about day-to-day patient care, and have the authority to ensure that their decisions are carried out.

As nurses progress in the Army Nurse Corps (ANC) so do their professional careers. Nurses are rewarded with regular increases in salary, rank, and responsibility, and have many opportunities to demonstrate their potential for promotion. It is not uncommon for a staff nurse to become a head nurse in just three or four years.

### EDUCATION

The ANC encourages nurses to improve their skills and enhance their professional experience through a variety of educational programs including continuing education courses, specialty courses, and postgraduate opportunities to attend civilian nursing programs at Army expense. Continuing education courses enable nurses to keep up with the latest developments in nursing. Many courses are taught at Army installations, and ANC officers may receive time and funding to take civilian courses not conducted at their facility. Specialty courses offer up-to-date clinical and theoretical information. They last 16-22 weeks and are held at select Army medical facilities. The ANC offers courses in the

following nursing specialties: Obstetrical/Gynecological Nursing, Critical Care Nursing, Perioperative Nursing, Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing, Community Health Nursing, and Emergency Nursing.

Army nurses may also be selected to complete a masters or doctorate in a civilian graduate program and nursing specialty of their choice. Those nurses interested in pursuing a master's degree in nurse anesthesia may also apply for acceptance into the Army's University of Texas at Houston, Health Science Center (UTHHSC) Program or the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USUHS) in Rockville, Maryland. Qualified nurses receive tuition, pay, and allowances while attending advanced schooling full-time.

For nurses who complete their masters in a clinical specialty, the ANC offers advanced practice nursing opportunities. Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) include nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse anesthetists and nurse midwives. All APNs bring a mature knowledge of nursing to patient care. They have the unique opportunity to integrate the inpatient and outpatient care continuum by following the patient through an entire episode of care (with the exception of nurse anesthetists who focus primarily on tertiary care delivery during surgery). The emphasis in all phases of advanced practice nursing is on patient teaching and preparing patients to take an active responsibility for their own health. This yields improved

adherence to treatment plans and the patient knowledge necessary to appropriately seek early intervention for health problems.

### Specialty Pay:

In addition to their salary, Advanced Practice Nurses are eligible to receive specialty pay based on years of creditable military service and military service obligation status.

### Incentive Specialty Pay:

Nurse Anesthetists - \$6,000 to \$15,000 annually.

### Board Certification Pay:

Family Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Anesthetists, and Nurse Midwives - \$2,000 to \$5,000 annually. (Community Health Nurses and Clinical Nurse Specialists who meet the requirements specified in the BCP Program guidelines may also apply for consideration.)

### HOW TO JOIN

The Army recruits and trains nurses so that they fully understand their responsibilities and privileges as officers. The decision to join the Army Nurse Corps is an important one and should be made with a full understanding of the commitment as well as the rewards.

The first step in joining the ANC is to contact your local **Army Health Care Recruiter**. You can find the Army Health Care Recruiter in your area by calling 1-800-USA-ARMY or visiting our Web site at [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com). Not only can Health Care Recruiters answer any questions you have about the

application process, they can also impart, from personal and professional experience, important information about the Army way of life. Once the Health Care Recruiters determine an applicant's eligibility, they will schedule a routine physical and an interview with an Army Medical Department officer. Both are submitted with the application. A board of Army Nurse Corps officers reviews the application and makes the selection decision.

An applicant officially accepts the offer of appointment by taking an oath of service and accepting a commission as an officer in the U.S. Army. The entire process, from the first meeting with the Army Health Care Recruiter to the commissioning ceremony, usually takes about three months.

### THE OFFICER BASIC COURSE AND PRECEPTORSHIP TRAINING

Following your commissioning, you will be introduced to the Army through the Officer Basic Course (OBC) at the AMEDD Center and School, Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. The course, which lasts 10 1/2 weeks for active duty nurses and two weeks for Reserve nurses, includes classroom instruction and field training, and covers everything from Army customs to management of casualties. You will also participate in physical fitness training.

Should you decide to take on a challenging role in the Army Nurse Corps, you will be paired with a preceptor to ensure that your transition from civilian nursing to the Army Health Care Team environment is as smooth as possible. Preceptors function as mentors working closely with you. They help develop your leadership and management skills, as well as familiarize you with the many aspects of military life.

### YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

Army medical facilities range from large tertiary medical centers to community hospitals to clinics. You may practice in more nontraditional environments, including research institutes, government agencies and field hospitals. There are seven Army medical centers across the United States and one in Europe. U.S. medical centers include Walter Reed in Washington, D.C., and Brooke in Texas — both of which are internationally recognized

facilities for treatment, education and research. All medical centers are full-service facilities.

Over 30 community hospitals are located in the United States and around the world. These facilities range in size and are located on Army installations. Clinics generally focus on ambulatory or outpatient care. The Army has numerous clinics across the country, as well as one in Japan and several in Germany.

### FIELD TRAINING EXERCISES

You may periodically participate in field training that sharpens your nursing skills and helps prepare you for deployment or disaster relief missions. A typical field training exercise could involve setting up a 60-bed hospital unit that includes radiology, pharmacy, medical supply, and medical and dental care laboratories. These exercises, which last from a few days to several weeks, take place both stateside and overseas. They include simulated patient care scenarios under a variety of challenging conditions.

### THE ARMY RESERVE

If you are interested in an alternative to full-time active-duty service, the Army Nurse Corps offers Reserve service provides a way to combine a civilian nursing career with many of the benefits of Army service. You enter the Army Reserve as a commissioned officer, earn a second income, and can pursue educational and career goals. At the same time, you have the opportunity to enhance your civilian career with the skills and knowledge you acquire in the Reserve. You will also be exposed to a new and diverse group of health care professionals.

Army Reserve nurses are usually assigned to a Reserve unit and serve two days each month, usually over a weekend. You can work in a wide range of environments, such as a modern hospital, working with seasoned professionals, or with paraprofessionals in a field hospital.

In the field, you will face the challenge of learning to manage mass casualties in support of ground operations. You will train enlisted personnel to stabilize fractures, treat open wounds and start IVs, and you will also evaluate equipment and field procedures. For two weeks each year, while participat-

ing in Annual Training, you may join a unit in field exercises, work in an Army hospital, attend professional seminars, or attend military or nursing education courses provided by the Army.

By choosing to be a nurse in the Army Reserve, you'll add an exciting new dimension to your life. And you will discover a whole new circle of friends and professional colleagues. As you meet people from different backgrounds, you will find that you share many of the same standards and goals. This gives you a great opportunity to forge friendships and professional contacts that will help you in your career.

Regardless of whether you join the Active Army or the Army Reserve, being an Army nurse will afford you a host of very rewarding and satisfying benefits. You will enter as a commissioned officer, have opportunities for continuing education and travel, receive post exchange and commissary shopping privileges, a uniform allowance, low-cost life insurance, and dental benefits. And, if you serve the requisite number of years, you will earn retirement benefits.

Active Army benefits also include:

- Earn 30 days paid leave annually
- No- or low-cost medical benefits
- No-cost, on-post housing or housing allowance
- Army posts provide an excellent environment for you and your family. They have quality schools and child care centers, as well as libraries, theaters, shopping, and many recreational facilities like golf courses, tennis and racquetball courts, swimming pools, and fitness centers.

Your first step toward taking advantage of nursing opportunities in the Army and Army Reserve is to contact your local Army Health Care Recruiter, who can answer your questions and explain the benefits in more detail. For the name of your nearest recruiter, call 1-800-USA-ARMY or visit the Army website at [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com).