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Royal Navy and Royal Marines



Opportunities in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines range from operational work on ships and aircraft through to supply and medical work. Vacancies exist at all levels, from jobs needing no qualifications to careers for graduates. Diving, the Submarine Service and the Royal Marines are the only areas closed to women.



**Security and Armed Forces/
Armed Forces**

Is life in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines for me?

You need:

- good team-working skills
- adaptability
- self-discipline
- to get on easily with other members of the crew – a small ship or submarine is no place for the person who likes to be alone
- to be tolerant of other people
- to be prepared to be away from home for long periods
- to be fit and healthy
- for officers particularly – good leadership and communication skills, initiative and judgement.

The Royal Navy

A life on the ocean waves? Perhaps many young men and women think of going to sea when they get fed up with life at home. However, the Navy is no romantic escape route, but a highly technological and disciplined maritime defence force with advanced ships, propulsion systems, sensors, weapons, aircraft and so on. There are opportunities in the Surface Fleet, the Fleet Air Arm and the Submarine Service.

A career in the Royal Navy can offer you a wide variety of experiences. You may find yourself assisting with anti-terrorism or peacekeeping duties anywhere in the world, surveying in the Antarctic, providing disaster relief in Asia, protecting threatened fish stocks in the North Sea or hunting drug shipments in the Caribbean!

The Royal Navy plays a vital role in defending this country's interests in home waters and overseas, on and beneath the sea, in the air and on land. Some 35,000 uniformed personnel operate over 120 ships and submarines and nearly 300 aircraft and a commando brigade.

You will need to wear a uniform and accept discipline. You will have to serve wherever the Navy needs you to go, in peace or war, however inconvenient or dangerous that may be – sometimes for months at a time. On the other hand, you will be with plenty of other people around your age, form lasting friendships – and see the world!

A career in the Navy can allow you to develop skills which can be used in employment later in life. Because not many people stay in the Navy until retirement age, a resettlement package is offered to help you in the transition to civilian life.

The ranks – trades

Once you are selected for entry, you can train for a wide range of trades. Assessment tests will help you and the Navy decide which work area will be suitable for you. Your training may lead to nationally-recognised qualifications.

For a detailed list of the trades available, look on the Royal Navy website or ask for a booklet from your nearest Armed Forces Careers Office. The main trades categories are:

- the warfare branch, including electronic warfare, weapons, submarine, communications, survey recording and diving
- engineering branch – weapons, marine and aircraft
- logistics branch, which includes administration, catering and stores
- medical branch
- the Fleet Air Arm – pilots, observers and aircraft handlers.

After completing training, you are likely to be posted to a ship for about two and a half years. If you are on a submarine (still a men-only job), you may spend weeks underneath the ocean, perhaps without even knowing where you are.

Between ship postings, periods of at least 18 months may be spent in a shore posting.

The ranks – entry

Rating

Entry is usually from 16 to 32 years (i.e. until your 33rd birthday). There are no particular GCSE entry requirements for most jobs (some that do have requirements are described below). All applicants undergo an entry test, selection interview and medical examination. Successful applicants enter the Royal Navy on an 'Open Engagement'. This means a pensionable engagement for 22 years with the right to leave at 12 months' notice any time after completing two and a half years (from the age of 18 or from the completion of initial training, whichever is later).

There is a premature-release option for anyone who decides they are not suited to the life during the first few months. On the other hand, it might be possible to extend service by a further ten years, making 32 years in all, when you would be eligible for a larger pension.

During training, pay is over £11,000 a year. On completion of training, an Able Rating starts on £13,866, with the potential to rise to over £40,000.

Artificer apprentice

Entry age range is as for ratings. The artificers are the technicians of the Royal Navy and will get the most rapid promotion. They can rise to commissioned rank simply with a good background of GCSEs. Artificers specialise in weapons and marine engineering.

To be selected for artificer training, you will have to pass aptitude tests, an interview and a medical. You also need either GCSEs at grades A*-C, including mathematics, English language and science, or successful completion of the first year of a BTEC National qualification in engineering with a GCSE grade A*-C in English language; or other qualifications which the Navy considers to be equivalent. The terms of engagement are the same as for rating entry.

Communications technician (CT)

Entry age range is as for ratings. The academic entry requirements are GCSEs at grades A*-C in English and maths. You also need to pass aptitude tests. Training is given either as a linguist, learning one foreign language to a high standard, or as an analyst, in which case the training concentrates more on the communications systems themselves. Recruitment is only occasional; check with Armed Forces Careers Offices on the present situation. Applicants need to be British subjects.

Medical assistant

Age of entry is from 17 to 32. No specific qualifications, but a good school report for younger entrants, the right temperament and the ability to pass a selection test are needed. As a trained paramedic, you may have to take on a lot of responsibility early in your career. Red Cross and City & Guilds qualifications can be obtained.

Officers – specialisations

- *Warfare officer* – responsible for the navigation, fighting and general running of the ship.
- *Engineer officer* – very diverse careers including weapons engineer officer, marine engineer officer and air engineer officer.
- *Logistics officer* – includes welfare and personnel work, catering, stores etc.
- *Training management officer* – responsible for the delivery and management of education and training, from basic to postgraduate levels.
- *Aircrew officer* – pilot, observer and air traffic control.
- *Medical officer* – doctors and dentists.
- *Information systems officer* – working with computer systems, project management and training.

Officers – entry

There are several entry routes:

- Naval College Entry (NCE) – with five GCSEs at grades A*-C and 140 UCAS points.
- Direct Graduate Entry (DGE)
- entry via one of several sponsorship schemes.

It is also possible to gain promotion from the ranks.

Direct Graduate Entry

This requires a degree acceptable to the Ministry of Defence (consult your local naval careers liaison officer for details) and also GCSEs at grades A*-C in maths and English.

The naval services use very advanced technology, so a high proportion of officer recruits are graduates. There are equal opportunities for men and women entrants; the only restriction on women is that they cannot serve in submarines or as divers.

The upper age limit for entry varies – e.g. a direct graduate entrant as a warfare officer must be under 26, as an engineering officer must be under 30.

Sponsorship schemes

- *Scholarships and reserved places* – these financial awards enable students with five suitable GCSEs at grades A*-C, including maths and English, to undertake sixth-form study for one or two years. Apply by 1 June. Scholarships to Welbeck residential college are also available for naval recruits.
- *Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS)* – awards bursaries to applicants entering higher education to study for an engineering degree at Southampton, Newcastle, Aston or Loughborough Universities. The Royal Navy Engineering bursary is £5500 and can be awarded during any year of a degree course.
- *University sponsorship* – can be a bursary, paid to undergraduates who are potential officers. Alternatively, it can be a university cadetship, which is harder to obtain and provides an officer's pay while studying. N.B. Bursaries may be subject to repayment if you change your mind or fail the course.

Potential officers need to show initiative, judgement and strong communication skills. An understanding of current affairs and life in the Armed Forces is expected. All applicants must appear before the Admiralty Interview Board. The interview is in addition to several practical and written tests spread over a couple of days. These

can be pretty demanding and competition is tough.

Officer training starts at the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, followed by a further period of training at sea. Officers who decide not to complete the full length of their commission can give notice after a minimum period of service, which varies according to the length and cost of their training.

Your commission

Officer entrants join the Royal Navy on an initial commission, which will be for a period of 12 years. All officer entrants, regardless of their entry route, then have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their future potential in productive employment, when applying for longer commissions. Selections for further commissions start two or three years after completion of initial training.

Pay and prospects

A Naval College entrant enters as a midshipman, rising to sub-lieutenant after two years. A graduate, or an entrant over the age of 21, starts as a sub-lieutenant, rising to lieutenant commander by their early 30s – a middle-management position.

On entry, a midshipman earns over £14,000 per year. A graduate entrant earns more than £21,000 to start, rising to over £32,000 on promotion to lieutenant.

The Royal Marines

The Marines were originally formed as a force of soldiers who fought on or from Royal Navy ships. Their main role now is as commando troops, specialising in snow, jungle, mountain and amphibious warfare. They have to be ready to move at short notice to wherever they are required, by helicopter, aircraft or ship. Marines are expected to be very tough, fit soldiers. Entry standards are high and training is very hard.

Women cannot join the Royal Marines (other than in the Band Service) at present.

The ranks – entry

Entry is either as a marine (males only), a musician or a bugler. Age limits are from age 16 to your 28th birthday. There are no formal entry requirements, but all entrants must pass selection tests, an interview and medical.

Musician and bugler applicants (males and females) are required to take an audition, where their musical aptitude will be tested. Training is undertaken at the Royal Marines School of Music in Portsmouth.

Officers – entry

Methods of entry are broadly similar to those listed under the Royal Navy; i.e. the scholarship and reserved place scheme, university sponsorship, and direct graduate entry.



For further information

This leaflet can only give a brief summary of entry requirements and methods of entry to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. For full details, contact your local **Armed Forces Careers Office**, or **schools liaison officer**, or ring the **hotline: 0845 607 5555**. More information can be found on the Royal Navy's website: www.royalnavy.mod.uk

Working in the Armed Forces – published by DfES.

The Armed Forces – one of the *Real Life Guides* series published by Trotman, price £9.99



Other leaflets in this series which may interest you

- J 03 (*JAD 13*) Nursing and medical work in the Armed Forces
- MA 06 (*YAL 4*) Jobs on cruise ships
- UA 01 (*B 4*) The Armed Forces
- UA 02 (*BAF 2*) The Army
- UA 03 (*BAL 2*) Royal Air Force
- WF 01 (*YAL 1*) The Merchant Navy
- WF 02 (*YAL 3*) The Royal Fleet Auxiliary

N.B. Former leaflet references are in brackets.

The Armed Forces are committed to equality of opportunity but, because of particular conditions, some jobs are not open to women.

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