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# AVIATION

"AN EXTRA DIMENSION OF EXCELLENCE"



## Branch 15

### Aviation

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## 1. WHAT ABOUT BRANCH 15?

Aviation (Branch 15) is a combat arms branch capable of providing resources which increase the combined arms team's agility, speed, depth, maneuverability, flexibility and firepower on the modern battlefield. The mission of Army Aviation is to find, fix and destroy any enemy through fire and maneuver and to provide combat support and combat service support in coordinated operations as an integral member of the combined arms team. As such, the branch offers unique opportunities to both men and women. Some examples include:

- Leading aviation forces in the accomplishment of assigned missions.
- Specializing in various aircraft systems and tactical employment of these systems.
- Developing policy, doctrine, organizational structure, training and new technology in support of aviation personnel, operations and equipment.
- Providing staff guidance to both aviation and non-aviation headquarters and troop organizations.
- Testing and evaluating new flight systems and techniques in many tactical, terrain and climatic environments.



Figure 2. What About Branch 15?

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## 2. ROLE OF THE AVIATION BRANCH OFFICER

Within Army Aviation, Branch 15 officers look forward to key roles in combat, combat support, maintenance, air traffic control and intelligence operations. Aviation roles include offensive, defensive and special operations, troop and equipment movement, medical evacuation, battlefield surveillance, command and control, reconnaissance, security, airspace control and logistics operations. Equally important are aviation roles in the areas of combat development, training development and doctrine, recruiting, service school and training center instruction, and advisory duty with reserve component aviation units.

As aviators, however, each officer must be fully knowledgeable of and trained in the doctrinal and organizational facets of aviation and the other combat arms in order to command, direct and control aviation and land forces as an equal member of the combined arms team. In a future military conflict, the versatility and unique characteristics of rotary wing aircraft will provide Army Aviation the unmatched flexibility to be at the center of activity to influence the action.



**Figure 3. Blackhawk (utility helicopter)**

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**Figure 4. OH-58C - Kiowa (observation helicopter)**

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Figure 5. AH-1S - Cobra (attack helicopter)

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### 3. BECOMING A BRANCH 15 AVIATOR

Officer candidates attending the Branch Immaterial Officer Candidate Course (BIOCC) and cadets of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and the United States Military Academy (USMA) may apply during their respective pre-commissioning programs for flight training and Branch 15.

To be eligible for selection, applicants must pass a Class 1A flight physical examination and the flight aptitude selection test (FAST), and have performed well in BIOCC, ROTC or USMA. Those selected will attend the Aviation Officer Basic Course, followed by the Initial Entry Rotary Wing (IERW) Course at the U. S. Army Aviation Center, Fort Rucker, Alabama. Those who do not complete flight training will be required to continue their Army career in another branch. Officers who are already on active duty may also apply for flight training following the procedures outlined in Army Regulation 611-110, Selection and Training of Army Aviation Officers.



Figure 6. Aviation Branch Insignia

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Figure 7. UH-1H - Iroquois (utility helicopter)

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Figure 8. CH-47D - Chinook (medium lift helicopter)

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Figure 9. OV-10 - Mohawk (surveillance aircraft)

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#### 4. TRAINING AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Army trains branch 15 officers for assignments to many types of duty positions. These include command and staff positions in attack, air cavalry and assault helicopter units; general support helicopter and aviation maintenance units; aviation flight detachments; aerial surveillance and electronic warfare aviation units; air traffic control units; aviation systems research and development commands; reserve component advisor regions; and all Army headquarters elements.

It all begins with commissioning as an Army officer and attendance at the Aviation Officer Basic Course (AVNOBC), conducted at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

AVNOBC is designed to train and develop future aviation officers to be an integral part of the combined arms team. It provides training in leadership and soldiering fundamentals with an emphasis on combined arms operations. The course is approximately 9 weeks in length and is followed by 36 weeks of Initial Entry Rotary Wind (IERW) Training.

During the 36 weeks of IERW training you will receive approximately 215 total flight hours, of which 40 are in the flight simulator. Phases of training are the preflight, primary, UH-1 qualification, instrument qualification, combat skills, and professional development. Forty percent of each class is identified to transition to the OH-58 Kiowa and will begin this training upon entry into the Combat Skills phase.



Figure 10. Aviator Wings

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Figure 11.

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## 5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Upon successful completion of the officer basic course and flight training, aviators are assigned to an aviation unit, preferably in a combat arms environment. During this initial assignment, they can expect to gain maximum “hands-on” experience in leadership, aviation technology and tactical employment as section leaders, platoon leaders and operations officers. Development then continues in the officer advanced course. The majority of aviation officers will attend the Aviation Officer Advanced Course (AVNOAC) at Fort Rucker, while some aviation officers will attend another combat arms officer’s advanced course. The AVNOAC is attended with other company grade officers of the aviation field and builds on the experience gained in combined arms operations during those initial tactical assignments - further preparing aviation leaders for positions of even greater responsibility.

Depending on Army needs, individual performance skills, and demonstrated potential, officers may also be selected for further technical training in other Army aircraft or aviation functions. These aviation functions include aviation logistics, aviation intelligence and air traffic control. Follow-on assignments are concentrated in aviation positions but will also offer some opportunity to begin development in a functional area. Normally, this begins near the officer’s eighth year of service, however, it may vary slightly from that point due to the needs of the Army, special training, assignments or similar events.

Participation in a functional area continues to increase following promotion to major and during the field grade years. This is when officers are able to make maximum contributions to the Army in the Aviation Branch and their functional area. Training and assignments throughout a career are designed to prepare commissioned aviators to be effective commanders and staff officers in many types of units and at all levels of the Army organization. Further details on officer professional development can be found in DA Pamphlet 600-3, Officer Professional Development and Utilization Guide.



Figure 12. Aviator Wings

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Figure 13. OH-58D - AHIP (observation helicopter)

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Figure 14.

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## 6. ASSIGNMENT LOCATIONS

Army aviators are assigned to every combat division and corps throughout the Continental United States (CONUS) and overseas. Most of the aviation units within CONUS, Hawaii and Alaska are part of Forces Command (FORSCOM) and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Units will vary from small flight detachments (one or two aircraft) to companies, battalions and brigades, to an entire air assault division located at Fort Campbell, Kentucky (over 400 aircraft). Overseas, Army aviators perform critical missions in support of our commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe, Korea, Panama, and to military advisory groups in many countries around the world. Regardless of location, officers serving in Branch "15" assignments will enjoy the many challenges associated with the various combat, fire, maneuver and support roles they are called upon to perform.

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### MAJOR AVIATION UNITS



Figure 15. MAJOR AVIATION UNITS



Figure 16. Master Aviator Wings

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Figure 17.

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Figure 18.

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## 7. FORT RUCKER

Fort Rucker is located in the southeast corner of Alabama, between the towns of Daleville, Enterprise and Ozark.

Fort Rucker is the home of the U. S. Army Aviation Center and School; and its tenant activities include the U. S. Army Safety Center, the U. S. Army Aviation Development Test Activity and the U. S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory.



Figure 19. Enterprise Gate

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Figure 20. ABOVE THE BEST

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