National Athletic Trainers' Association

How to Become a Civilian Employee of the U.S. Armed Forces
By NATA Council on Employment

Of the many new work environments available to certified athletic trainers, one of the most demanding – and most rewarding – is working with the U.S. Armed Forces. Working with the military and providing immediate, quality care to active-duty soldiers and their dependents in a variety of settings is a challenge and there are many different opportunities. Because it is a relatively new avenue for certified athletic trainers to pursue, not everyone is aware of the protocol necessary to find a government job.

This guide will give you a few tips. The National Athletic Trainers' Association has gathered information on employment in the military branches and how to find your government job.

Each particular branch has it own employment policies, but most ATCs hired today are either independent contractors or part of the Government Civil Service system. There are numerous opportunities for certified athletic trainers to work on military instillations within the Morale, Welfare and Recreation system.

Marine Corps
Some of the best military work opportunities for athletic trainers are available through the Marine Corps' Community Services Semper Fit program. Each area of the program – Health Promotion, Sports, Recreation, Fitness and Recreational Safety – has a multitude of positions that require some educational background that mirrors the athletic training curriculums. Musculoskeletal injuries remain the single greatest impediment to mission readiness, which means athletic trainers are the perfect professionals to bridge the gap between health promotion, recreation, fitness and sports and medicine.

Job searches in these disciplines can be conducted online at www.usajobs.opm.gov, or at www.usmc-mccs.com. Additionally, there are currently eight civilian ATCs working directly with Marines stationed in various bases across the U.S.

Navy
The U.S. Navy offers many opportunities for ATC employment. One of the most notable is in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation system as Fitness Coordinators. They also may work as Training Specialists in developing safe and effective physical conditioning programs. The Navy Seals have currently contracted six ATCs to work directly with SEAL teams. These contracts are listed as "individual set aside" contracts and may or may not be advertised on the NATA Web Site. As recently as September 2003, the Navy Medical Center Portsmouth had contracted three ATCs in the orthopedic department to staff ancillary facilities throughout the Hampton, VA area. Also, an ATC has recently been assigned to an aircraft carrier as the Civilian Afloat Fitness Director. In addition to these opportunities, the Navy has several SMART centers, which are very similar to collegiate athletic training rooms. Visit www.navy.com/careers to learn more.

Air Force
Air Force opportunities appear limited at this time. However, interested ATCs should not refrain from pursuing jobs in the Air Force, particularly within the Morale, Welfare and Recreation system. Visit www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/ to learn more about possible career.

Army
Opportunities in the Army have been limited to date, but those available should be listed at www.cpol.army.mil. Morale, Welfare and Recreation jobs are also advertised on this Web site. Specific athletic training positions may not be listed, but ATCs are qualified for some positions under the categories of Arts and Recreation, Education and Training, Medical, Health Science and Public Health, Health Care Technical Support and Social Sciences and Welfare.

Coast Guard
The U.S. Coast Guard currently employs several contract ATCs at its Initial Training Site at Cape May, NJ. Some ATCs work directly with seaman whiles others work in the Fitness Center. Visit www.gocoastguard.com/jobs.html for information.

Military Service Academies
The Service Academies have long recognized the skills of certified athletic trainers, and employ more than 50 in the United States Air Force Academy, United States Naval Academy, United States Military Academy, United States Coast Guard Academy, United States Merchant Marine Academy and their associated Preparatory Schools combined. The Service Academies almost exclusively employ civilians to work with cadets and midshipmen. There is an even mix of contractor and civil service positions, and openings are advertised on the NATA Career Center, www.nata.org/careercenter/index.htm.

Armed Forces Athletic Training Society
The Armed Forces Athletic Training Society was organized in 2003 for civilian and military ATCs to promote and network within the military channels. Approximately 70 percent of the membership is military and 30 percent civilian. For more information, please contact Maj. Terry DeWitt at dewitt@obu.edu.

More references
After perusing these Web sites, you can find more information through the following guides.

- *The Book of US Government Jobs: Where They Are, What's Available and How to Get One* (8th Edition) -- Dennis V. Damp, Samuel Concialdi
- *Federal Resume Guidebook: Write a Winning Federal Resume to Get In, Get Promoted and Survive in a Government Job* -- Kathryn Kraemer Troutman
- *T*en *Steps to a Federal Job: Navigating the Federal System, Writing Federal Resumes, KSAS and Cover Letters with a Mission* -- Kathryn Kraemer Troutman
- *Where the Jobs Are in Local, State and Federal Government (Government Job Finder)* -- Daniel Lauber, Jennifer Atkin

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