



## **Strategic Sealift Officer Program**

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## **What is a Strategic Sealift Officer?**

Strategic Sealift Officers are commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy Reserve assigned to reserve U.S. Naval activities that support strategic sealift in times of national defense or emergency.

## **How are Strategic Sealift Officer Program (SSOP) U.S. Navy Reserve Officers different from other Reserve Officers?**

The SSOP is significantly different from other Navy Reserve programs. The program consists of only officers, all of whom are required to maintain U.S. Coast Guard Unlimited Tonnage or Horsepower Oceans Merchant Mariner Credentials. These officers actively participate with the U.S. Navy through the Strategic Sealift Readiness Group or the Selected Reserves.

## **How do you serve in the Navy as a Strategic Sealift Officer?**

Strategic Sealift Officers (SSO) serve in the Navy either through the Selected Reserves (SELRES) or through the Strategic Sealift Readiness Group (SSRG). While on orders, the SSO will provide subject matter expertise in marine engineering, operations and logistics. The majority of SSOs are in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) where they maintain a civilian career in the maritime industry and complete a minimum 2 week Active Duty Training (ADT) period annually. Opportunities for long term support are available.

The Strategic Sealift Officer Program's primary supported command is Military Sealift Command (MSC). As the primary supported command of SSOP Officers, MSC has been designated as the flag sponsor of the Strategic Sealift Officer Program. As such, MSC supervises the care, development and employment of the SSOP community in an effort to optimize the benefits provided by your education and civilian career. Typical ADTs will utilize the SSO's skill set afloat, in shipyards and in ports.

## **Is this a new Program?**

Merchant Marine Officers have been supporting the U.S. military in one form or another since the birth of our nation. During World War I a program was established to formalize this support. This program has endured. Formerly called the Merchant Marine Naval Reserve from 1925 to 1938, the Merchant Marine Reserve from 1938 to 2010 and since 2010, it is now called the Strategic Sealift Officer Program.

## **How do you become a Strategic Sealift Officer?**

- Graduate from the United States Merchant Marine Academy or any of the six State Maritime Academies (SUNY Maritime College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Maine Maritime Academy, Great Lakes Maritime Academy, California Maritime Academy, and Texas A&M Maritime Academy) with a U.S. Coast Guard Unlimited Oceans License (deck or engine).



- Complete the required course work designated by the Department of Naval Science at the United States Merchant Marine Academy or the NROTC unit at a State Maritime Academy.
- Fulfill all requirements to be commissioned a U.S. Naval Officer in the Navy Reserves.
- Once commissioned (1665 designator) and after completion of the Post Commissioning Indoctrination Course and the Strategic Sealift Officer Warfare Insignia Personnel Qualifications Standards (PQS) you will be approved to wear the SSO Insignia.

## **What is the required course work and other activities required while at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy or as part of the NROTC unit?**

In addition to your academic courses and license courses for your respective major, you must take two Naval Science program courses. At the State Maritime Academies, you must be an active member, referred to as Midshipman, in the NROTC unit and participate in activities such as weekly drill and physical fitness training.

## **What are the incentives and benefits associated with being a Midshipman in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program?**

While pursuing a U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credential, being a Midshipman in the Strategic Sea Lift Officer program gives you the opportunity to gain leadership experience, expand the potential career opportunities available to you upon graduation and serve your country as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy Reserves.

**Eligible Midshipmen enrolled in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program can receive an incentive payment of \$4,000 per semester up to a maximum of \$32,000 over four years.**

## **What are the eligibility requirements for Midshipmen participating in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program to be eligible for the incentive payment?**

To be eligible for SIP, a student must be:

- Physically qualified by the Department of Defense Medical Evaluation Review Board.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- In good standing with the NROTC unit in all facets of the program.

## **What are the requirements to be a Midshipman in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program?**

- Be a United States Citizen.
- Possess a strong desire to serve in the U.S. Navy in a leadership role.



- Be accepted and enrolled at SUNY Maritime College as a full time student (12 or more credits) in a U.S. Coast Guard unlimited oceans licensing program (deck or engine).
- Have at least 2 full academic years of undergraduate study remaining.
- Be at least 17 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year you begin.
- Be 26 years old or less on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year that you graduate and are commissioned. (Waiverable for prior military service.)
- Be within U.S. Navy height, weight, and fitness standards for Midshipmen.
- Academic standards at the discretion of the NROTC unit's Commanding Officer.

### **Must I join the Strategic Sealift Officer program as a freshman?**

Normally you can still join the strategic program if you are currently in a license program and have at least two years remaining until graduation and can fulfill the NROTC requirements.

### **What are the obligations upon graduation if I participate in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program?**

Becoming a member in the Strategic Sealift Officer Midshipmen Program obligates you after graduation to the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration to serve for a minimum of 8 years as a Naval Reserve Officer in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program. During this time you must:

- Sail for 3 years on your U.S. Coast Guard unlimited deck or engine license on a U.S. Flag vessel in the U.S. Merchant Marine.
- Maintain your U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credentials.
- Maintain a civilian career in the Maritime Industry.

### **How do I apply to be a Midshipman in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program?**

Contact your college's NROTC unit for an application, specific entrance details, and timelines.

### **Where can I find more information about the Strategic Sealift Officer Program?**

For more information on the SSOP see the following references:

OPNAVINST 1534.1D

RESPERSMAN 1534