

## A basic guide to UK military ranks, experience, qualifications and pay.

### Notes:

- This is not an exhaustive or authoritative guide but it aims to provide a very generalised aide memoire. The author is conscious that things change within the military and not all relevant information is publicly available. This is not an MOD document.
- The table does not cover all nuances by rank, trade, unit or Service. For example in certain organisations military ranks have different names but candidates will be able to contextualise their experience within this table. For example, in the Royal Artillery a Corporal (Cpl) is known as a Bombardier (Bdr).
- A service person will have a rank and may also have an appointment. For example platoon sergeant, coxswain, regimental sergeant major, staff officer grade 1-3 (SO1, SO2, SO3), station commander, officer commanding, commanding officer and navigators are all appointments. Candidates should explain their appointments to recruiting staff in civilian terms.
- There will be considerable difference in educational backgrounds including at the same rank. For example, some Lance Corporals might have masters degrees and others will have Basic Skills Level 3 in English and Maths.
- All service personnel are trained in leadership and will have completed mandatory courses for promotion to some ranks but their experience will vary hugely.
- There are a number of routes to becoming an officer, some will be commissioned directly after training and other will be promoted from the ranks. In the Army and Royal Marines these are known as Direct Entry and Late Entry officers. They will have had different experience and may have different skill sets.

### Pay notes:

- This table over simplifies the pay arrangements for service personnel. For example, there are 4 pay spines for each non commissioned rank.
- Pay scales are published annually in the Armed Forces Pay Review Body reports.
- Some trades and professionals are paid on separate pay scales, for example nurses, medical staff, chaplains and military provost guard service.
- Some individuals will have specialist allowances which will significantly increase their pay, for example pilots and parachute trained personnel.
- Direct entry and late entry officers are paid on different scales.
- Most service personnel are paid an 'X-factor' of 14.5% of their pay. The X-Factor is a pensionable addition to pay that recognises the special conditions of service experienced by members of the Armed Forces compared with their civilian peers. It accounts for a range of potential advantages and disadvantages which cannot be fully evaluated when assessing pay comparability with the civilian workforce.

- Service personnel are part of non-contributory pension schemes and receive considerable other benefits such as gym membership, free dental treatment, subsidised food and accommodation.

Service	Rank	Salary Band (2021) <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Experience	Comments
<b>Other Ranks (ORs)</b>				
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OR 2) <sup>2</sup>	Able Rating (AB) Marine (Mne) Private (Pte) Leading Aircraftman/Senior Aircraftman (LAC/SAC)	£20,700-£32,000	C&G Certificate in Effectiveness at Work	This is the entry level rank in the military usually with little management responsibilities however the RN/RAF can be different as they can spend longer in this step compared to the other services. Anywhere between 1 – 8 years' experience again depending on Service.
<b>Junior Non Commissioned Officers (JNCOs)</b>				
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OR 3)	N/A Lance Corporal (LCpl) LCpl N/A	£27,600-£32,000	Level 2 Award or Certificate in either Team Leading/ Leadership & Team Skills awarded by either the CMI or ILM	Basic management responsibilities usually looking after 4-6 people from training, compliance, mentoring and basic reports. Assistant Supervisor / Team Leader, often training to fulfil the requirements of a managerial / supervisory role.
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OR 4) <sup>3</sup>	Leading Hand (LH) Corporal (Cpl) Cpl Cpl	£31,900-£37,900	There are a number of qualifications that they can gain depending on what route they take. Level 3 in the following Coaching & Mentoring, BTEC Management or Level 4 in Leadership & Management,	Manages a team of 8-10 people, normally some form of training or instructional responsibility as well. Their civilian equivalent is a Team Leader / Supervisor

<sup>1</sup> Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) reports are published annually.

<sup>2</sup> OR-1-9 are NATO other ranks (OR) (non commissioned) and are included here as are used in annual AFPRB reports.

<sup>3</sup> There is no OR 5 in the UK.

			awarded by either CMI, LMI or Somerset College	
<b>Senior Non Commissioned Officers (SNCOs)</b>				
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OR 6)	Petty Officer (PO) Sergeant (Sgt) Sgt Sgt	£35,900-£44,400	There are a number of qualifications that they can gain depending on what route they take. Level 3 First Line Management. Level 4/5 Coaching & Mentoring. Level 5 Leadership & Management or a Level 5 BTEC in Management, awarded by either CMI, LMI or Somerset College	Manages a team of around 35 people as their middle manager from HR H&S, COSHH to career responsibilities. Also will act as the advisor to young officers to make sure that they follow all procedures etc. Will have responsibility for certain sections of their department, taking on more managerial tasks.
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OR 7)	Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Colour Sergeant (CSgt) CSgt or Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Flight Sergeant/Chief Technician (FS/Chf Tech)	£40,400-£51,275		Normally leading a more specialist department such as logistics, stores, accounting etc and responsible for the correct running procedures of these departments and expected to advise others about the correct procedures. Can be advanced instructors in their fields as well. Increasing responsibilities, with officers relying heavily on their skills and expertise.
<b>Warrant Officers (WOs)</b>				
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OR 8)	Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) WO2 WO2 N/A	£43,900-£51,300	There are a number of qualifications that they can gain depending on what route they take. Level 5 Coaching & Mentoring, BTEC Management. Level 6 Management & Leadership. Level 7 Strategic Leadership, BTEC Strategic Management &	Normally responsible for between 90- 120 people depending on the size of the unit. Will normally be a unit expert in most unit procedures and would have had exposure to most aspects of the business. Supervisor / Middle Manager who will often have experience

			Leadership, awarded by either CMI, LMI or Somerset College	of leading, motivating and training teams of staff.
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OR 9)	Warrant Officer Class 1 (WO1) WO1 WO1 Warrant Officer (WO)	£50,800-£54,300		This is the highest non officer and they provide a crucial link between officers and other ranks in the team that they lead. Can be responsible for between 500 - 900 people depending on the size of the unit. Will normally be a unit expert in all unit procedures and would have had exposure to all aspects of the business. Will act as an advisor to the CEO on all areas of unit procedures. Some parallels to professional heads.
Commissioned Ranks/Officers				
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OF 1) <sup>4</sup>	Sub-Lieutenant (Sub Lt) 2nd Lieutenant/Lieutenant (2Lt, Lt) 2Lt, Lt Flying Officer/Pilot Officer (Fl Off, Plt Off)	£27,800-£37,000	Level 5 Management & Leadership Certificate, awarded by CMI, LMI or G&C	Manages a team of around 35 people as their manager with responsibilities from HR, H&S, COSHH to career and talent management. Often employed

<sup>4</sup> OF1-6 are NATO officer ranks and are included here as used in annual AFPRB report

				as project officers or programme leads.
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OF 2)	Lieutenant (Lt) Captain (Capt) Capt Flight Lieutenant	£42,850-£51,000	Level 5 or 6 Diploma Leadership & Management. Level 7 Strategic Leadership & Management, awarded by CMI, LMI or C&G.	Normally specialised roles within the units such as operational managers or in logistics, training or career development roles. Often employed as a deputy with ability to step up and represent more senior officers.
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OF 3)	Lieutenant Commander (Lt Cdr) Major (Maj) Maj Squadron Leader (Sqn Ldr)	£54,000-£71,400	Level 7 extended Diploma Leadership & Executive Management or Leadership & Management, awarded by CMU, LMI, Somerset College or C&G.	Often equivalent to a 'Head of'. A senior manager with proven skills encompassing the management of large, multifaceted teams. Likely to have experience of leading a unit of around 120 people.
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OF 4)	Commander (Cdr) Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) Lt Col Wing Commander (Wg Cdr)	£75,800-£87,700	Masters or Degree Qualification including a year's full time CPD at the Defence Academy.	Likely to have had experience commanding a unit. An Army/RM Lt Col may have experience of commanding a regiment of up to 700 personnel. A very senior manager who will probably have had experience as chief operating officers or programme directors.
Royal Navy Royal Marine Army Royal Air Force (OF 5)	Captain (Capt) Colonel (Col) Col Group Captain (Gp Capt)	£91,800-£100,900	Masters or Degree Qualification and additional specialist experience and full time CPD qualification from the Defence Academy.	More specialised advisory roles for the Service with a wealth of experience that they can use to help advise and shape future policy, plans, equipment etc. Likely to have had experience as a deputy chief executive. A Capt in the RN is likely to have commanded a warship or submarine.

<p>Royal Navy          Royal Marine          Army          Royal Air Force          (OF 6)          1 Star officer<sup>5</sup></p>	<p>Commodore (Cdre)          Brigadier (Brig)          Brig          Air Commodore (Air Cdre)</p>	<p>£109,400-£113,800</p>	<p>Masters or Degree Qualification and likely to have had Fellowship or expert academic experience including full time CPD qualifications form the Defence Academy.</p>	<p>1 star officers often hold the skills and experience needed in a senior managerial capacity, such as Executive or Managing Directors. They may command units of around 4,000 personnel.</p>
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<sup>5</sup> Admirals, Generals and Marshals are 2-4 star officers.