



# UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

## RPA SENSOR OPERATOR



DIGITAL EDITION



# NEVER-CEASING VIGILANCE

REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT  
SENSOR OPERATOR

## WATCHFUL EYES

Our enemies try their best to hide and evade our watchful eyes. They fear us. They know we're near but are unable to see us and they're never certain if we're watching them. They only become aware of our presence at the crucial last minute, just before explosions light up the nighttime skies.

Remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) are vital to the defense of our nation and have quickly become one of the most effective weapon systems in the Air Force. They conduct real-time intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike capabilities on the battlefield and are the number one requested aircraft by ground forces commanders.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Being an Air Force Sensor Operator carries an enormous amount of responsibility. You sit next to the pilot in a ground control station flying the aircraft that may be located half way around the world while also operating top-secret equipment.

You control the camera on the aircraft to see what's happening on the ground from high above. Your ability to process multiple sources of information and interpret data quickly is critical to mission success.

It's not a 9-5 job and the days can be long and intense. All RPA crews rotate schedules from days to swings to mids.

Also, no two days are ever alike. You may observe and record the actions of enemy forces one day while the next day you conduct combat operations by firing hellfire missiles or dropping bombs onto those enemy targets. You're the one responsible for guiding all weapons released from the aircraft.





# TRAINING PIPELINE

Following Basic Military Training, you'll begin Sensor Operator training, which is conducted in three phases. The fast-paced regimen is quite difficult and takes a significant amount of self-motivation. If you study, apply yourself and work hard you'll successfully master the training requirements.

While in the Basic Sensor Operator Course you'll receive your orders for the aircraft you'll be assigned to and the base where you'll undergo Initial Qualification Training. Once you successfully complete that portion of the training, you'll then be assigned to your permanent duty station where you'll complete Mission Qualification Training.

## PHASE 1 UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING

- Aircrew Fundamentals Course  
1 week— JBSA-Lackland, Texas
- Basic Sensor Operator Course  
6 weeks — JBSA-Randolph, Texas

## PHASE 2 INITIAL QUALIFICATION TRAINING

- **MQ-9**  
25 weeks — Holloman AFB, New Mexico

## PHASE 3 MISSION QUALIFICATION TRAINING

Training is conducted at unit specific locations and typically takes up to three months to complete.





## QUALIFICATIONS

- Be a U.S. citizen
- Be between the ages of 17 and 39
- Have normal color vision and complete a Ground Based Aircraft Controller Physical
- Meet moral and physical requirements
- Acquire a “top secret” security clearance and complete a current Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI)
- Complete Basic Military Training

(Note: Due to requirements of this career field, Sensor Operators incur a six-year enlistment commitment.)

## CAREER FIELD BENEFITS

- Stable assignments with little or no deployments
- You may qualify for additional pay such as flight pay and special duty assignment pay.

## AIR FORCE BENEFITS

- 30 days of vacation with pay each year
- Up to 100 percent college tuition assistance
- Comprehensive medical and dental care
- Tax-free food and housing allowances

(Note: The above Air Force benefits are available to those serving full-time. Not all benefits are available for part-time service. See your recruiter for more details.)

## MULTIPLE WAYS TO SERVE

You can choose one of several paths that allows you to serve your country either full-time or part-time. No matter which path you select, you'll become a member of our global Air Force family. For more information, contact a recruiter today.

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**1-800-423-USAF**

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# AIM HIGH

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