



INSIDER TIPS TO KNOW

ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

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FOUNDATION

Intelligence

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14N | Pentagon

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- Can I fly as an intelligence officer? Yes! There are positions aboard manned reconnaissance aircraft like the RC-135 and JSTARS, as well as certain SOF positions that require non-rated aircrew members. The E-4B National Airborne Operations Center also has intelligence officers flying aboard. All of these positions require you to pass a Class III flight physical, attend SERE, aircrew fundamentals, and other position qualification training. Look for X-prefixed 14N positions if you are interested in these assignments to earn your wings.
- I want to be an Air Attache, how do I become one? Being an Air Attache is considered a career broadening assignment for intelligence officers, it is not a career. Any career field officer can apply, but Air Attaches are typically field grade officers with operational experience. If you want to be an Air Attache, consider taking the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB), and the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) early in your career if you are proficient in a foreign language(s). Timing will be important if you desire a specific region because of limited positions and rotation schedule. You need to carefully examine your career timing as well to ensure you are available to compete for PME and leadership positions within your career field. The Foreign Area Officer (FAO) career field also offers a path to Attache and other Security Cooperation positions.
- What assignment should I want as a brand new intelligence officer? New intelligence officers should seek to build expertise in the field. This typically means a position at a flying squadron/OSS, or in an intelligence squadron. 14Ns at flying squadrons typically provide aircrew intelligence support, brief threats and help mission plan, but there are fewer opportunities to lead. 14Ns at intelligence squadron typically lead many Airmen performing part or all phases of the intelligence cycle: collection, exploitation, analysis & production, or dissemination of intelligence. If you are interested in supporting flying operations, go to an OSS/flying unit. If you are interested in learning about creating intelligence and

leading Airmen, go to an IS.

- Should I avoid joint or national intelligence community assignments? No! The intelligence community (IC) is a big place, and the Air Force is a small part of it. Intelligence officers need to understand the IC, how it is organized, and how the Air Force can leverage it to fly, fight, and win. There is no better way to learn than to have an assignment at NSA, NGA, CIA, NRO, or other intelligence community member. Many IC members are Combat Support Agencies that warfighters rely on. Fully integrated joint warfighting is not just a bumper sticker, it's how we fight wars. Any experience you can gain from joint duty assignments at the Combatant Command level or higher is extremely important, especially as a field grade officer.
- What is some good advice for the first few years as an intelligence officer? The intelligence community is enormous - You will not have the time even in an entire career to be an expert in it all. Intelligence Officers don't have the luxury of a specialty or airframe - You can be a squadron intelligence officer for F-15s one assignment, and then a SIGINT Flight Commander at NSA for the next, and then lead an imagery production flight after that. So learn as much as you can about the job you are doing, and never stop learning. Understand that your basic intelligence officer course did not make you an expert. Be humble and approachable, and be ready to lend a hand where needed. If you are fortunate enough to lead Airmen, learn their job as much as you can so you understand their challenges. If that means attending a course, or completing a Job Qualification Standard, or sitting a position, do it! It will be easier to find ways to remove barriers or improve the mission if you have common understanding. And never forget to have fun!