How Does Military Pay Stack Up?

Military members should—and do—earn more than federal civilian workers. According to a Congressional Budget Office study, median cash compensation for troops exceeds that of most US government civilians with comparable education and experience. As the charts show, this is true of enlisted personnel and officers. Note: Military cash compensation = basic pay, allowances, and related tax advantages. Civilian cash compensation = earnings for full-time workers with a high school degree and some college (for comparison with enlisted) or college degree (for comparison with officers). Data are for 2011. Other studies found the military also leads in noncash and deferred benefits (health care, pensions, etc.).