



15 Things Veterans Want You to Know



1. Not all military members are soldiers.

- Each branch of the U.S. Military has its own mission, different services, rankings, uniforms, etc.
- Each has its own 'mini-culture'
- "Military personnel" or "Veterans" should generally be used rather than "soldiers"

2. Reserves are part of the military. All branches have reserves.

There are two ways to serve in uniform in our country:

- Active Duty – This is a full-time job
- Reserves – Reservists are trained to serve and also have civilian jobs. This can be disruptive to work and family life. Training includes one weekend per month and two weeks per year. The reserves:
 - May have previously served as active duty
 - Are mobilized as needed and serve together as a unit
 - Often don't have the same resources and support as active duty when they return

3. Not everyone in the military is infantry (e.g. tanks or on patrol).

- 1.4 million Americans serve as active duty
- More than 800,000 serve as reserves
- Military occupations vary and include infantry, technicians, mechanics, cooks, administrators, lawyers, doctors, musicians, etc. These jobs have different physical and mental demands.
- Military members obtain extensive training to obtain specialty ratings

4. The military has leaders at every level in the chain of command.

- Each branch has a different rank structure
- Military members value their responsibility for and accountability to others

5. The military is always on duty.

- They live their work 24/7, there is no off day
- The time commitment takes its toll on military personnel and their families
- Even when on leave, they can be called at a moment's notice

6. The military takes pride in appearance and conduct.

- They follow standards for wearing their uniforms
- Physical fitness is important
- They are held to a standard of conduct and are accountable for their actions

7. Not all military members have killed someone.

- Those who have do NOT want to talk about it
- Never ask this question

8. Not all military members have post traumatic stress.

- Post traumatic stress can be caused by many different types of trauma, including combat and military sexual trauma. All of this plays into the development of post traumatic stress. Combat can cause post traumatic stress that may require treatment.

- Post traumatic stress can also occur with civilians who have endured something difficult.
- Most people who experience trauma DO NOT go on to develop post traumatic stress. There are individual differences in how people respond to traumatic events.
- If you are a health care provider, ask about a military member's worst and the best days in military service.

9. Military members with invisible wounds of war (post traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, depression, substance abuse disorder) are not dangerous or violent.

- Invisible wounds are real and are injuries. They are not mental illness or a psychiatric condition and deserve the same treatment as visible injuries. The majority of people with invisible wounds are not prone to becoming dangerous or violent.

10. It's hard for military members to ask for help.

- Historically the military promotes emotional and physical perfection, making it difficult to ask for help if a military member has an invisible wound. In recent years, invisible wounds have become more validated.

11. Military service changes people. The change is permanent and that's okay.

12. Military members differ in how much they identify with the military after they leave.

- Ask a Veteran: *How do you define yourself now? How has your military service shaped you?*

13. Military families serve with their service members.

- Recurring separation from loved ones, frequent relocations, changing family dynamics and difficulty establishing employment and social connections are some of the challenges for military families.
- Military families are very resilient, adaptive and flexible.

14. Military members would die for each other and their country.

15. Military members make these sacrifices for one reason: to serve something more important than themselves.

- The honor, commitment and duty to America defines military culture
- Service members make this choice

Five Questions to Ask

1. Did you serve in the military?

- Veterans want to be asked about their service
- It starts the conversation

2. Which branch did you serve in?

- By asking this question, it shows that you know there is a difference.
- You don't need to know specifics of each branch, but know that there are differences within each branch and not to generalize.

3. What was your job in the military?

- There are hundreds of things a person could have done in his or her military service

4. What was your worst day in your military service – or on deployment? (For health care providers only)

5. What was your best day in your military service – or on deployment? (For health care providers only)

- There will be individual responses in how people respond to their military service

For More Information – Visit jobs.utah.gov/veteran or email utahvets@utah.gov

Presenter's Contact Information: Lisa D. Duckworth, MSML, SPHR, Utah Dept. of Workforce Services, Veteran and Military Employment Services

Email: lduckworth@utah.gov • Phone: 801.656.7587 • LinkedIn Profile: [linkedin.com/in/lisa-d-duckworth](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisa-d-duckworth)

This material is adapted from "15 Things that Military Veterans Want you to Know," a course created to educate anyone who works with, lives with or cares for Veterans. PsychArmor asked hundreds of Veterans what they want civilian employers, health care providers and therapists to know about them.