

# Military 101

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## Military Branches Overview

### Department of Defense

The Department of Defense is headed by the Secretary of Defense (a civilian) who is appointed by the President of the United States. Under the Secretary of Defense, there are three military departments: The Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, and the Department of the Air Force. Each of these military departments are also headed up by civilians known as "service secretaries" who are also appointed by the President. There are five branches of the Military: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard, and Air Force.

Branch	Role/Mission	Personnel
Army	Engage in large scale ground operations	"Soldiers"
Navy	Ensure American dominance of the oceans, seas and rivers, and transport other assets across waters	"Sailors"
Air Force	Ensure American dominance of air, space, and cyberspace; provide the ability to strike targets anywhere in the world; provide "close air support" to ground forces, transport personnel, equipment, and supplies worldwide	"Airmen"
Marine Corps	Serve as an expeditionary "force in readiness" prepared to deploy at a moment's notice and be on the ground within about five days, with at least a battalion, anywhere in the world. Marines are the first force on the ground in any combat operation, and the last out.	"Marines"
Coast Guard	Both a military and law enforcement service. During peacetime, falls under Dept. of Homeland Security. During war, under Dept. of the Navy.	"Coastguardsmen"

The Army is commanded by a four-star general, known as the Army Chief of Staff. The Army Chief of Staff reports to the Secretary of the Army (for most matters). The top military member in the Air Force is the Air Force Chief of Staff. This four-star general reports (for most matters) to the Secretary of the Air Force. The Navy is commanded by a four-star admiral, called the

Chief of Naval Operations. The Marines are commanded by a 4-star general called the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Both the Chief of Naval Operations and the Marine Corps Commandant report (for most matters) to the Secretary of the Navy.

These four "flag officers" and the Chief, National Guard Bureau serve as the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The Joint Chiefs of Staff comprise the four Service Chiefs, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Chairman is nominated by the President and approved by the Senate (as are other general and flag officer positions). For operational matters (such as war or conflict), the JCS by-passes the individual service secretaries and report directly to the Secretary of Defense, and the President.

The Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Defense. However, the Coast Guard is considered a military service, because, during times of war or conflict, the President of the United States can transfer any or all assets of the Coast Guard to the Department of the Navy. In fact, this has been done in almost every single conflict that the United States have ever been involved in. The Coast Guard is commanded by a 4-star admiral, known as the Coast Guard Commandant.

### **Type of service**

- **Active:** Military members who serve on full time status in the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps.
- **Reserve Component.** The reserve components of the United States Armed Forces are military organizations whose members generally perform a minimum of 39 days of military duty per year and who augment the active duty (or full-time) military when necessary. The reserve components are also referred to collectively as the Guard and Reserves.

### **Army**

The main function of the Army is to protect and defend the United States (and its interests) by way of ground troops, armor (tanks), artillery, attack helicopters, tactical nuclear weapons, etc. The Army is the oldest U.S. Military service, officially established by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1775. The Army is also the largest U.S. Military Service. Two Reserve Forces, which can be tapped for trained personnel and equipment during times of need, support the Army: The Army Reserves and the Army National Guard. The primary difference between the two is that the Reserves are "owned" and managed by the federal government, and each state "owns" its own National Guard. However, the President of the United States or the Secretary of Defense can "activate" state National Guard members into Federal military service during times of need.

Army personnel are referred to as Soldiers.

### **Marine Corps**

The Marines are often referred to as the "Infantry of the Navy." Marines specialize in amphibious operations. In other words, their primary specialty is to assault, capture, and control "beach heads," which then provide a route to attack the enemy from almost any direction. The Marines were officially established on 10 November 1775 by the Continental Congress, to act as a landing force for the United States Navy. In 1798, however, Congress established the Marine Corps as a separate service within the Department of the Navy. While amphibious operations are

their primary specialty, in recent years, the Marines have expanded other ground- combat operations, as well. Like the Navy, there is no Marine Corps National Guard, but Marines are supported in times of need by the Marine Corps Reserves.

Personnel are referred to as Marines.

## **Navy**

Officially established by the Continental Congress in 1775, the Navy sustains its mission to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces, above, on, and below the ocean's surface, capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas. The Navy makes it possible for the United States to utilize the seas for a multitude of purposes where and when our national interests dictate. The combination of 11 aircraft carriers, a robust naval aviation capability, combat surface ships, submarines, special operation warriors, and the integrated Navy - Marine Corps team, maintain the primacy of a global maritime force. The Navy is supported, when required, by the Naval Reserves. However, unlike the Army and Air Force, there is no Naval National Guard (although a few states have established "Naval Militias.")

Navy personnel are referred to as Sailors.

## **Coast Guard**

The United States Coast Guard was originally established as the Revenue Cutter Service in 1790. In 1915, it was reformed as the United States Coast Guard, under the Treasury Department. In 1967, the Coast Guard was transferred to the Department of Transportation. Legislation passed in 2002 transferred the Coast Guard to the Department of Homeland Security. In peacetime, the Coast Guard is primarily concerned with law enforcement, boating safety, sea rescue, and illegal immigration control. However, the President of the United States can transfer part or all of the Coast Guard to the Department of the Navy in times of conflict. The Coast Guard is a military and law enforcement service. During peacetime, the Coast Guard reports to the Department of Homeland Security, however during wartime, it reports to the Navy. The Coast Guard Reserves, and a volunteer "Coast Guard Auxiliary" also support the Coast Guard in times of need.

Personnel in the Coast Guard are referred to as Coastguardsmen.

## **Air Force**

The Air Force is the youngest military service, established in 1947. The Air Force's mission is to ensure American dominance of air, space, and cyberspace; provide the ability to strike targets anywhere in the world; provide "close air support" to ground forces, transport personnel, equipment, and supplies worldwide. To accomplish this mission, the Air Force operates fighter aircraft, tanker aircraft, light and heavy bomber aircraft, transport aircraft, and helicopters (which are used mainly for rescue of downed-aircrew, and special operations missions). The Air Force's mission also includes military satellites and strategic nuclear ballistic missiles. Like the Army, the Air Force Reserves, and the Air National Guard supplement the active duty Air Force.

Personnel in the Air Force are referred to as Airmen.

## **National Guard and Reserve Component**

The reserve components of the United States Armed Forces are military organizations whose members generally perform a minimum of 39 days of military duty per year and who augment the active duty (or full-time) military when necessary. The reserve components are also referred to collectively as the Guard and Reserves.

According to 10 U.S.C. § 10102, the purpose of each reserve component is to provide trained units and qualified persons available for active duty in the armed forces, in time of war or national emergency, and at such other times as the national security may require, to fill the needs of the armed forces whenever, during and after the period needed to procure and train additional units and qualified persons to achieve the planned mobilization, more units and persons are needed than are in the regular components.

The National Guard of the United States, part of the reserve components of the United States Armed Forces, is a reserve military force, composed of National Guard military members or units of each state and the territories of Guam, of the Virgin Islands, and of Puerto Rico, as well as of the District of Columbia, for a total of 54 separate organizations. All members of the National Guard of the United States are also members of the militia of the United States as defined by 10 U.S.C. § 311. National Guard units are under the dual control of the state and the federal government.

The majority of Reserve and National Guard personnel hold a civilian job full-time while serving in their military role. These personnel are augmented by a full-time cadre of fellow Reservists and National Guard members who serve in an active status.

## **Understanding Military Rank Structure**

Military rank is more than just who salutes whom; military rank is a badge of leadership. Responsibility for personnel, equipment, and mission grows with each increase in rank. Do not confuse rank with pay grades, such as E-1, W-2 and O-5. Pay grades are administrative classifications used primarily to standardize compensation across the military services. The "E" in E-1 stands for "enlisted" while the "1" indicates the pay grade for that position. The other pay categories are "W" for warrant officers and "O" for commissioned officers. Some enlisted pay grades have two ranks.

There are three general categories of rank. Enlisted personnel, Warrant Officers, and Commissioned Officers. While each branch of service (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps) have their own rank naming convention, they each follow mandated principals in regard to how those ranks are defined.

It is important to understand that regardless of the rank the individual has achieved during their time of service, they are all required to start with some form of basic training. After that is completed, Service Members then attend specialized or advanced training in their field. The Military Occupational Specialty, or MOS classifies their area of study. There are hundreds of MOS fields. An overview of the rank structure used by the military is below.

### **Enlisted (E-1 through E-9)**






Enlisted members are the "backbone" of the military as they perform the primary jobs that need to be done. This is the largest component of military service members. Enlisted members are "specialists" as they are trained to perform specific specialties in the military. As enlisted personnel progress up the ranks (there are nine enlisted ranks), they assume more responsibility, and provide direct supervision to their subordinates. Enlisted personnel in certain grades have special status.

To join the military today, and become an enlisted member, requires a high school diploma (although a very few -- less than 10% each year, are accepted with "alternative credentials," such as a GED). However, a majority of enlisted members on active duty today have some college. Many have associates and bachelor's degrees. Some even have higher-level degrees, such as masters and doctorates. An overview of responsibilities for enlisted members is outlined below:

- E-1 through E-4 personnel are new to their military career and are "doers" rather than leaders. While promotion times vary by organization, traditionally enlisted personnel achieve the rank of E-4 within the first three years of active duty.
- E-5 through E-9 personnel are considered Non-commissioned officers (NCO) (the Marine Corps considers an E-4 an NCO), with responsibility to train, supervise, enforce policies, and make decisions. Over time, responsibilities increase and include leadership and supervision of junior enlisted personnel. Promotions take longer to achieve in these ranks.

# RANK INSIGNIA OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

## ENLISTED

E-1	E-2	E-3	E-4	E-5	E-6	E-7	E-8	E-9	SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISORS				
ARMY													
no insignia  Private E-1 (PV1)	 Private E-2 (PV2)	 Private First Class (PFC)	 Corporal (CPL)  Specialist (SPC)	 Sergeant (SGT)	 Staff Sergeant (SSG)	 Sergeant First Class (SFC)	 Master Sergeant (MSG)	 First Sergeant (1SG)	 Sergeant Major (SGM)  Command Sergeant Major (CSM)	 Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA)			
MARINES													
no insignia  Private (Pvt)	 Private First (PFC)	 Lance Corporal (LCpl)	 Corporal (Cpl)	 Sergeant (Sgt)	 Staff Sergeant (SSgt)	 Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt)	 Master Sergeant (MSgt)	 First Sergeant (1stSgt)	 Master Gunnery Sergeant (MGySgt)	 Sergeant Major (SgtMaj)  Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SgtMajMC)			
AIR FORCE													
no insignia  Airman Basic (AB)	 Airman (Amn)	 Airman First Class (A1C)	 Senior Airman (SrA)	 Staff Sergeant (SSgt)	 Technical Sergeant (TSgt)	 Master Sergeant (MSgt)	 First Sergeant (E-7)	 Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt)	 First Sergeant (E-8)	 Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt)	 First Sergeant (E-9)	 Command Chief Master Sergeant (CCM)	 Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMSAF)
NAVY													
no insignia  Seaman Recruit (SR)	 Seaman Apprentice (SA)	 Seaman (SN)	 Petty Officer Third Class (PO3)	 Petty Officer Second Class (PO2)	 Petty Officer First Class (PO1)	 Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	 Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO)	 Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPPO)	 Force or Fleet Command Master Chief Petty Officer (FORMC) (FLTMC)	 Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)			
COAST GUARD													
 Seaman Recruit (SR)	 Seaman Apprentice (SA)	 Seaman (SN)	 Petty Officer Third Class (PO3)	 Petty Officer Second Class (PO2)	 Petty Officer First Class (PO1)	 Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	 Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO)	 Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPPO)	 Command Master Chief (CMC)	 Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPO-CG)			



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### **Enlisted Military Rank with Civilian Business Equivalents**

Although civilian businesses label their employees differently than the military, the roles of military members are similar in nature to any business. Think of the enlisted member as the worker in a civilian company, the ones who hands-on perform the job. Within the "worker group," NCOs (Army, Air Force, and Marines) and Petty Officers (Navy and Coast Guard) are the foremen and line-supervisors. They perform the job, but also provide direct supervision to the other workers. Senior NCOs (Army Air Force and Marines) and Chief Petty Officers (Navy and Coast Guard) are assistant managers who came up through the ranks of the corporation. They are valuable as managers because of their years of experience.

**Non-Commissioned Officer Rank and Typical Role (Note: This is merely a guideline for how these roles and responsibilities might translate to civilian business. All personnel should be evaluated on their own merits.)**

Corporate Position	Enlisted Rank	Typical Role	Typical years experience
Senior Management	E-7 through E-9.	Plan, direct, supervise, and coordinate work activities of subordinates and staff relating to employment, compensation, labor relations, and employee relations. Can command hundreds of troops and significant impact on policy and war fighting. Perform difficult staff duties, including dealing with understaffing, refereeing disputes, firing employees, and administering disciplinary procedures.	16-30 Years (age: 40s)
Middle Management	E-6	Has much work experience, able to lead Junior Middle Management and below, and assist Senior Management. Typically responsible for ensuring subordinates understand and carry out directions. Responsible for resolving Junior Middle Management and Junior employee issues; serve as role model for Junior employees.	10-16 years (age: 30s)
Junior Middle Management	E-5	Halfway through the Enlisted Rank Structure. Gets much done on the ground or ship. They have the opportunity to lead Junior employees and carry out the direction of senior personnel. Considered first line supervisor for Junior employees.	4-10 years (age: 20s to early 30s)
Junior Employees	E-2 through E-4	Knowledgeable on how things operate but still gaining work experience. Are typically responsible for completing tasks assigned by E-5s.	2-4 years (age: late teens to early 20s)
Entry Level	E-1	Young, energetic, and in their first year of service. Typically just out of basic training and/or completing additional training for their job specialty.	4-10 years (age: late 20s to early 30s)

### **Officers (O-1 through O-6)**

Officers are individuals who receive a Presidential commission after demonstrating outstanding character, providing a requisite leadership potential, completing a service specific training program (Officer Candidate School; ROTC; service academy); and obtaining a college degree (although there are instances in which a commissioned officer does not have a college degree). Officers are responsible for the Enlisted Service Members in their department or field. Unlike enlisted members and warrant officers, commissioned officers do not specialize as much (with certain exceptions such as pilots, doctors, nurses, and lawyers). As Officers move up the ranks, most will obtain a master's degree as they are promoted.

- O-1 through O-3 – these are new officers in the military. On average, it takes approximately 4-6 years to be promoted in these ranks.
- O-4 through O-6 – these positions continue to have higher levels of leadership and areas of responsibilities, and promotions take longer.

### **Flag Officers (Generals and Admirals)**

Making up less than 1% of the officers, Flag Officers (senior officers) are selected by the President and command the highest levels of the military. Most Flag Officers have more than 20 years' experience and have commanded large military commands.



# RANK INSIGNIA OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

## OFFICERS

0-1    0-2    0-3    0-4    0-5    0-6    0-7    0-8    0-9    0-10    SPECIAL

### ARMY - AIR FORCE - MARINES

Second Lieutenant (2LT)	First Lieutenant (1LT)	Captain (CPT)	Major (MAJ)	Lieutenant Colonel (LTC)	Colonel (COL)	Brigadier General (BG)	Major General (MG)	Lieutenant General (LTG)	General (GEN)	General of the Army (GA)

### NAVY - COAST GUARD

Ensign (ENS)	Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG)	Lieutenant (LT)	Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)	Commander (CDR)	Captain (CAPT)	Rear Admiral Lower Half (RADML)	Rear Admiral Upper Half (RADML)	Vice Admiral (VADM)	Admiral (ADM)	Fleet Admiral (FADM)

W-1

W-2

W-3

W-4

W-5

### ARMY

Warrant Officer (WO1)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW3)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW4)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW5)

### NAVY - COAST GUARD

Warrant Officer 1 (WO1) * The grade of Warrant Officer W-1 is no longer in use.	Chief Warrant Officer (CW02)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW03)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW04)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW05)

### MARINES

Warrant Officer (WO)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW02)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW03)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW04)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW05)

### AIR FORCE

NO WARRANT	NO WARRANT	NO WARRANT	NO WARRANT	NO WARRANT
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### **Officer Military Rank with Civilian Business Equivalents**

Although civilian businesses label their employees differently than the military, the roles of military members are similar in nature to any business. Commissioned officers are the managers of the company. They have broad areas of responsibility for the management, organization, and efficiency of various departments of the corporation. Senior commissioned officers (generals and admirals) are the board of directors.

**Officer Rank and Typical Role (Note: This is merely a guideline for how these roles and responsibilities might translate to civilian business. All personnel should be evaluated on their own merits.)**

<b>Corporate Position</b>	<b>Officer Rank</b>	<b>Typical Role</b>	<b>Typical years experience</b>
CEO	General, (Navy Admiral) O-7 through O-10 = 1 to 4 stars	Responsible for thousands of people and billions in equipment. Make major policy decisions within their command, and on strategic military policy.	22+ years
Vice Presidents	Colonel, (Navy Captain) O-6	Command thousands of troops and significant impact on policy and warfighting	20+ years
Senior Management	Lt Col, (Navy Commander) O-5	Can command hundreds of troops or hold important policy staff jobs in the offices of senior leaders	16-22 years (age: 40s)
Middle Management	Major, (Navy Lt Commander) O-4	Middle of officer ranks, a plateau point for many. Can run most staff operations, from logistics to combat plans. In the Navy, they may command ships	10-16 years (age: 30s)
Junior Middle Management	Captain, (Navy Lieutenant) O-3	Many O-3s get much done on the ground, particularly in combat situations. They may command groups of up to 100 or 200 troops, or aircraft.	4-10 years (age: late 20s to early 30s)
Junior employees	1st Lieutenant, (Navy LT Junior Grade) O-2	Knowledge of how things operate, but still gaining experience to effectively lead large groups. May command platoons	2-4 years (age: mid-20s)
Entry level	2nd Lieutenant, (Navy Ensign), O-1	Young, energetic, and in their first year of service.	O-2 years (age: early 20s)

### **Warrant Officers (WO1-CW5)**

Approximately 2% of military service members, Warrant Officers are personnel within a very specific profession, and are higher in rank than Enlisted, but report to Officers. Unlike commissioned officers, warrant officers remain in their primary specialty to provide specialized knowledge, instruction, and leadership to enlisted members and commissioned officers alike. Traditionally, Warrant Officers are in technical specialties including aviation, communications security and medical. With few exceptions, one must be an enlisted member with several years of experience, recommended by their commander, and pass a selection board to become a warrant officer. The Air Force is the only service which does not have warrant officers. Warrant officers are not required to have college degrees (they are selected primarily based upon technical skills and experience), but many of them do.

**Warrant Officer Military Rank with Civilian Business Equivalents** Although civilian businesses label their employees differently than the military, the roles of military members are similar in nature to any business. Warrant Officers can be thought of as the experienced technical specialists that the company hired to perform highly specialized functions.

**Warrant Officer Rank and Typical Role (Note: This is merely a guideline for how these roles and responsibilities might translate to civilian business. All personnel should be evaluated on their own merits.)**

Corporate Position	Officer Rank	Typical Role	Typical years experience
Senior Management	WO1 – _CWO5 (Warrant Officer 1 – _Chief Warrant Officer 5) Rankings after WO1 are considered to be Chief Warrant Officers	Senior specialist personnel are normally technical leaders and specialists in Medical, Supply/Logistics, Engineering, Electronics, Maintenance, and Administration of the company or organization. Will possess all certifications in their field. Knowledge of Human Resources, Customer Relations skills, and Business Acumen. Able to communicate effectively and carry out mission of organization. At least a 2-4-year degree in related fields and requires at least 10 years experience as enlisted to move to the Warrant Officer Corps.	16-30 years (age: 40s)

### **Points to Remember**

**Veteran Population.** Veterans comprise a much larger part of the US population (7-8% as of February 2018) than those currently serving on active duty. The Veterans Administration counts 20.4 million living Veterans. There are approximately 3.3 million Veterans with Post 9/11 service.

**The military is not just a “job”:** The military see their role not as a “job” but more as a long-term commitment and a way of life.

**For some, the military is a family tradition:** Some families produce generation after generation of lawyers, or doctors, while some have generations in military service. For these families, service is not only a way to show patriotism but a proud family tradition.

**Not all veterans have seen combat:** Veterans who have been in war are “combat veterans”, but anyone who has served in war or peace is a “veteran” after active service.

**The military is well educated:** Military personnel are not drawn mainly from the poor and uneducated: 96% of officers have college degrees and 37% have advanced degrees. For enlisted service members, high school graduation rates average 10 points higher than the general population.

**Forms of address are important.** In the military, an officer is “sir or ma’am” to anyone but a higher-ranked officer (who will usually address a lower officer by rank and last name or, if an acquaintance, by their first name), while an enlisted individual is addressed by his or her rank and last name. A civilian, who doesn’t distinguish between officers and enlisted or doesn’t use the proper and polite form of address, is seen as being disrespectful to the military.

## **Values.**

The United States military prides itself on values. These values not only apply for the military at war but also bear meaning for personal behavior. Each of the services has their own set of values but the Army's values illustrate the way in which our military views values:

1. **Loyalty:** Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and fellow Soldiers.
2. **Duty:** Fulfill your obligations.
3. **Respect:** Treat others as they should be treated.
4. **Selfless Service:** Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own.
5. **Honor:** Live the Army Values.
6. **Integrity:** Do what's right, both legally and morally.
7. **Personal Courage:** Face fear, danger, or adversity, both physical and moral.

**Decisiveness:** Military actions require innumerable split-second decisions under stressful conditions, waiting to act until one has all of the facts can cost lives.

**Pride and Honor:** Troops see the defense of our country as a calling and one of the greatest forms of service.

**Commitment to Winning:** The can-do attitude instilled in the military includes a commitment to getting the job done no matter what.