

Military and Veteran Families 101



**A BRIEF LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE AND
CULTURE OF THE MILITARY, AND THE
NEEDS OF THE MILITARY-CONNECTED.**



Why is it important to understand military and veteran families?



MORE THAN 10 YEARS OF WAR...

...AND MORE THAN 2.5 MILLION TROOPS TO:

- Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq, 2003 – 2010)
- Operation New Dawn (Iraq, 2010 – 2013)
- Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan, 2001 – ?)
- ...and many other smaller engagements:
 - Liberia
 - Georgia
 - Djibouti
 - Libya
 - Somalia and others

Why is it important to understand military and veteran families?



- HOW MANY VETERANS ARE ATTENDING?
- HOW MANY HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS CURRENTLY SERVING?
- HOW MANY HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS A VETERAN?
- HOW MANY KNOW A VETERAN?

What we will cover:



Military structure

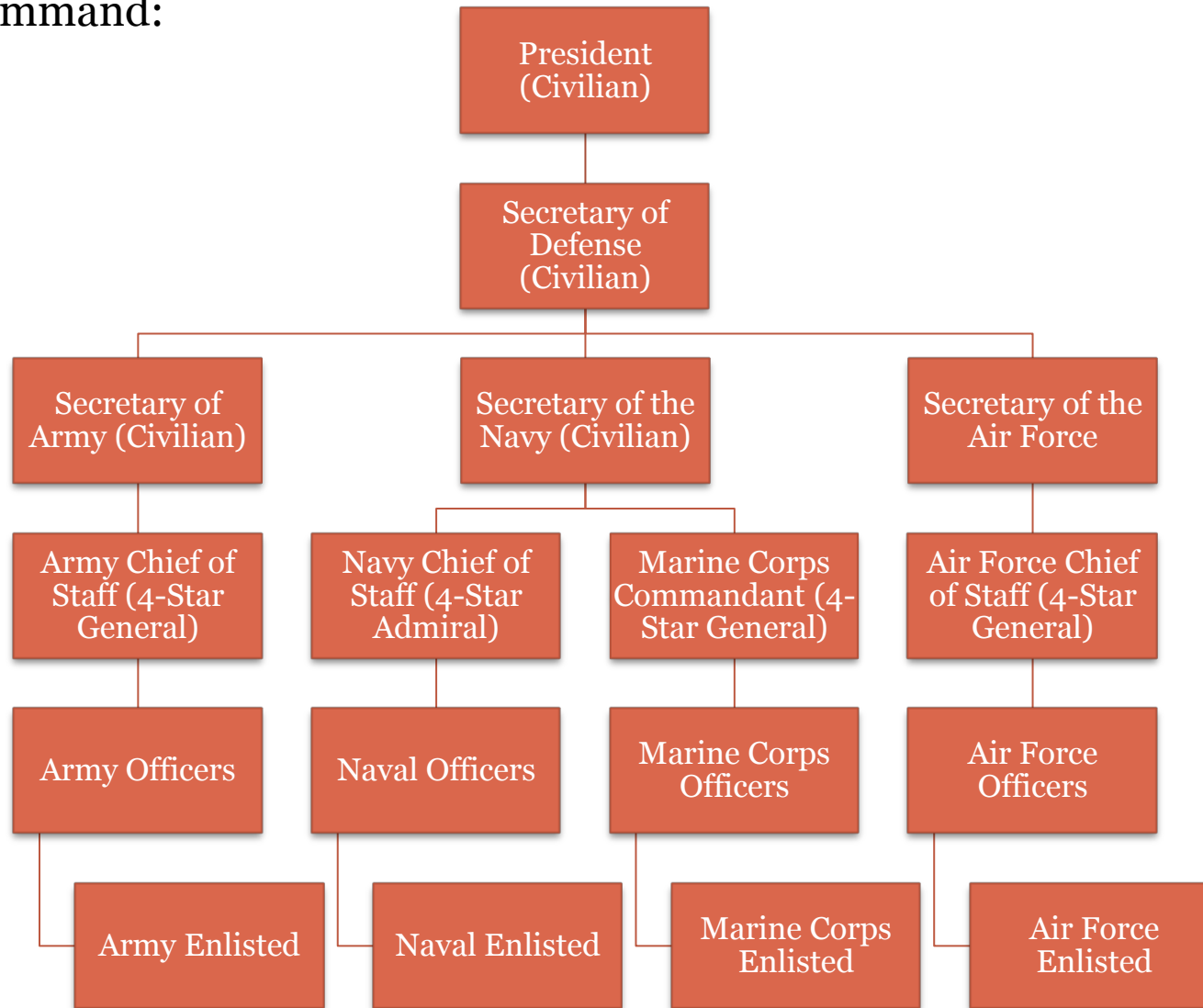


Military culture



A broad look at the
issues

U.S. military chain of command:



Rank structure



Officer

- “White collar”
- Are commissioned by POTUS to serve
- College degree a requirement
- ~20,000 are commissioned each year
- Greater level of responsibility – “Plans”
- Higher pay

Enlisted

- “Blue collar”
- Work on contract (“enlistment”)
- High school diploma/GED required
- ~180,000 enlist every year
- Also lead, but in smaller units – “Executes”
- Skilled specialists

Rank structure (con't)



Enlisted (con't)

- **Warrant officer**
 - Highly specialized enlisted service member
 - Degree not required
- **Battlefield commission**
 - When officer is killed or enlisted member demonstrates heroism
 - Hasn't happened since the Vietnam War

Branches of the military:



Army

- Active, Reserve & National Guard
- Largest military branch
 - ~550,000 Active Duty
 - ~350,000 National Guard
 - ~200,000 Reservists
- Land based
- Longest deployments
- Ground troops, tanks, helicopters, etc.
- Air power supports ground operations
- Special units (Special Forces, Rangers)
- “Soldiers”
- Motto: This we will defend.

Army



Branches of the military:



Air Force

- Active, Reserve & National Guard
 - ~330,000 Active Duty
 - ~100,000 National Guard
 - ~70,000 Reserve
- Strategic air power
- Long range air operations/intelligence
- Responsible for military satellites
- Newest branch of the military (1947)
- “Airmen”
- Motto: Fly-Fight-Win

Air Force



Branches of the military:



Navy

- Active and Reserve
 - ~320,000 Active Duty
 - ~60,000 Reserve
- Sea power
- Aviation support
- Provides medical and transportation support to Marine Corps
- Special units (SEALs)
- “Sailors”
- Unofficial motto: Non sibi sed patriae (Not self but country)

Navy



Branches of the Military



Marine Corps

- Active and Reserve
 - ~190,000 Active Duty
 - ~40,000 Reserve
- Not an actual branch of the military
- Amphibious warfare
- Aviation support
- Special units (Force Reconnaissance)
- “First to fight” - Marine Expeditionary Units
- Protect all U.S. embassies and the President
- “Marines”
- Motto: Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful)
- Informal motto: Every Marine is a rifleman

Marine Corps



Branches of the military:



Coast Guard

- Active and Reserve
 - ~40,000 Active Duty
 - ~9,000 Reserve
- Coastal security
- Stateside disaster relief
- Search and rescue operations
- Part of Dept. of Homeland Security
- Under Dept. of Defense during a time of war
- “Guardian” & “Coastie”
- Motto: Semper Paratus (Always Ready)

Coast Guard



Why do women and men join?



To serve their country

To improve their lives

Money for college

To leave home

Rite of passage

Adventure and travel

Training

Military culture



- **Culture of violence**
 - Purpose of the military is to defend our country (and U.S. interests) through the controlled use of force

The Rifleman's Creed (USMC):

This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine.

My rifle is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life.

My rifle, without me, is useless. Without my rifle, I am useless. I must fire my rifle true. I must shoot straighter than my enemy who is trying to kill me. I must shoot him before he shoots me. I will.

My rifle and I know that what counts in war is not the rounds we fire, the noise of our burst, nor the smoke we make. We know that it is the hits that count. We will hit.

My rifle is human, even as I, because it is my life. Thus, I will learn it as a brother. I will learn its weaknesses, its strength, its parts, its accessories, its sights and its barrel. I will keep my rifle clean and ready, even as I am clean and ready. We will become part of each other. We will.

Before God, I swear this creed. My rifle and I are the defenders of my country. We are the masters of our enemy. We are the saviors of my life.

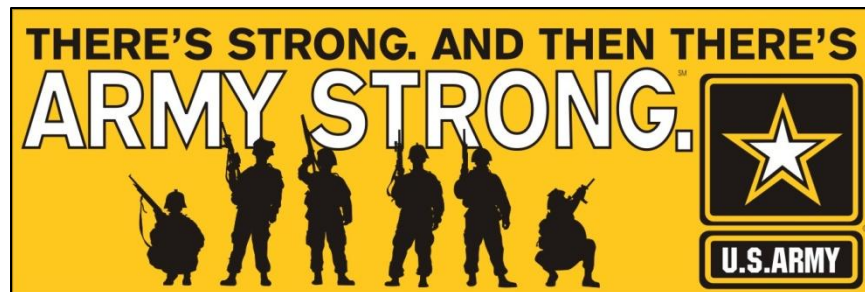
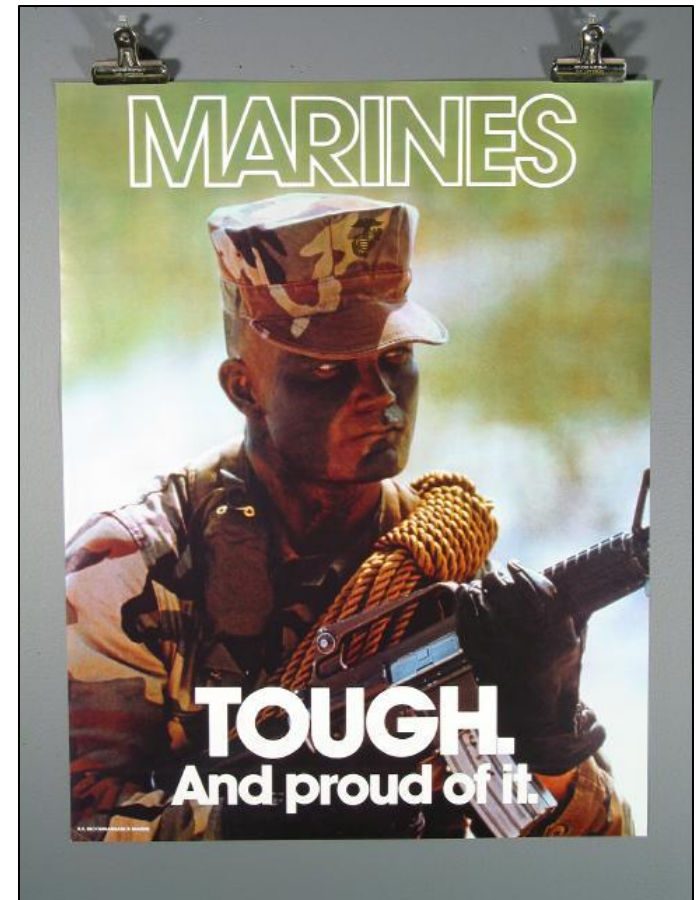
So be it, until victory is America's and there is no enemy, but peace!

Military culture



- **Culture of violence**
 - Purpose of the military is to defend our country (and U.S. interests) through the controlled use of force
- **Warrior mentality**
 - An absolute necessity to achieving the mission
 - Can be a barrier to asking for help

Warrior mentality

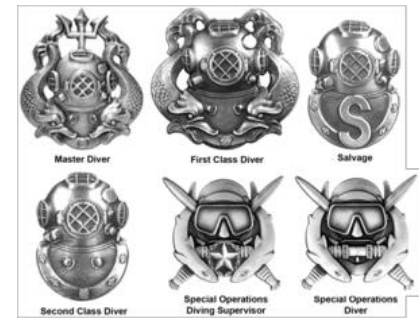
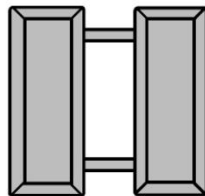
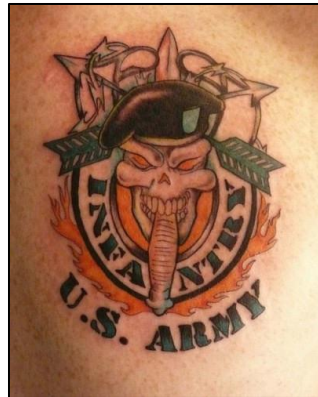


Military culture



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- **Iconography/symbolism**
 - A way to denote rank
 - A way to denote unit
 - Tradition
 - Group identity

Iconography/symbolism



Issues affecting military members, veterans, and their families:



The majority of service members leave the military and go on to lead positive, fulfilling lives as constructive members of their community.

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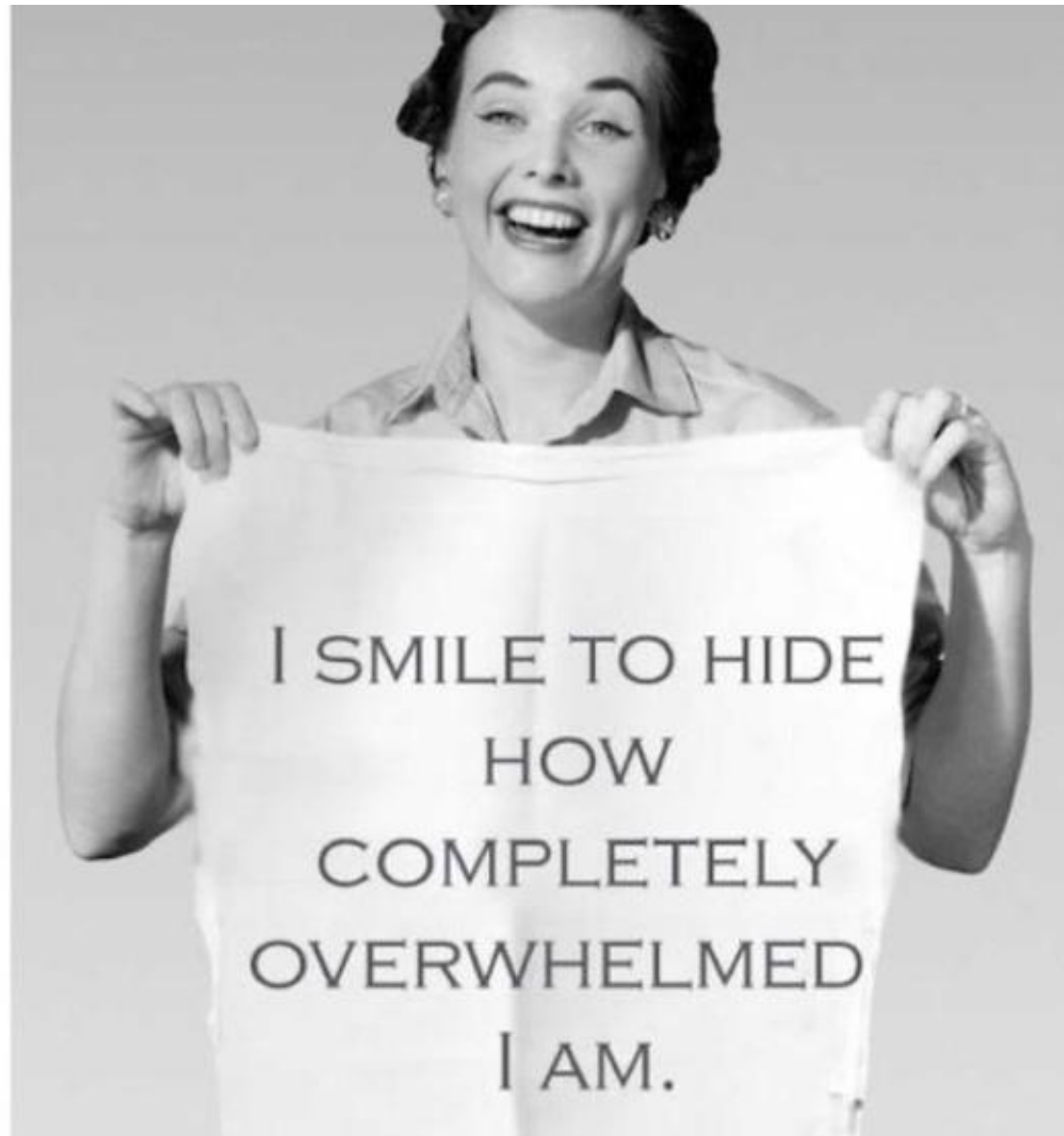
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- Accelerated learning curve
 - Leadership
 - Teamwork
 - Technology and globalization
 - Efficient performance under pressure
 - Respect for procedures and authority
 - Integrity
 - Diversity
 - Conscious of health and safety standards
 - Triumph over adversity

Issues affecting military members, veterans, and their families:

- **Military Stress**
 - Military culture
 - Long deployments
- **Post-Traumatic Stress**
 - Combat
 - Accidents
 - Loss
 - Drones
- **Moral injury**
 - Compromising ethical code
 - Guilt of inaction
- **Traumatic Brain Injury**
 - Type of combat
 - Better medical care
- **Homelessness**
 - 130,000 - 200,000 veterans
- **Reintegration**
 - Adjusting to civilian life
 - ✦ Culture
 - ✦ Structure
 - ✦ Identity
 - Employment
 - ✦ Gaining
 - ✦ Maintaining

Issues affecting military members, veterans, and their families:

- **Suicide**
 - Vietnam-era
 - Current
- **Military Sexual Trauma**
 - Women AND men
 - 1 in 4 female vets
- **Other forms of harassment/abuse**
 - Gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members and spouses (End of DADT; *U.S. vs. Windsor*)
 - Hazing
- **Family issues**
 - Spouse/relationship challenges
 - ✦ Separation
 - ✦ Economics
 - ✦ Higher divorce rate
 - Children
 - ✦ Separation
 - ✦ Not knowing
 - ✦ Behavioral issues increase



Ways to Thank a Veteran for their Service



- Welcome them home – and mean it
- Hire them
- Know what they've been doing “over there”
- Send a care package to a service member
- Donate to an organization that helps veterans
- Volunteer

Illinois Joining Forces



ILLINOIS JOINING FORCES

*Supporting Service Members, Veterans
and their Families*

www.IllinoisJoiningForces.org

The End. Questions?

