

The US Military

In the decade since 9/11, America's highly-capable volunteer military has faced a series of global challenges. From counterterrorism operations to disaster response, our men and women in uniform have proven themselves time and again. Over ten years of sustained combat have taken a toll on our servicemembers and their families. They deserve support from political leaders who understand the use of force, and from well-funded civilian security agencies.

Few of our national security challenges can be met with military might alone. 21st century national security challenges demand a team approach, coupling defense efforts with development assistance, diplomacy, and



support for emerging democracies. As our military leaders adapt to a changing world, they rely more on robust civilian agencies to ensure success.



If you read only one thing...

Key Issues:

Values are a matter of life and death in the U.S. military.

The U.S. military is apolitical.

The U.S. military is highly educated and ethnically representative of the U.S. population.

The U.S. military does not choose wars; only civilian leaders have that power.

Who serves in today's military?

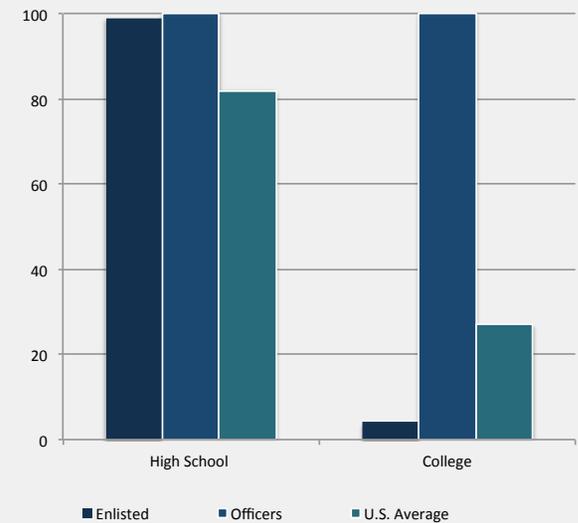
The military is comprised of some of the most able people in America. Only 25% of the population between 17 and 24 are eligible to enlist; 75% are disqualified due to lack of physical fitness, failure to graduate high school, or a criminal record.

The military is well educated. Enlisted servicemembers must graduate from high school. Accordingly, 98% have a high school diploma or equivalent, whereas nearly 20% of the general population does not. Officers must have a college degree, an achievement that fewer than one-third of Americans have earned.

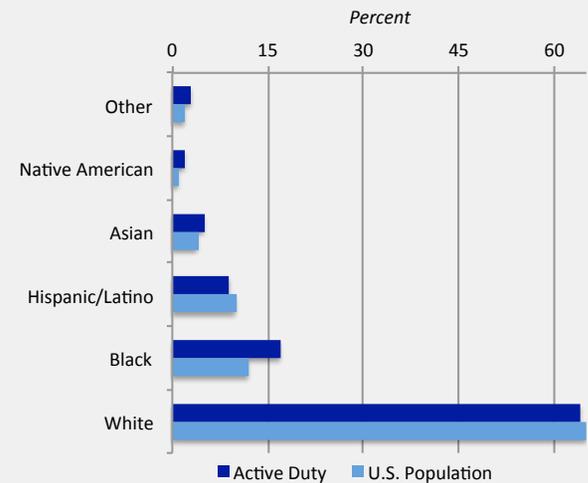
The military is nearly ethnically representative of the U.S. population, and most recruits come from the middle class. African Americans are slightly over-represented and Latinos are slightly underrepresented but the numbers are broadly similar to the U.S. population among both officers and enlisted servicemembers. The chief demographic difference between the military and the rest of the population is gender: only about 15% of servicemembers are women.

Most members of the military do not want a return to the draft; they want to be a professional, volunteer force. Reinstating a draft is often seen by civilians as a way of leveling American society and creating a common, bonding experience between the military and civilians. But most members of the professional military do not want people serving with them who do not want to be there—it endangers their lives. At the same time, active duty members welcome reservist help, even from those

Education Levels

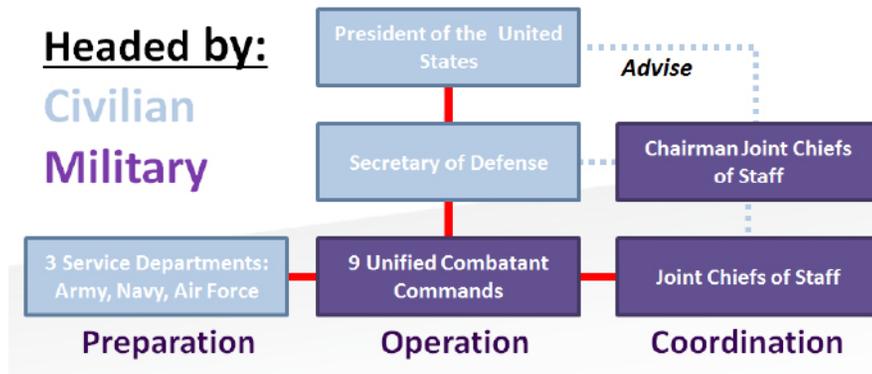


Racial/Ethnic Background



involuntarily recalled.

Who runs the military?



The military is under civilian control. The President, who serves as the Commander-in-Chief, decides—with Congress—which wars we enter, sets military strategy, and determines the number of troops.

The Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force are civilians in charge of preparation. They ensure each service has the budget, necessary manpower, training, and equipment to accomplish their objectives.

Combatant Commanders are military officers who are in charge of military operations in geographic areas, and some specialty areas such as Strategic Command and Special Operations Command.



Key Fact

The “chain of command” runs from the President through the civilian Secretary of Defense to uniformed Combatant Commanders.

They take their orders from civilians: the President and the Secretary of Defense, collectively known as “National Command Authority.”

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are the senior members of the uniformed military, but they do not command forces. They advise the president; they do not command operations. And they are not in the “chain of command.”

The Burden of Command: Rank & Unit Size

In general terms, there are two types of servicemembers: enlisted personnel and commissioned officers.

Commissioned Officers command and manage. They lead and coordinate missions, and are referred to as “Sir” or “Ma’am.” To become an officer, a servicemember must either graduate from a Service Academy, or else earn a bachelor’s degree and complete an ROTC program or Officer Candidate School. A small number of people receive “direct commissions” without completing any of these programs. Many doctors, lawyers, and chaplains receive their commissions and enter the military this way.

Understanding rank. As officers advance in rank, they assume responsibility for larger units. For example, the difference between

Unit Sizes

UNIT (ARMY)	LED BY	# TROOPS
Division	Major General	15–18,000
Army Brigade or Marine Regiment	Colonel	2,500–4,000
Battalion	Lieutenant Colonel	665–1,000
Company	Captain	130–250
Platoon	Lieutenant	35–45
Squad	Sergeant	9–13
Fire Team	Corporal	3–4

a Lieutenant and a Lieutenant Colonel—in Army infantry units—is responsibility for about 950 more lives.

Enlisted personnel advise officers and execute missions. They enter the military, gaining specialized skills through training and experience. They execute orders and get the job done on the ground. They should not be referred to as “Sir” or “Ma’am.” They should be addressed by rank and last name – “Private Smith.” Enlisted servicemembers can become Non-Commissioned Officers, such as Sergeants, and take on additional leadership and management roles. A Sergeant might be thirty years older than a newly commissioned Lieutenant, but would still be outranked by the officer. The lowest ranking officer out-ranks the highest ranking enlisted servicemember, but senior enlisted leaders are afforded tremendous respect by even the highest ranking officers. A strong working relationship and deep respect between senior enlisted and officers is often required for a unit to operate effectively.

The Military Services

Each service has its own mandate. The Army is built to execute large-scale and long-term ground operations. The Air Force controls air and space operations and is in charge of two-thirds of our nuclear triad (ballistic missiles and bombers). The Navy provides naval security, ensures sea transport, and allows for U.S. force projection. The Navy also controls the third leg of the nuclear triad (nuclear missile submarines).



Common Error

Not all personnel are ‘soldiers’:

- Army = soldier
- 1. Navy = sailor
- Marines = Marine
- Air Force = Airman
- Coast Guard = Coast Guardsman

When in doubt, use ‘servicemember’ or ‘troops.’

The Marines are a rapid deployment amphibious force. Each of the services also contributes elite forces to the Special Operations community, as well as computer specialists to the Cyber Command.

The Coast Guard is also a uniformed service and is considered a part of our nation's military. Legislation passed in 2002 placed the Coast Guard within the Department of Homeland Security except when called to war, at which point they fall within the Navy.

Not all military personnel are 'soldiers.' Using the correct terminology is important to showing respect. When referring to members of different services, use 'servicemembers' or 'troops.' Soldiers serve in the Army. Sailors make up the Navy. The Air Force has Airmen, and the Coast Guard has Coast Guardsmen—regardless of gender. Marines are called Marines – with a capital “M.”

The Reserves and the National Guard. The National Guard is organized by individual states to train and prepare for unforeseen circumstances and mobilize if needed during war. While the governor controls each state's National Guard, units can be federalized (placed under presidential control) and deployed upon request, such as after September 11, 2001. Note: The National Guard only has Army and Air Force.

The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force Reserves are run by the federal government. They consist of everyday Americans who agree to train at a minimum of one weekend a month and two full weeks a year, with the possibility of being 'activated' for longer periods of service when needed.



Key Fact

In 1973, the U.S. ended the draft and adopted an all-volunteer military. Today, less than 1% of Americans currently serve in the active duty or reserve military.

However, the Reserves are responsible for key duties, such as logistics, public affairs, and maintenance. This was deliberately done to ensure that reserves would be deployed when the nation went to war. At the time, policymakers intended for this to ensure that wars could not be fought without real public support or real impact on the public, since calling on the Reserves directly impacts local communities. Many members of the Reserves also work in local police, fire, and other emergency responder forces. When they are deployed as part of a war, local communities and businesses must cope with depleted ranks at home.

Since 2001, the Reserve Forces have provided a great deal of support and been called to full-time active duty far in excess of their minimum requirements. During the surge in Iraq, for instance, Reserves and the National Guard comprised 28% of all U.S. forces. However, there are reserve units in many areas that lack VA services, so many reservists returned to towns ill-equipped to help them reintegrate. The National Guard has also seen higher rates of federalization and deployment since the beginning of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, causing real complications during crises at home. During Hurricane Katrina, for instance, the Mississippi National Guard was deployed to Iraq leaving little help for the post-Hurricane operations at home.

Where is our military deployed?

The military is deployed worldwide—not only in Afghanistan.

The U.S. military has a truly global presence, with American military personnel and equipment deployed on every continent, on every one of the world's oceans, and in the skies and space above every area of the globe.

In general, American military forces are deployed abroad for one of five reasons:

Treaty obligations. We make treaties to offer U.S. protection or to place troops in other countries, such as Germany. Sometimes we do this in order to protect a country, other times in order to reduce the size or capabilities of a country's armed services, with their support. In many countries, our security partnerships allow for training, capacity building, and burden-sharing across militaries.

Cement and safeguard alliances. U.S. forces are deployed to Eastern Europe to strengthen our relationships there. In East Asia, too, American forces are deployed to ensure the security of our allies.

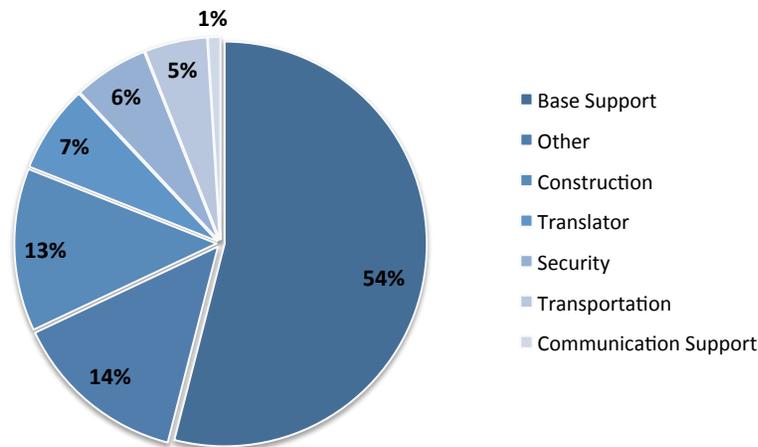
Forward deployment to ensure regional stability and rapidly respond to threats. Forces stationed in Japan and on Guam are able to get to other parts of Asia far more quickly than if they were in the U.S., letting them rapidly counter possible aggression from countries such as North Korea. The Navy also ensures the security of global shipping lanes.

Ongoing training, stability and support operations. We work with other nations' militaries to help them become more capable and make our role less essential. Contemporary examples include operations to fight terrorism or train local units in the Philippines, Indonesia and the Horn of Africa. Often, these missions don't make the headlines.

Combat operations. American troops are deployed anywhere where we are actively engaged in war or counter-terrorism operations.

Military Contractors

What do military contractors do?



The number of contractors is increasing, but not all of this trend is negative. While contracting has increased since the wars in the former Yugoslavia of the 1990s, 87% of military contractors perform non-security related tasks such as cooking and cleaning. When America ended the draft, it decided to assign military members warfighting duties and move “base support” duties such as preparing food or cleaning barracks to contractors. It makes sense to hire locals and third-party nationals to perform these functions.

However, the use of military contractors to perform security operations is controversial and sometimes problematic. Security

contractors comprise just 6% of the contracting force, and translators comprise an additional 7%. It may not make sense to outsource these strategic functions. Individuals charged with the use of force, interrogation, or embassy security for our diplomats should fall under the chain of command and be subject to the same legal rules as our military forces. And while there are advantages to outsourcing translation duties to locals who know the language best, there is no substitute for trained and proficient linguists in the military services.

Military Values

Military values are matters of life and death. The military places a high premium on values such as honor and keeping one's word, and for good reason: survival and success on the battlefield depends upon trust. In the civilian world, not showing up to an appointment on time is annoying; in a combat environment, a similar lapse can cost lives. Many veterans carry these values with them into civilian life after leaving the military.

Progressives share many values with the U.S. military. The military and progressives share a fierce commitment to merit-based advancement, as well as a feeling that the privileged should help the underprivileged. Officers, for instance, eat after those under their command. Both also share a strong sense of community. 'Lead by example' and 'Leave No Man Behind' are key pillars of battlefield leadership. Finally, progressives and the military believe decision-making should be based on what is right, not what is expedient.

Progressives and the military have achieved important successes working together. The GI Bill helped create the American middle class after World War II, by assisting veterans in getting an education, buying a home, and setting themselves up for success after their service. The new post-9/11 GI Bill offers similar opportunities to today's veterans. Other examples include the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law, gender combat integration, reform in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the development of The Counterinsurgency Field Manual, which integrated military and civilian ideas by providing the framework for the surge strategy in Iraq.

Each of these achievements was born through collaboration between progressives and the military. These initiatives are of paramount importance in guiding today's wars and taking care of today's veterans.

The military is fiercely apolitical. By law, servicemembers may not appear in uniform at political events and they may not endorse candidates. This reflects and safeguards a deep institutional commitment to civilian control of The military, and is a value military personnel hold sacred. When servicemembers take their oath, they swear their allegiance to the Constitution, not to a particular party or President.

The military does not always vote Republican. In the 2008 presidential election, the majority of servicemembers under the age of 60 voted for President Obama. Because a higher proportion of seniors served in the military before the draft ended in 1973, Senator McCain received more votes from veterans and servicemembers overall (55%-45%). In 2012, President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney evenly split the veterans and servicemembers' vote in the swing state of Virginia,



Key Fact

Official Service Values

Army:

1. Loyalty
2. Duty
3. Respect
4. Selfless Service
5. Honor
6. Integrity
7. Personal Courage

Navy:

1. Honor
2. Courage
3. Commitment

Marines:

1. Honor
2. Courage
3. Commitment

Air Force

1. Integrity First
2. Service before self
3. Excellence in all we do

suggesting that the military vote split similarly to the overall vote.

The military is not necessarily militaristic. Servicemembers are the first to see the real costs of war, and they—and their families—bear the brunt of the conflict. But feelings towards war are complicated. Many servicemembers also want the opportunity to apply their expertise and provide meaningful service for America’s security.