



Military Cultural Competency & Transition Awareness

**Working with Service Members, Veterans &
Families**

Virginia Veteran and Family Support



Military Culture

This training provides an overview of military culture to include organizational structure, rank, branches of service, core values, and demographics as well as similarities and differences between the Active and Reserve components, National Guard and Military Family awareness.

It also provides awareness of transition and reintegration needs for veterans and members of the National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves and their Families.



Why This Is Important

How many of you served in the U.S. Military?

How many of you are immediate family members of someone who is or has served in the U.S. Military?

How many of you have worked or interacted with a Service Member, Veteran or family member in the last 90 days?



Learning Objectives

- Describe the military organizational structure, rank, branches of service, core values, and demographics
- Identify differences between the Active and Reserve components and National Guard
- Identify characteristics of military transitions from active duty, deployment and reintegration to civilian life and the challenges that arise
- Identify best practices to enhance behavioral health, treatment options and resources for military service members, veteran, family and caregivers
- Discuss the prevalence and characteristics of suicide amongst military service members and veterans



Why Military Culture is Important

“But I fear they do not know us. I fear they do not comprehend the full weight of the burden we carry or the price we pay when we return from battle. This is important, because a people uninformed about what they are asking the military to endure is a people inevitably unable to fully grasp the scope of the responsibilities our Constitution levies upon them...We must help them understand, our fellow citizens who so desperately want to help us.”

ADM Michael Mullen Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,
United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, Saturday,
May 21, 2011.



Culture of the Military

- Abides by the Uniformed Code of Military Justice
- Each service follows its own set of traditions
- The military has its own terminology
- Follows an organized rank structure
- The Army and Marine Corp. military calls their enlisted jobs Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). The Air Force uses Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC), the Navy uses Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC)
- Strong work ethic, accountability, personal responsibility
- Stoic, overcomes challenges, flexible and resilient



Diversity In The Military

Diversity is race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies

Table 6. Race and Ethnic Representation in the Active Component and U.S. Population

As of May 2018

Rank and Grade	White	Black	Asian	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Multi/ Unknown	Hispanic *
General/Flag Officer (O-7 and above)	87.5%	8.1%	1.8%	none	0.3%	2.4%	2.1%
Officer (all)	77.3%	8.1%	5.2%	10.1%	0.5%	8.2%	7.6%
Warrant Officer	69.0%	16.0%	3.1%	0.8%	0.6%	10.4%	11.6%
Senior Enlisted (E-7 and above)	63.1%	19.1%	3.8%	1.3%	1.2%	11.5%	14.3%
Enlisted (all)	67.4%	18.5%	4.3%	1.3%	1.3%	7.3%	17.5%
Total Active Duty	69.1%	16.8%	4.4%	1.2%	1.1%	7.5%	15.8%
U.S. Resident Population (age 18-64)	76.2%	13.7%	6.3%	1.2%	0.3%	2.2%	17.9%

Sources: Officer and Enlisted figures are as reported by the Defense Manpower Data Center, May 2018. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States, States, and Counties: April 1, 2010, to July 1, 2017, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Release Date: July 1, 2017.



Military Terms

“Squared Away”

Taken Care of or Very
Professional/Sharp

“In Country”

Physically in a combat zone

“Contingency”

Military actions requiring
rapid deployment



Military Terminology

This “language” serves an important purpose:

- It has a practical function that makes communicating with other service members easier and more efficient
- The U.S. military uses unique items and concepts that civilians aren't exposed to
- There is a need for expedient, clear communication
- Service members are immersed in a linguistic world apart from the daily life of a civilian. Some are self-explanatory and others are cryptic, but most have a specific meaning



Military vs. Civilian Terminology

Combat - Hazardous conditions

Company/Squad/Platoon – department, team or section

Medal – Award

Military Personnel Office - Human Resources

Mission - Task/objective

Reconnaissance - Data collection and analysis

Regulations - Policy or guidelines



Core Values

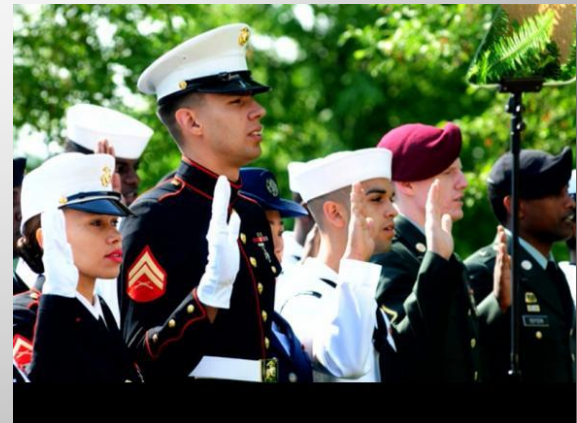
Navy: *Honor, Courage, Commitment*

Marine Corps: *Honor, Courage, Commitment*

Air Force: *Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in all we do*

USCG: *Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty*

Army: *Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor Integrity and Personal Courage*





Military Ethos

The **military ethos** reflects how military professionals:

- View themselves (identity)
- How they fulfill their function (expertise)
- How they relate to their government and to society (responsibility)



Military Creeds

All services have creeds. A creed is an oath or saying that provides a value structure by which to live or work by. Creeds then set the tone of life in each service.



Rank Structure



Enlisted

“E”

- An enlisted member is one who has joined the military or "enlisted" Paygrades E-1 through E-9

Non-Commissioned Officer

“NCO”

- An NCO is an enlisted member-rank of officer through promotion. NCOs serve as the link between enlisted personnel and commissioned officers. They hold responsibility for training troops to execute missions. Training for NCOs includes leadership, management, specific skills, and combat training. Paygrades E-4/E-5 through E-6/E-9

Warrant Officer

“W” or “CWO”

- A warrant officer is a highly trained specialist. One must be an enlisted member with several years of experience, be recommended by his or her commander, and pass a selection board to become a warrant officer. Paygrades W1 through W5

Officer

“O”

- A commissioned officer's primary function is to provide management and leadership in his or her area of responsibility. Requires a bachelor's degree and later, as one progresses through the ranks possibly a master's degree for promotions. Specific commissioning programs exist (e.g., military academies, Officer Candidate Schools, and Reserve Officer Training Corps [ROTC]). Paygrades O-1 through O-10



Military Rank to Civilian Position



Military Rank to Civilian Job Equivalent	
Commander	Director or Senior Manager
Executive Officer	Deputy Director
Field Grade Officer	Executive or Manager
Company Grade Officer	Operations Manager
Warrant Officer	Technical Specialist or Dept. Manager
Senior NCO	First Line Supervisor
Infantry	Security Force
First Sergeant	Personnel Manager
Squad Leader	Team Lead or Team Chief
Supply Sergeant	Supply or Logistics Manager
Operations NCO	Operations Supervisor



Service Force Inception



14 June 1775

13 Oct. 1775

18 Sept. 1947

10 Nov. 1775

4 Aug. 1790

20 Dec. 2019

Reserve:
23 Apr. 1908

Reserve:
3 Mar 1915

Reserve:
14 Apr. 1948

Reserve:
29 Aug. 1916

Reserve:
19 Feb. 1941

National
Guard:
13 Dec. 1636

National
Guard:
18 Sept. 1947



Army - Soldier

- **Mission:** To fight and win our nation's wars with sustained land dominance across full-range of military operations
- Oldest and largest branch; main ground force
- Built to execute large-scale and long-term ground operations

www.army.mil





Marine Corps - Marine

- Mission: As America's expeditionary force in readiness since 1775, the Marines are forward deployed to win our Nation's battles swiftly and aggressively in times of crisis
- A component of the Department of the Navy
- Maintains amphibious and ground units for contingency and combat operations

www.marines.mil





Navy - Sailor

- **Mission:** The mission is to recruit, train, equip and organize to deliver combat ready Naval forces to win conflicts and wars while maintaining security through sustained forward presence
- The Navy is America's forward deployed force and is a major deterrent to aggression around the world
- Operates on, above and below the water

www.navy.mil

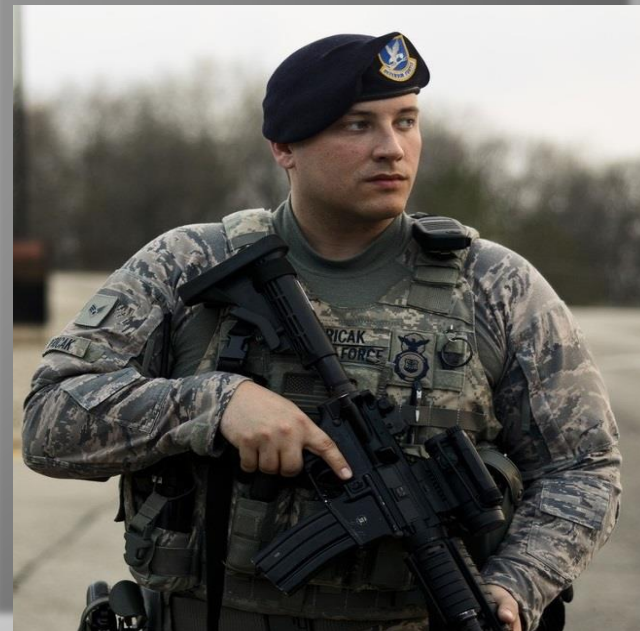




Air Force - Airman

- **Mission:** To fly, fight and win—in air, space and cyberspace.
We are America's Airmen
- The Air Force provides a rapid, flexible and lethal air and space capability that can deliver forces anywhere within hours
- Controls air and space operations and is in charge of two-thirds of our nuclear capabilities

www.af.mil





Coast Guard – Coast Guardsman

- **Mission:** To ensure our Nation's maritime safety, security and stewardship
- The oldest continuing seagoing service in the U.S.
- Operates under the Department of Homeland Security but can be transferred to the US Navy by the President in times of war

www.uscg.mil





Space Force

- **Mission:** Organizes, trains, and equips space forces in order to protect U.S. and allied interests in space and to provide space capabilities to the joint force
- Develops military space professionals, acquiring military space systems, maturing the military doctrine for space power, and organizing space forces to present to our Combatant Commands
- The U.S. Space Force (USSF) is a new branch of the Armed Forces, established on December 20, 2019, and will be stood-up over the next 18 months operating under the U.S. Air Force





Armed Forces Reserve

- 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
- Minimum duty requirements are one weekend per month, plus two weeks of training per year, members of the Reserves are considered part-time



Reserve Components

- There are 800, 000 + in the Reserve Components
- All five services (branches) have reserve components
- Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines fall under the Dept. of Defense
- Coast Guard falls under the Dept. of Homeland Security





Individual Ready Reserve

- IRR is a category of the Ready Reserve of the Reserve Component of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- Composed of former active duty or reserve military personnel
- All members of IRR may be subject to recall

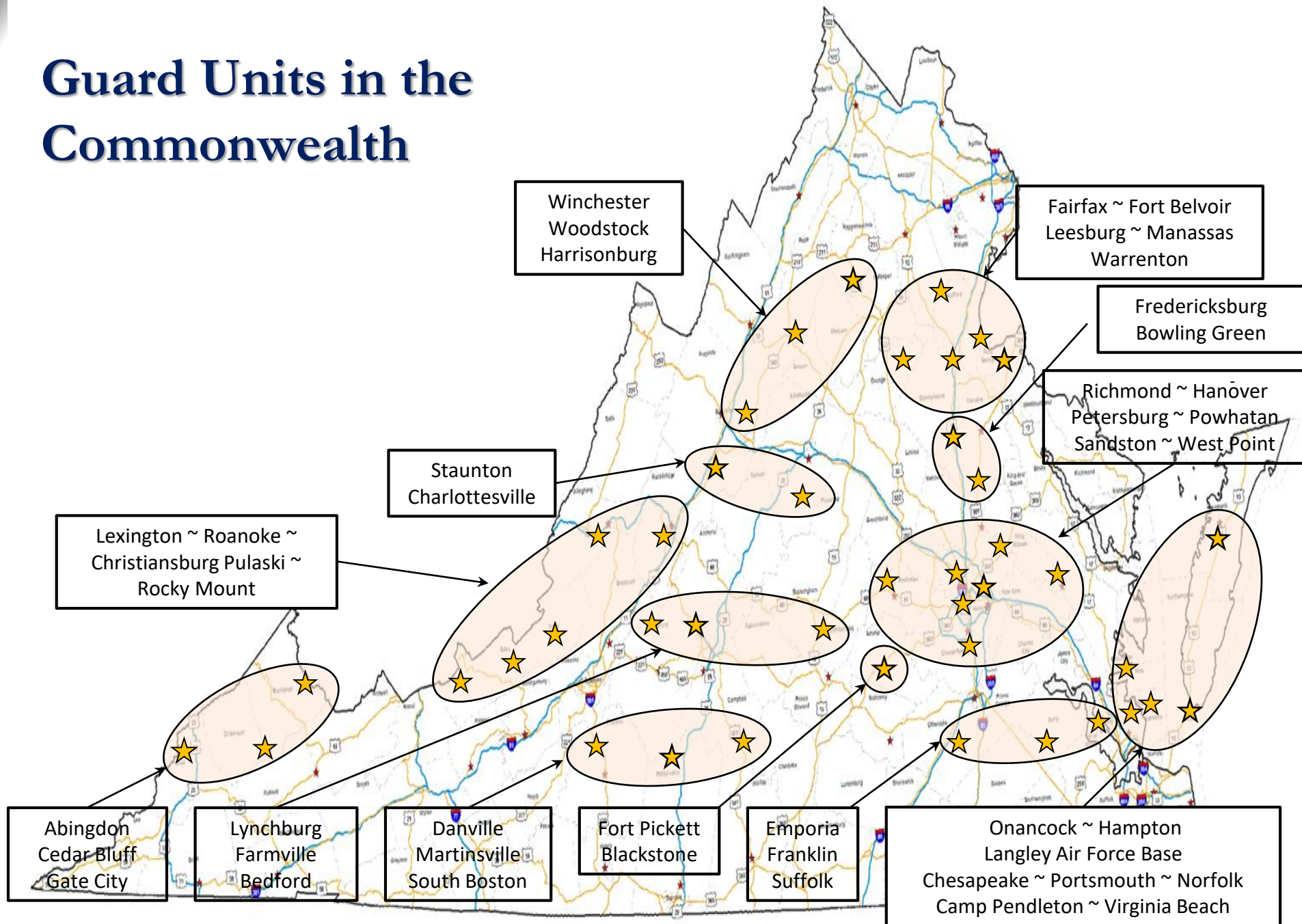




Virginia National Guard (Army and Air)

- 9,100 Soldiers, Airmen, Virginia Defense Force personnel and civilian employees
- Unique dual-status force with a federal mission and state mission
- Domestic response capabilities: mission command, high mobility ground transportation, ground and aerial damage assessment, imagery analysis, resupply, medical treatment, decontamination, cyber security and vulnerability assessment
- On the federal side: train Army and Air Force combat and support units, air dominance, weather support, intelligence operations, unmanned aerial vehicles, sustainment support and cyber operations

Guard Units in the Commonwealth





Activation of National Guard

- **Title 10** – President orders National Guard to active duty – can be voluntary or not, duration is determined by the type of activation. There are seven different types of activation
- **Title 32** – State Active Duty (SAD). The Governor can activate National Guard personnel to “State Active Duty” in response to natural or man-made disasters or Homeland Defense missions. Allows the Governor, with the approval of the President or the Secretary of Defense, to order a member to duty for operational Homeland Defense activities





Recent Conflict Casualty Status

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Mar. 2003 – Nov. 2011

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Oct. 2001 – Dec. 2014

Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) Dec. 2014 - Present

Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) Oct. 2014 - Present

CASUALTY STATUS
as of 10 a.m. EST
11 May 2020

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM U.S. CASUALTY STATUS¹

	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
OIF U.S. Military Casualties	4,418	3,481	937	0	31,994
OIF U.S. DOD Civilian Casualties	13	9	4	0	
Totals	4,431	3,490	941	0	31,994

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM U.S. CASUALTY STATUS^{3, 4}

	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
OEF U.S. Military Casualties					
Afghanistan Only 3	2,219	1,833	385	1	20,093
Other Locations 4	130	12	118	0	56
OEF U.S. DOD Civilian Casualties	4	2	2	0	
Worldwide Total	2,353	1,847	505	1	20,149

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL U.S. CASUALTY STATUS⁶

	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
OFS U.S. Military Casualties	90	64	26	0	570
OFS U.S. DOD Civilian Casualties	2	2	0	0	
Totals	92	66	26	0	570



Recent Conflict Casualty Status

*Casualty Type



U.S. Military Casualties - OCO Casualty Summary by Casualty Type

Download Reports:



(As of May 12, 2020)

Operation / Casualty Type	Weaponry	Other	Transportation	Pending	Unknown	Medical	Total
OEF Hostile Death	540	1,115	28	19	141	2	1,845
OEF Non-Hostile Death	137	184	89	16	17	60	503
OEF Pending Non-Hostile Death	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
OEF Wounded in Action	3,745	10,789	17	22	5,537	39	20,149
OFS Hostile Death	36	25	0	3	0	0	64
OFS Non-Hostile Death	6	13	0	4	1	2	26
OFS Wounded in Action	256	268	0	1	45	0	570
OIF Hostile Death	2,080	1,067	92	64	164	14	3,481
OIF Non-Hostile Death	274	263	256	23	22	99	937
OIF Wounded in Action	19,334	8,982	133	25	3,503	17	31,994
OIR Hostile Death	10	8	0	1	2	0	21
OIR Non-Hostile Death	19	37	1	1	2	14	74
OIR Wounded in Action	24	144	0	1	59	0	228
OND Hostile Death	12	26	0	0	0	0	38
OND Non-Hostile Death	16	8	1	1	1	9	36
OND Wounded in Action	77	209	0	0	12	0	298
Total	26,566	23,139	617	181	9,506	256	60,265

OEF=OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM; OIF=OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM; OND=OPERATION NEW DAWN

OIR=OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE; OFS=OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL

OIF Navy totals include one Coast Guard death.



Characteristics of OIF/OEF/OFS and Differences from Past Conflicts

- Heavy dependence on National Guard & Reserve
- Longer deployments with multiple combat deployments and infrequent breaks in between
- High intensity urban warfare
- Chronic threat of IEDs and RPGs
- New advancements in body armor, tactical vehicles
- Fewer fatalities and more wounded survive than ever before



Stressors of Military Life

Frequent Moves:

For children: changing schools, loss of friends, new routines

For spouses: job change, periods of un/under-employment, search for new doctors, loss of friends

Separation Due to Deployments:

Spouse becomes single parent

Children: loss of parent, uncertainty, worry

Financial: Inability to sell home, unforeseen moving costs, additional day care costs

Limited Support System: Separation from extended family, constant change of friends





Everyone is Affected by Combat





Moving from this....







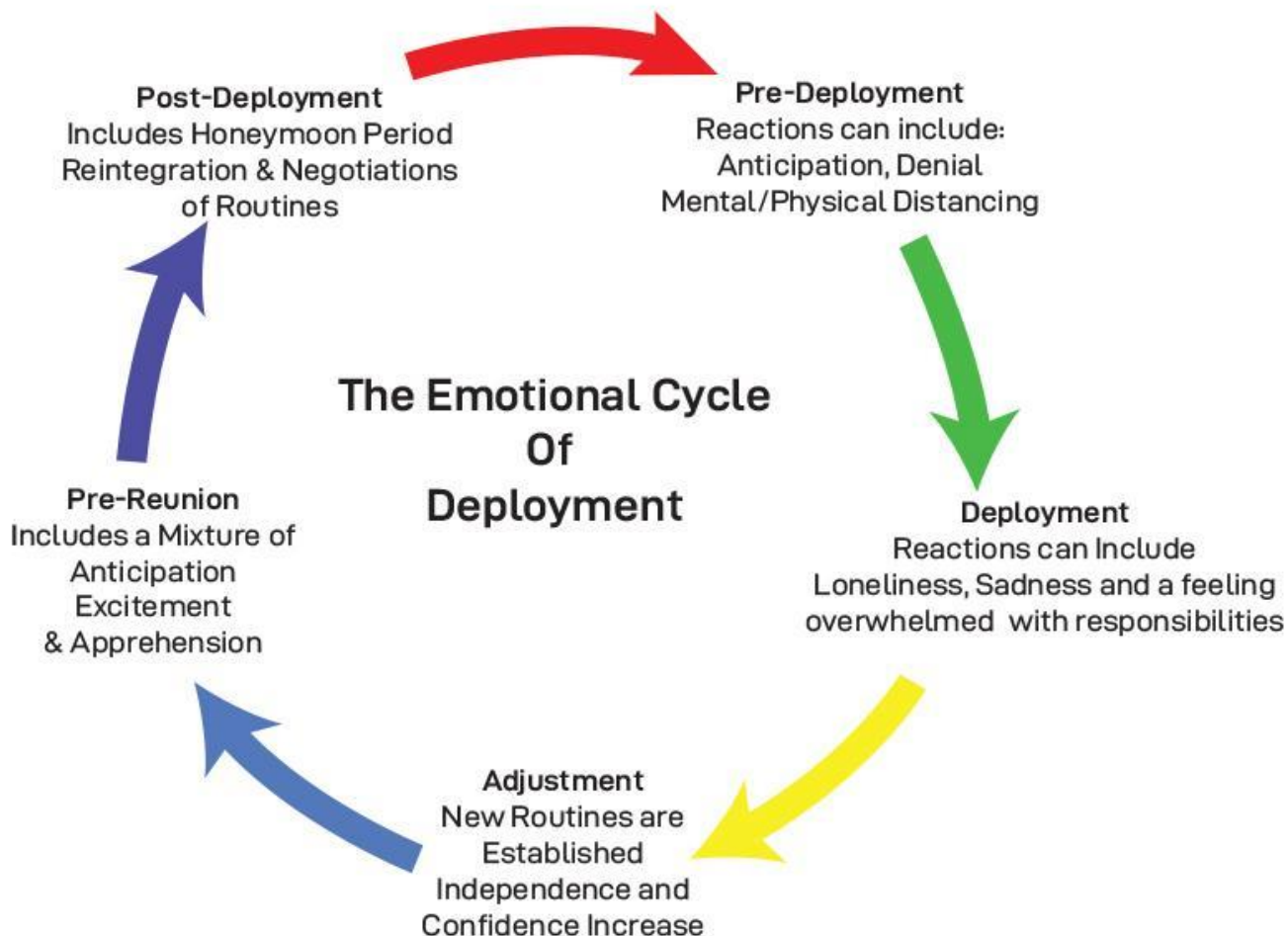


To This:





Emotional Cycle of Deployment





Stressors of Combat

Transition Stress:

- As discussed in the previous Emotional Cycles of Deployment

Combat Stress Reaction:

- Reactions to the traumatic stress of combat and the cumulative stresses of military operations

Serious Injuries:

- Long lasting impact, some leading to medical discharge from the military

Specific to Guard and Reserves:

- Returning to civilian life and not a military base, readjusting to civilian income, employment and often times having been cross leveled (not deploying or coming home as a unit)



POLL



Poll Results

- **Deployment is the leading cause of suicide in service members**

False – In the military, failed or failing relationships in the 90 days prior to death were reported in 36.9% of active duty suicides

- **The majority of service members who die by suicide had a mental illness**

False - The majority of service members who die by suicide were not diagnosed with a mental illness

- **Approximately one-half (51.5%) of Service members who died by suicide received some form of care (though not necessarily suicide- or behavioral health-related care) via the Military Health Service (MHS) in the 90 days prior to death**

True - Although it is not known whether these individuals were suicidal at the time of contact, these contacts could represent opportunities for identification and treatment of suicidal risk

- **The suicide rate is higher in combat veterans than non-combat veterans**

False - Historical data suggests that combat and increased rates of suicide do not appear to be associated, suicide is not higher for troops or veterans who saw combat than for those who did not.



Transitioning Home for Combat Veterans

- Survivors guilt
- Moral injury
- Changing combat zone responses to appropriate responses in civilian community





Transitioning Home from Combat

“There is nothing normal about war. There’s nothing normal about seeing people losing their limbs, seeing your best friend die. There’s nothing normal about that, and that will never become normal...”

Lt. Col. Paul Pasquina from “Fighting for Life”

This video discusses the transition from combat to home, presented by Charles Hoge, M.D. Colonel (Ret.)

<https://youtu.be/Wlx5T1wboxw>



Reintegration to Family Life

- Communication issues
- Unsure what to share about their deployment/or can't share at all
- Over stimulation
- Intimate partner violence
- Responsibilities in the household structure
- Lack of sensitivity toward partner/emotional numbing
- Minimizing partner's stressors and challenges
- Intimacy issues
- Role changes/adjustments



Transitioning from Military Life

- Finding a new identity/purpose
- Establishing a new support system
- Choosing a permanent home
- Healthcare
- Employment
- Benefits
- College
- GI Bill





Federal Definition: Veteran

What is a Veteran?

Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines a veteran as; “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.”



Our U.S. Veteran Population

- 19,209,704 veterans in the U.S.
- 5.1 million are between ages of 25-50
- 5.2 million are between ages of 50-65
- 9.4% of veterans are women
- 7.2 million Gulf War Veterans



Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics
www.va.gov/vetdata



Virginia Veterans

Total Veterans

Virginia has approximately 714,410 veterans

Population

Virginia currently has the 6th largest veteran population in the nation, however by 2023, Virginia is projected to be ranked 3rd

Young

**Virginia ranks 5th in younger veterans (age 17 – 39)
33% of the Virginia veteran population is under the age of 50**

Female

**Virginia has the second largest number of women veterans to total veterans, 107,533
(Nationally, females are 9% of the vet pop)**

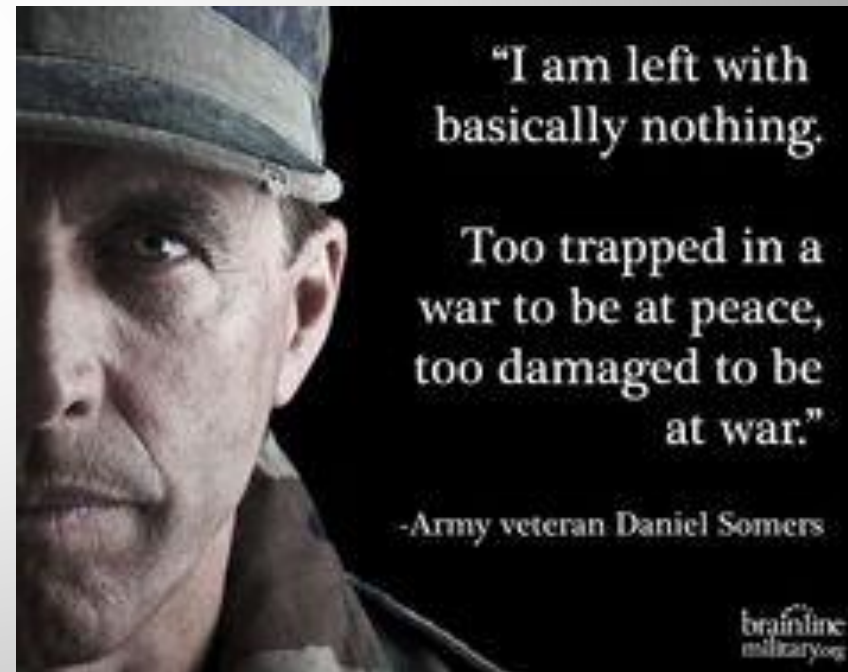
Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

www.va.gov/vetdata



Possible Complications From Military Service

- PTSD
- TBI
- MST
- Moral Injury
- Anxiety/Depression
- Substance Use Disorder





Our Brain During a Traumatic Event

- Function of the brain during a traumatic event: survival
- Fight-Flight-Freeze response
 - Stress activates immune and defense systems
 - The brain interprets the traumatic experience as dangerous
 - The brain generates powerful memories

Individuals with PTSD sometimes lose the ability to discriminate between past and present experiences or interpret environmental contexts correctly



PTSD



“A Normal Reaction to an Abnormal Situation”



What Is PTSD?

- PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) is a mental health issue that some develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault.
- At first, it may be hard to do normal daily activities, like go to work, go to school, or spend time with people you care about. But most people start to feel better after a few weeks or months.
- If it's been longer than a few months and you're still having symptoms, you may have PTSD. For some people, PTSD symptoms may start later on, or they may come and go over time.



Military and Para-Military Related PTSD

- Trauma reoccurs over days, months or years (e.g. handling body parts every day, being under fire on a regular basis, repeat deployments)
- The impact of and coping with PTSD can be affected by unit support, command, leadership and national support



Treatment for PTSD

Focus on symptom relief: Sleep patterns and mood, confronting fears, understanding emotional responses to traumatic events

Treatment will reduce distress associated with memories and suppress physical reactions

Types of treatment include:

- Prolonged Exposure Therapy
- Cognitive Processing Therapy
- Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Interpersonal Therapy
- Non-traditional therapies



Traumatic Brain Injury

TBI is a disruption in the normal function of the brain that can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or penetrating head injury.

Blast injuries caused by exposure to improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades, land mines, mortar/artillery shells, motor vehicle crashes, falls and assaults

Even those who were not obviously wounded in explosions or accidents may have sustained a brain injury





Combat Related Traumatic Brain Injury

- Closed brain injuries – are very common
- May not exhibit physical wounds
- Many will not report the incident
- Many will not even be aware they've experienced a TBI



Virginia Department of Veterans Services



Traumatic Brain Injury Symptoms

IMPACT ON COGNITION AND MEMORY

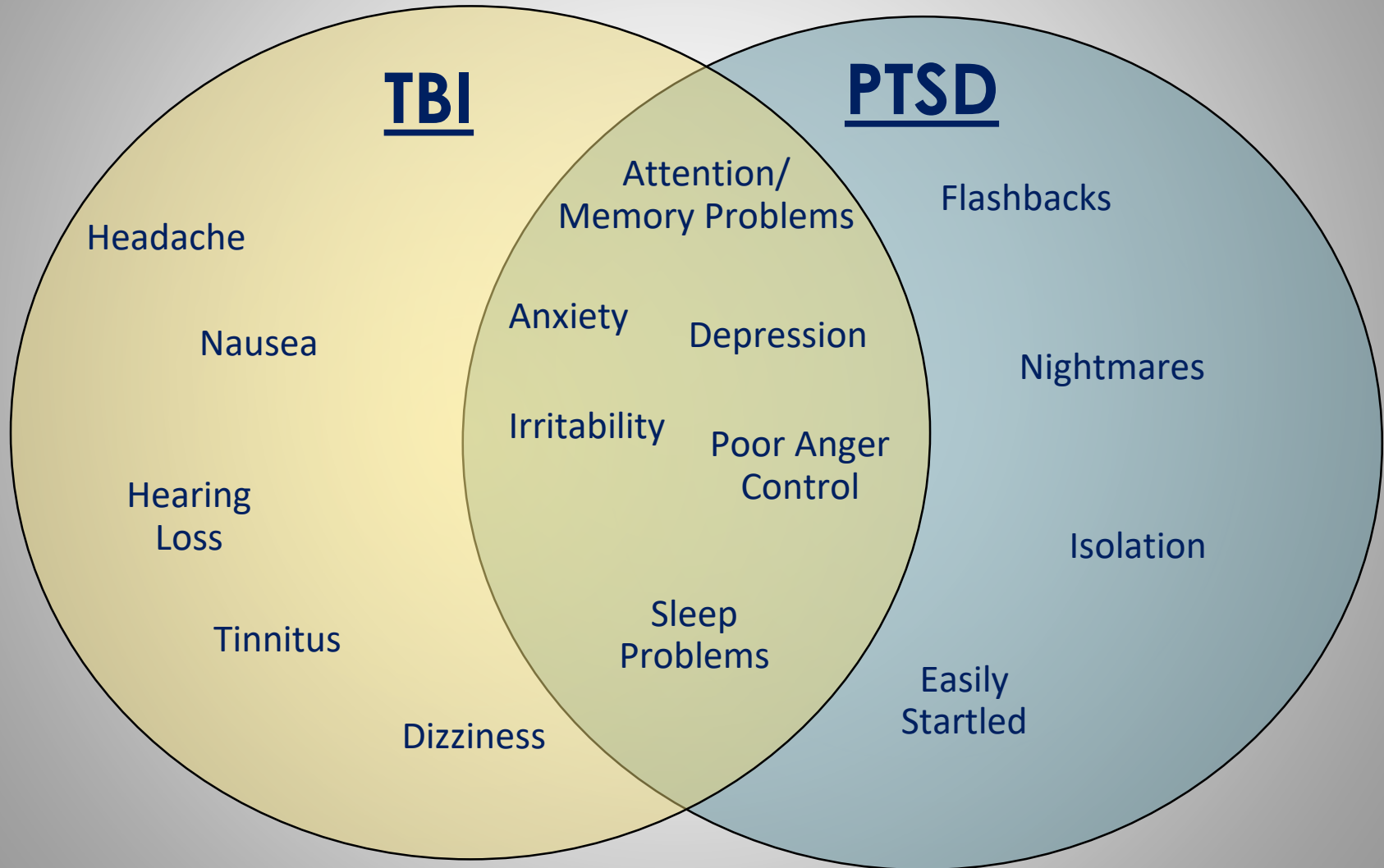
IMPACT ON EMOTION

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOR





PTSD/TBI Symptom Overlap





Moral Injury

- Like psychological trauma, moral injury is a term that describes an extreme and unprecedented life experience including the harmful aftermath of exposure to such events.
- Events are considered morally injurious if they “violate deeply held moral beliefs and expectations”



Moral Injury from combat

- Moral injuries may stem from direct participation in acts of combat, such as killing or harming others, or indirect acts, such as witnessing death or dying, failing to prevent immoral acts of others, or giving or receiving orders that are perceived as gross moral violations
- In the aftermath of moral injuries, traumatic acts may result in highly unpleasant and haunting states of inner conflict and turmoil.
- Emotional responses may include: Shame, guilt, anxiety about possible consequences, anger about betrayal-based moral injuries and behavioral manifestations

Moral Injury Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKGSn0VuaV8&feature=youtu.be>



Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

- “Sexual assault or repeated, unsolicited, threatening acts of sexual harassment that occurred while a veteran was serving on active duty or active duty for training”
- 1 in 5 females and 1 in 12 males

Fiscal Year 2018: Sexual Assault in the Military

DoD Sexual Assault Prevalence

0.7% indicated an experience of sexual assault



6.2% indicated an experience of sexual assault



More Service Members Are Coming Forward to Make a Report

After experiencing a sexual assault, how many Service members reported it to a DoD authority?

About 1 out of 14



About 1 out of 3



Of female Service members who indicated an experience of sexual assault and reported it:

- ▶ About 21% endorsed experiences consistent with legal criteria for retaliatory behavior

Note: The estimate for men was not reportable due to small sample size.

Sexual Harassment Rates in the Military

6.3% indicated an experience of sexual harassment



24.2% indicated an experience of sexual harassment



Sexual harassment is a leading factor affecting the unit climate on sexual assault. Controlling for paygrade, Service, and deployment status...



- ▶ **1 in 5 women** who experienced sexual harassment also experienced sexual assault



- ▶ **1 in 12 men** who experienced sexual harassment also experienced sexual assault

Individual Service Sexual Assault Prevalence



Army



Navy



Marine Corps



Air Force

2018	Women: 5.8%	Women: 7.5%	Women: 10.7%	Women: 4.3%
	Men: 0.7%	Men: 1.0%	Men: 0.8%	Men: 0.5%
2016	Women: 4.4%	Women: 5.1%	Women: 7.0%	Women: 2.8%
	Men: 0.6%	Men: 0.9%	Men: 0.7%	Men: 0.3%

Bolded text indicates a statistically significant increase from 2016

Service Members' Satisfaction with Response Resources

76%

Satisfied with support from Victim Advocate

74%

Satisfied with support from Special Victims Counsel/ Victims Legal Counsel

72%

Satisfied with support from Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

Data represent respondents who interacted with response resources after filing an Unrestricted Report for a sexual assault that occurred in the past year

Bystander Intervention

93% of respondents who noticed inappropriate or risky behavior **intervened**. Interventions included:

- ▶ Speaking up (**62%**)
- ▶ Talking to those who experienced it (**58%**)
- ▶ Intervening in another way (**37%**)
- ▶ Telling someone while it was happening (**24%**)
- ▶ Telling someone after it happened (**24%**)

2018 WGRA results showed that 27% of Service members indicated witnessing a high-risk situation in FY18, and of those who observed, 93% acted to address the situation. Percentages in this section do not add to 100 percent because respondents could choose more than one intervention.

Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military Fiscal Year 2018

Sources: *2018 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members. 2018 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members, DoD Office of People Analytics, Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database, and DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office



Common Coping Mechanisms for Military Stressors

- Self medication
- Hypervigilance and increased security awareness
- Isolation
- High adrenaline, high risk behavior

VIDEO

This video depicts a servicemember who returned from combat and is having difficulty transitioning into civilian life

Note: This video ends positively, but does contain graphic images and sounds which portrays re-experiencing and flashbacks of a servicemember

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_zX1uhW4Bw



Suicide and 2017 Virginia Statistics

- Highest number and percent of female veterans since VVDRS began collecting data (n=15)
- There were 259 violent deaths of veterans in Virginia. 89% were suicide deaths
- Veteran decedents were listed with a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis at a rate 3 times higher than others
- Among veterans with a mental health diagnosis, PTSD was elevated for ages 20–24 (37.5%), 25-34 (28%), and 35-44 (18%)



Suggestions When Working with Veterans

- Be military culture competent, but “know what you don’t know”
- Connect the service member with other veterans - help them develop a peer support network
- Don’t make field diagnosis of others, encourage them to seek care
- Do not share your personal views on war or politics –ACTIVELY listen to the veterans needs
- Consider loss of identity/purpose (“I was a Soldier/Marine”)
- Refer to support services/organizations



Suggestions When Working with Combat Veterans

- Do not say you understand what they have experienced unless you have experienced combat or military yourself
- Involve the veteran's primary support system
- Long term- recognize importance in discussing grief and survivors guilt and the impact of experiences on the veteran's spirituality and belief system
- Refer to other professionals as appropriate



Strengths Resulting From Military Service

1. Leadership
2. Team Work
3. Diversity
4. Flexibility/Adaptability
5. Systematic Planning and Organization
6. Work under pressure/meet deadlines

This video discusses veterans issues with mental health as well as their positive attributes



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VmUulPab4M>



Resources

DVS--Virginia Veteran and Family Support www.dvs.virginia.gov
National Resource Directory www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov
Defense Centers of Excellence for
Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury www.health.mil/dcoe.aspx
Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center www.dvbic.org
Department of Veterans Affairs www.va.gov
DoD Disabled Veterans www.dodvets.com
Vocational Rehab/Employment www.vetsuccess.gov
Center for Deployment Psychology <http://deploymentpsych.org/military-culture-course-modules>
National Center for PTSD www.ptsd.va.gov
VetsPrevail <https://www.vetsprevail.org/>



Resources

