

Translate **MILITARY EXPERIENCE** into a Job-Winning Resume

In today's job market, translating your military experience into a professional resume is critical for success. You have spent years learning many valuable, real-world skills that are difficult to duplicate in a classroom environment, so it is important to know how to communicate these skills to a future employer in a way that differentiates you from other candidates.

Omitting Irrelevant Information

Highlight the skills and qualifications that are most relevant to the specific job you are seeking, and leave irrelevant details out. Since the resume needs to be as concise and to-the-point as possible, putting your "greatest hits"-and only that-in front of an employer's eyes is a strategy for success.

THREE STEPS FOR SUCCESS

Step 1: De-Militarize Your Document

The military has its own language, acronyms, rank structures, service branches and jargon, which can often seem like a foreign language to non-military personnel. Even though you may be more comfortable "speaking military," hiring managers may reject your resume if it is written with language that isn't easily understood.

Step 2: Give the Full Picture of Your Experience From Infantry to Logistics Management

Military Experience An infantryman with 23 years in the Army (E-9/Command Sergeant Major) who operated tanks and weapons and dug ditches is having a hard time identifying skills or direct experience to bring to the civilian workforce.

Experience to Market to Civilian Employers Trained and evaluated 40 personnel supporting 2,000+ troops in 4 countries, with an inventory list of 1,500 line items and assets valued at \$65M.

Functional Areas of Expertise or Core Competencies Personnel management, logistics and operations. Strategic planning and tactical application.

Possible Employment Opportunities Based on his experience, this Command Sergeant Major could market his skills as a logistics expert and apply for management positions.

Key Skill Areas to Highlight

Technical

Military careers such as a telecommunication technician, financial management technician, mechanic and health care specialist all have closely related civilian careers. The technical skills you develop in your military career should be included in your resume.

Interpersonal

In the military, you'll work with a variety of people from high ranking officers to unit commanders, teammates and subordinates. Oftentimes, service members must master the art of interacting with supervisors, peers and subordinates in order to complete their missions. Interpersonal skills are valued in the civilian workplace, and should be detailed in your resume to reflect your ability to work with many different kinds of colleagues to get the job done.

Leadership

Any leadership experience or training that you acquired in the

Showcasing Communication Skills

Knowing how to translate and articulate effectively provides a glimpse into your communication skills. This is especially important when hired, because you will be communicating with your co-workers and you may be translating a company's products and services to outside customers and suppliers.

In converting your experience to civilian language, here are some examples of terms you can use in your military to civilian resume.

- *Soldiers* should be called *staff, employees* and/or *co-workers*
- *Uniforms* and *weapons*, etc. become *supplies*
- *Barracks* and other buildings are simply *facilities*

STEP 3: TRANSLATING THE DETAILS

It is also important to convert your education, medals and accomplishments into civilian language, provided that they are relevant to the position you seek.

For example, you would not use your marksmanship or your frontline experience on a civilian resume, so do not worry about this. Also, an achievement such as meritorious promotion in a combat zone can be turned into a simple statement such as “*extensive management experience in critical situations.*”

All in all, converting the military language into terms that are understandable to public sector employers will be one of the most important aspects of your military to civilian resume writing. While you need to make sure that your resume is focused, you cannot do this without first making sure that it is comprehensible.

Training

Make your classroom achievements easy to understand. Feel free to edit course titles for clarity's sake. Here are some common examples:

<i>Basic Training</i>	Basics Skills Course
<i>Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Course (BNOC)</i>	Intermediate Leadership and Management Development Course
<i>Combined Arms Staff College</i>	Senior Managerial Leadership School

Common Terms

You know it as: They know it as:

<i>Commander, Chief</i>	Division Head, Director, Senior Manager
<i>TDY/TAD</i>	Business travel
<i>Subordinates</i>	Employees, co-workers
<i>Regulations</i>	Guidance, policy, instructions
<i>Reconnaissance</i>	Data collection, survey, analysis

Awards

You might have a list of ARCOMs, MSMs, and AAMs--and that is a good thing. Clearly, you did your job well. Don't, however, fill your resume with each and every one of them. Simply mention, where appropriate, that you received awards for outstanding job performance.

Job Titles

Don't get caught up in making sure your positional military title (Captain, Major, Sergeant) translates. Focus more on communicating the functional area of your job title (Communications Technician, Emergency Medical Technician, Nurse). That said, here are some common translations that may be helpful:

<i>Warrant Officer</i>	Technical Manager/ Specialist Department Manager
<i>Senior NCOs</i>	First-Line Supervisor
<i>Sergeant Major</i>	Senior Advisor
<i>First Sergeant</i>	Personnel Supervisor
<i>Squad Leader</i>	Team Leader/Team Chief
<i>Supply Sergeant</i>	Supply Manager/Logistics Manager
<i>Operations NCO</i>	Operations Supervisor
<i>Platoon Sergeant</i>	Supervisor/ Instructor/Trainer

Remember, it is not necessary that everything be on your resume. Only mention the most recent and relative information.

Get a Civilian Critique

When you have finished, ask someone else to take a look at your resume and ask if it makes sense. Get input from other civilians who can tell you if your resume is still “wearing too much camouflage.”

The job seeker who articulates and translates best will ultimately land the interview!



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