
Myth Busting Potential Recruits Misperceptions about Post-Military Life

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Positive post-military economic outcomes are frequently cited by recruits as one of the main drivers of the propensity to serve. Many potential recruits may hold misperceptions about military service and their ability to transition out of the military to civilian employment. Here are facts and data that can be used to respond to the misperceptions.

All veterans have PTSD.

- While some veterans do experience PTSD, approximately 50-70% service members and veterans do not meet the criteria for PTSD or a co-occurring mental health disorder.
- Trauma does not always lead to psychological problems: Posttraumatic growth is common among combat veterans, particularly among those with PTSD, and is associated with better mental functioning and quality of life.
- **Main point:** If exposed to trauma, Veterans are extremely resilient and have many resources to aid them in their mental health treatment. Post-traumatic growth can allow for a new positive outlook on life, stronger relationships with others, and potentially a personal or spiritual change.

The military doesn't care for its people.

- Unlike other employers, the military works to ensure that each service member has a successful transition back to civilian life and civilian employment.
- The military Services provide the Transition Assistance Program including classes, on financial planning, finding employment, seeking benefits, accessing higher education, and career exploration towards the end of one's military service.
- **Main point:** In order to continue recruiting young adults into the military, the military Services have made the economic post-service success of veterans a priority and has dedicated resources to ensure their success. Military supervisors and leaders have been tasked to ensure that their subordinates are prepared to transition well and have successful civilian lives.

The military doesn't prepare service members for the civilian work force.

- American service members receive extensive education and training in applicable career skills as soon as they enter the military, starting with boot camp/basic training and then through formal training for their specific occupation.
- Research suggests that veterans develop and excel in highly sought after competencies at levels greater than that of their civilian counterpart.
 - Employers appreciate the skills that members gain in the military and recruit veterans to obtain the skills.
 - 86% of the more than 8,000 military occupations have a direct connection to a civilian job and in addition, there are even more indirect connections between civilian and military occupations through soft non-technical skills such as communications and leadership.
- Once employed, veterans tend to rise faster in their companies and succeed more than non-veterans.
- In the past five years, the unemployment rates for all veterans were lower than the rate of unemployment for non-veterans.
- Military service also leads to increased educational opportunities at no or low cost:
 - Starting in 1944, the GI Bill has helped more than 2.3 million veterans pay for college.
 - Each year, the services provide free voluntary education opportunities to 271,000 service members who took 761,000 classes through 2,710 academic institutions at 12,010 locations.
 - The services also have a number of programs to help service members obtain licenses and certificate.
- **Main Point:** The training and experiences obtained while in military service provides veterans with numerous skills that are in high demand in the civilian workforce but lacking in most civilian employees. This gives military veterans a "leg up" against their competitors in finding civilian employment. Veterans excel in the civilian workforce, especially in comparison to their civilian counterparts.

Military jobs are just about blowing up and killing people.

- Only 10% of military occupations are combat-related.
- Most military occupations support combat operations and do not actually see combat themselves.
 - This means that most veterans will have non-combat skills that are highly valued in the workforce.
- Those who do see combat will have transferable skills that they can use in other occupations.
- Approximately, only 15% of all active-duty service members are deployed overseas to hostile areas of the globe, which is the lowest number of troops deployed since 1957.