

# Translating Military Experience into a Winning Resume

*The military affiliated students receiving their education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are a vital component of our campus community. We recognize their sacrifices and value their life experiences as they enhance the diversity of our student body. This handout is meant to help students transition their military experience to the civilian workforce.*

## THREE STEPS FOR SUCCESS

**Step 1: De-Militarize Your Document** Lose acronyms, “Responsible for” or anything that isn’t easily understood

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

**Military Experience:** An infantryman with 5 years in the Army 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 ten personnel supporting 1,000 troops in several units, 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.

**Opportunities:** Skills could be marketed as a logistics expert and pursue management positions.

**Highlight Key Skill Areas:**

Technical skills within mechanical, financial, communications, and health-care industries often have closely related civilian positions.

Interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively with supervisors, peers, and subordinates in order to complete missions are easily transferable.

Leadership skills are highly valued, particularly overseeing the work of subcontractors.

**Step 3: Excel in the Civilian Workplace**

Translating communication skills, efficiency, and flexibility will make you a valuable employee. Developing a positive mindset, collaborating with multiple stakeholders, and maintaining a work-life balance will contribute to an effective move into the civilian workforce.

## EXPLAINING YOUR SERVICE

**Telling Your Story:** Consider audience knowledge about the military or government structure before you speak. Civilianizing your resume helps recruiters understand how your skills translate into the needs of their company.

Recruiters who see thousands of resumes for any particular job opening don’t have time to translate.

**Showcasing Communication Skills:** In converting your experience, consider that soldiers can be called staff, employees, and/or co-workers, uniforms and weapons can be replaced with supplies, and barracks and other buildings can become facilities.

## 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.

The following common translations and tips can help you get your point across to just about anybody.

**Awards:** Simply mention, where appropriate, that you received awards for outstanding job performance. If there is something critical to mention about a certain award that propels your case for the job further, then it is fine to elaborate on that particular award.

**Job Titles:** Focus on communicating the functional area of your job title (Communications Technician, Emergency Medical Technician, Nurse).

Remember, it is not necessary to include everything on your resume. Only mention the most recent and relevant information.

**Training:** Make your classroom achievements easy to understand. Edit course titles to improve clarity.

## Helpful Websites/Resources for Conversion

Mil2Fed ([www.dllr.state.md.us/mil2fedjobs/](http://www.dllr.state.md.us/mil2fedjobs/)) , Military Crosswalk ([www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/](http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/))

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**COMMON TERMS** Review current content and consider some of the replacements below:

<b>You know it as:</b>	<b>They know it as:</b>
NCOIC, Watch Captain, Petty Officer of the Watch Commander, Chief Executive Officer (XO) Action Officer (AO) Warrant Officer Senior NCOs Sergeant Major First Sergeant Squad Leader Supply Sergeant Operations NCO Platoon Sergeant	Supervisor / Manager / Coordinator Division Head / Director / Senior Manager Deputy Director, Assistant Manager Analyst (or Senior Analyst if applicable) Technical Manager / Specialist Department Manager First-Line Supervisor Senior Advisor Personnel Supervisor Team Leader / Team Chief Supply Manager / Logistics Manager Operations Supervisor Supervisor / Instructor / Trainer
TDY/TAD PCS OER/NCOER MOS/MOC Commanded Battalion, Unit, Platoon Mission Combat/War Headquarters Subordinates Service Members Security Clearance Military Personnel Office (MILPO), Personal Action Center (PAC) Regulations Reconnaissance TDA/MTOE	Business travel Relocation Performance appraisal Career field Supervised / directed Organization / agency / department Responsibility / task / objective / job Hazardous conditions / conflict Headquarters / corporate office Employees / co-workers Employees / co-workers / colleagues / personnel / individuals Security clearance Personnel office Guidance / policy / instructions Data collection / survey / analysis Organizational structure / material resources / manpower
Basic Training Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Course (BNOC) Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Course (ANOC) Officer Advanced Course (OAC) Combined Arms Staff College Command and Staff College War College	Basic Skills Course Advanced Skills Course (mention career field) Basic Leadership and Management Development Course Intermediate Leadership and Management Development Course Advanced Leadership and Management Development Course Entry Level Officer Training Course Senior Managerial Leadership School Senior Leaders Program Executive Leadership School