



Exploring Untapped Labor Pools: Recruiting Veterans for Manufacturing Careers September 11, 2025

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Poll Question: Hiring Veterans



I have recruited and hired veterans.

- Yes
- No
- Not Attempted

Agenda

- Military Population
- Benefits of Hiring Veterans
- Military Workforce Basics
- Military Workforce Impediments
- Veterans Transition Programs
- Develop a Understanding of Military Occupational Specialties
- Questions



Coast Guard Petty Officer gets hoisted into an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter near Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C

Military Population

- Military population is real: 4th in nation, family ties
- Annual transitions: ~ 16,000
- Military attributes are real – hard/soft skills
- Employer desire to hire and jobs are real
- DoD commitment is (now) real (SkillBridge, TAP)
- Plethora of civilian programs: NCWorks, NC4ME, etc.
- So, why is there an issue?



Air Force medical technician places a red cross around the arm of Air Force Staff Sgt, assigned to the 4th Healthcare Operation Squadron, at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base

Military Population

- Approx. 16 million veterans, according to the VA, represent less than 6.5% of the total U.S. adult population
- Roughly three-quarters (78%) of veterans in 2021 served during wartime, and 22% served during peacetime
- Approximately 619,000 veterans live in North Carolina
- Forty-three percent of NC veterans are 65 or older compared to just 18% of non-veteran adults. Just 9% of the state's veterans are between the ages of 18 and 34, less than one-third the share of non-veterans (30%)



A soldier exits a C-130 during a static line jump over Sicily DZ at Fort Bragg

Benefits of Hiring Veterans

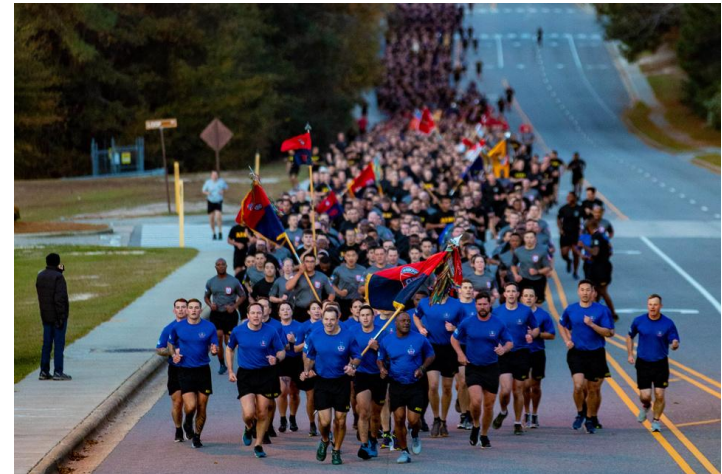
- Veterans receive advanced training in a variety of technical skills (logistics, information technology, medical, aircraft repair, engineering, maintenance, military police, etc.)
- Veterans work well independently, do not want to be micromanaged
- IRS tax credit <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/work-opportunity-tax-credit>



Marine participates in convoy operations during a field exercise at Camp Lejeune

Benefits of Hiring Veterans

- 61% of veterans have some college education
- 68% of employers report that veterans perform better or much better than civilian peers
- Veterans have in-demand skills
 - Professionalism / Work Ethic
 - Teamwork / Collaboration
 - Communicating Effectively
 - Critical Thinking / Problem Solving
 - Mission Oriented
 - Understand health and safety



Army paratroopers assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division participate in a division run as part of All American Week at Fort Bragg

For Discussion: Veteran Skills Transfer



1. What skills can veterans contribute to your organization?
2. What are some skill gaps within the military workforce?

Military Workforce: Impediments (MIL)

- “Shrinking filtered funnel” of transitioning military:
 - Pre-arranged jobs (special opps)
 - Track filter (education, entrepreneurs, nothing)
 - Sector filter (federal / other public jobs)
 - Skill filter (occupational, avocational)
 - Fit filter (work environment – physical, structural)
 - Geo filter (49 states vs. NC)



Marines deploy a section of a floating bridge system during a field exercise at Camp Lejeune

Military Workforce: Impediments (MIL)

- Mix, Military Occupational Skills (combat arms heavy)
- MOSs lack natural job match to civilian jobs
- Unrealistic skills *perception* (negative, positive)
- Unrealistic job *expectations* (level of position, salary)
- Lack of focus, vision, passion for future employment
- Lack of urgency: fatigue, delay transition, safety nets



Soldiers meet with civilian recruiters at a on-post job fair

Military Workforce: Impediments (CIV)

- Lack understanding of hard/MOS skills - and fit to jobs
- Lack appreciation of soft skills/attributes - and job fit
- Misunderstanding of disabilities (PTSD, TBI, physical)
- Lack time, understanding of opportunities and salesmanship in recruiting transitioning military
- Selling jobs NOW, not “careers”
- Hesitant to invest in recruiting, training, apprenticeships, sign-on bonuses, relocation – want “off the shelf” trained vets
- Lack understanding of military compensation – (E4 over 4 - \$48,000/year, \$23/hour)

For Discussion: Veteran Recruitment



1. What formal veterans recruiting program does your company have in place?
2. What are your biggest challenges to recruit veterans?

Veterans Transition Programs



Develop a Better Understanding of Military Occupational Specialties

- One of the biggest challenges for transitioning military entering the workforce is translating their military occupational specialty – or MOS – into terms that a civilian can understand.
- An MOS is the role or job someone had while in the military. There are over 10,000 different occupational specialties across the military that cover a whole range of skillsets and levels of responsibility.
- O*NET OnLine - <https://www.onetonline.org/>
 - Database that contains detailed information on hundreds of occupations, providing a vast amount of data for human resources professionals

Develop a Better Understanding of Military Occupational Specialties

- MOS ~ college major; reflect skillsets
- Service members work in occupations specific to the military and occupations that exist in the civilian workplace (i.e., administration, maintenance, information technology, logistics, healthcare, etc.).
- Consider a military recruiter/recruitment team, include veterans on interview panels, and seek the advice of the veterans currently in the workplace.
- US Department of Labor Veterans Job Matcher
<https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Jobs/match-veteran-jobs.aspx>



Q & A Discussion

10 minutes

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