



Use this card to translate military training into civilian skills.

WARRIORS IN THE WORKFORCE
A RESOURCE FOR LEADERS AND HIRING MANAGERS

Essential Skills Service Members Gain DURING PROFESSIONAL MILITARY TRAINING

During their military careers, service members receive extensive, full-time training not only in technical specialties but in valuable nontechnical (or soft) skills, such as leadership, decisionmaking, persistence, and communication. These skills are vital to success in the civilian workforce, but translating military terminology into civilian workplace parlance can be challenging. This reference card identifies many of the essential skills that enlisted service members from the Army and Marine Corps combat arms occupations¹ have learned in formal, in-residence professional military training programs that explicitly and implicitly teach these skills. This knowledge will help you better evaluate résumés, conduct interviews, and make informed hiring decisions by increasing your awareness of what these veterans have to offer your organization.

Flip the card for an overview of each course and answers to commonly asked questions. Scan the QR code to access in-depth materials, including skills descriptions, our methodology and sources, and notes.

COURSES TAUGHT TO COMBAT ARMS SERVICE MEMBERS, AND WHAT THEY MEAN FOR YOU

COMPARABLE CIVILIAN EXPERIENCE LEVEL	Entry-Level	Midlevel	Mid- to Senior-Level	Senior-Level	Entry-Level	Midlevel	Mid- to Senior-Level	Senior-Level	Senior-Level
	ARMY COURSES				MARINE CORPS COURSES				
	Basic Combat Training	Basic Leader Course	Advanced Leader Course	Senior Leader Course	Recruit Training	Corporals Course**	Sergeants Course**	Career Course**	Advanced Course**
MILITARY RANK	E-1 to E-2	E-4 to E-5	E-5 to E-6	E-6 to E-7	E-1 to E-2	E-4	E-5	E-6	E-7
Handling work stress	●	●	●	●	*	*	*	*	*
Being dependable and reliable	●	●	●	●	*	*	*	*	*
Persistence	●	●	●	●	*	*	*	*	*
Conscientiousness and attention to detail	●	●	●	●	*	*	*	*	*
Interpersonal skills	●	●	●	●	*	*	*	*	*
Teamwork and team-building	●	●	●	●	*	●	●	●	●
Leading, motivating, and inspiring others		●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Oral communication		●	●	●			●	●	●
Decisionmaking/decisiveness		●	●	●			●	●	●
Training others		●	●	●			●	●	●
Managing and supervising the work of others		●	●	●					
Critical thinking				●		●	●	●	●
Written communication							●	●	●
Project planning				●					

NOTE: Some skill differences between the Army and the Marine Corps may be more apparent than real. For example, Army instructors tended to describe courses as addressing management and supervision, whereas Marine Corps instructors tended to describe them as addressing leadership and mentoring. All are important elements of what many consider simply "leadership."

¹ This resource was developed first for the combat arms occupations. Future similar resources could be produced for other military occupations, including occupations in the Air Force and Navy.

* Marine Corps Recruit Training course materials were not available for analysis. However, students in that course likely learn skills similar to those taught in Army Basic Combat Training.

** Taken by a subset of personnel. Not completed by all marines.

● = a key skill taught in the course
● = a key skill taught in a previous course

COURSE OVERVIEWS

Army Basic Combat Training. This ten-week course completed by all enlisted Army soldiers at the start of their military careers aims to transform young, inexperienced civilians into confident, disciplined personnel instilled with such values as placing the mission first and never quitting. For example, students rotate through team-leader positions and experience continuous stress and pressure in live-fire exercises, where a mistake could result in death. Course activities require constant collaboration with others, and students are expected to take responsibility for and contribute to solving problems.

Army Basic Leader Course. This 22-day course helps students develop the skills necessary to be successful first-line supervisors for small groups. For example, lectures address supervision concepts and principles, and students practice developing subordinates' motivation. As rotating team leaders, students must plan and direct their team's efforts to successfully complete exercises, such as negotiating a simulated combat situation. Training principles and techniques taught through lectures are put into practice as students conduct classes, provide individual training sessions to fellow students, and analyze team performance.

Army Advanced Leader Course. This occupation-specific mid-to-senior-level course is designed to help students prepare to lead larger organizations. Some of the key skills addressed in the six-week Indirect Fire Infantryman course—such as teamwork and team building, supervising others, and oral communications—are common for all infantry and armor occupations. In the case of noncommissioned officers serving in leadership positions in mortar and section platoons, their specific course also requires students to exercise careful oversight of tasks that require precision (e.g., aiming mortar tubes), attention to detail, and clear communication with subordinates.

Army Senior Leader Course. This occupation-specific course is taken by noncommissioned officers as they progress in rank to more-senior levels. Activities in the seven-week course for armor and infantry jobs expose students to complex problems with no obvious or fully correct solutions, requiring the application of critical-thinking skills, decisionmaking under pressure, and managing and supervising others in dynamic situations. Students are evaluated based on the substance and clarity of their formal and informal presentations to their teams and must effectively promote communication to plan collaboratively. Students confront difficult leadership situations, such as dealing with a key subordinate's family emergency during the lead-up to deployment to a combat zone.

Marine Corps Corporals Course. This three-week course is taken by marines who are transitioning from subordinates to junior leaders and preparing to assume positions in which they will typically manage 3–4 subordinates. The course challenges students to address the effects of their actions and decisions as junior leaders. For example, students consider disciplinary case studies, ethical dilemmas, and other ambiguous situations and must explain their decisions to peers and instructors. The course also uses stories and historical case studies to instill a desire in the students to lead and motivate subordinates.

Marine Corps Sergeants Course. This seven-week course is taken by sergeants who are preparing to lead teams of 13–15 subordinates. To improve communication skills, for example, students must give extemporaneous speeches and write and deliver presentations using visual aids. Students also play decision games that require developing a plan of action under time pressure and conditions of uncertainty. To develop critical thinking, students consider scenarios that feature complex problems and incomplete information.

Marine Corps Career Course. This seven-week course is taken by staff sergeants who are preparing to assist officers in leading organizations of up to 60 subordinates. Through a combination of lectures, practical application and coaching sessions, and guided discussions, students refine decisionmaking and critical thinking skills by, for example, considering a range of case studies involving real-life events and dilemmas encountered during training and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Oral and written communications skills are tested and honed as students conduct mock interviews with news media role-players on camera and as they develop and present a “confirmation brief”—a proposed plan for a mission that is presented to a commander for approval.

Marine Corps Advanced Course. This seven-week course is taken by gunnery sergeants who are preparing to serve as strategic-level advisers to leaders of organizations of more than 200 personnel. The course largely focuses on strengthening decisionmaking and decisiveness and managing training. For example, students develop skills for acquiring situational awareness, synthesizing ideas and information, and deliberately and methodically making effective high-level decisions. The course also teaches students how to design, implement, and assess the training program of an organization of more than 200 personnel.

NOTE: Basic Leader Course is formerly known as Warrior Leader Course and also Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC); Advanced Leader Course is formerly known as Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course (BNCO); Senior Leader Course is formerly known as Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course (ANCO)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Are the skills shown on this card a comprehensive list of the skills combat arms veterans possess?

A. No, veterans are likely to have developed additional skills through other courses and on-the-job experience. Additionally, there are some skills that, though not the focus of a single course, permeate the entire military culture, such as continuous learning and operating safely.

Q. Where can I learn about the skills service members acquire through on-the-job experience?

A. A companion reference card that summarizes on-the-job-experience will be released in 2016. Scan the QR code to check its availability.

Q. Can the information in this toolkit be generalized to non-combat arms personnel?

A. Yes, in many cases. Scan the QR code for more information.

Q. Where can I learn about veterans' technical skills, as opposed to nontechnical skills?

A. Information on technical military training can be found at <http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/>

Q. Where can I find more information on hiring veterans?

A. More information on hiring veterans can be found at https://employmentportal.herokuapp.com/employer_tools



This reference card is based on research found in *What Veterans Bring to Civilian Workplaces: A Prototype Toolkit for Helping Private-Sector Employers Understand the Nontechnical Skills Taught in the Military* by Chaitra M. Hardison, Michael G. Shanley, Anna Rosefsky Saavedra, James C. Crowley, Jonathan P. Wong, and Paul S. Steinberg, RAND Corporation, 2015 (TL-160-OSD). For more information on this publication, visit www.rand.org/t/160.

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