

OptimalResume's Top 5 Tips for Creating a Resume with Military Experience

1. The objective drives the entire process. If you're retiring or separating from the U.S. Armed Forces, your objective will determine everything that you do with your resume. If your goal is to transition into the civilian sector, then your resume should be written one way. If, on the other hand, your objective is to work for the Federal Government and/or a defense contractor, then your resume will be written in an entirely different way.

2. Translate your military experience to the civilian world. If your goal is to transition into the private sector to work for a civilian company, then you want to showcase all of your transferable skills, qualifications and experiences using civilian words and not military lingo. For example, don't talk about C3 operations. That means nothing to the private sector. Rather, talk about managing sophisticated communications technology and then you've explained - in English - what you do.

3. Keep the military lingo in your resume. If your goal is to work for the Federal Government or a defense contractor, then the military lingo is great to use. In fact, you'll also want to include things like rank, brigade numbers, security clearances and a host of acronyms that will be widely recognized by your target group of employers. In this instance, you want to be a "inclusive" and appear to be already a part of that military/defense community - which you are!

4. Academic credentials, professional certifications, honors, awards and other distinguishing information sells. If you have strong academic credentials (e.g., M.S. in Nuclear Engineering from West Point or Graduate of US Army Command), distinguishing professional credentials (e.g., FAA Mechanic Certification), notable military honors and awards (e.g., Meritorious Service Medal), or an extensive record of public speaking or publications, be certain to prominently display that information. No matter the market or the job you're pursuing, this type of information clearly sets you apart from other candidates and gives you a remarkably competitive advantage.

5. Integrate the "right" keywords so your resume will get selected during a keyword search. Here are just a few general keywords and keyword phrases for military service that you may want to include (if appropriate to your experience and education):

- Armed Forces
- Aviation Assets
- Brigade
- Combat Engineering
- Defense
- Field Operations
- Foreign Nationals
- Intelligence
- Logistics
- Peacekeeping
- Security
- Special Operations
- Tactical
- Terrorism
- Test & Evaluation