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Understanding Military Culture

and why is that important?

Objectives

- Provide an overview of the US Military, customs and culture
- Understanding the culture removes barriers to relationships, aids in developing rapport. Common language aids in creating alliances
- Do's and don'ts in dealing with Veterans
- Most frequent disabilities of combat veterans
- Outreach to Veterans

What is a Veteran?

- Any person that served in the US Armed Forces
- Department of Veteran's Affairs defines those veterans eligible for VA benefits as:
 - Discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions.. Certain VA benefits require Wartime service. VA recognizes these periods of war:
 - WWII: Dec 7, 1941 – Dec 31, 1946
 - Korean War: Jun 27, 1950 – Jan 31, 1955
 - Vietnam War: Aug 5, 1964 (or Feb 28, 1961 in-country veterans) – May 7, 1975
 - Gulf War (incls Desert Storm, OIF, OEF): Aug 2, 1990 -

Commonalities of a Veteran

- Every soldier, sailor, airman, marine has his/her own experiences/stories
- Not just a job but a way of life.
- Duty, Honor, Country
- No matter how short the service, remains an important factor in their lives

Why do people join the service?

- All volunteer force for the past 38 years
- Only one in 4 Americans has a military connection
- Family tradition
- Sense of responsibility and/or service
- Education and training opportunities
- Adventure/Escape from current situation

“STRUCTURE”

- Military life is structured and regimented
- Chain of Command/Hierarchical Organization
- Right versus Wrong
- Doctrine and Regulations
- Off-Duty as well as On-Duty

What Happens when that “structured” life goes away?

US Department of Defense

- Seven Uniformed branches
- Approx 3 million total service members
- Civilian controlled:
 - Commander in Chief is the POTUS
 - Secretary of Defense: Ashton Carter
- Mission: provide military forces needed to deter war and protect the security of the country

US Army

Mission: fight and win our nation's wars with sustained land dominance across a full-range of military operations

- The largest and oldest branch of service
- Established as the Continental Army in 1775 to fight the Revolutionary War
- Active Duty (540K): 49% of the total Army strength, primarily combat and combat support units
- Army National Guard (360K): 33% of the total Army strength, primarily combat and combat support units
- Army Reserves: (205K): 18% of the total Army strength, primarily combat support and combat service support units

US Navy

Mission: Power projection, strategic deliverance and tactical delivery of combat power

- The U.S. Navy is descended from the Continental Navy which was formed in 1775 along with the U.S. Army. However, the Continental Navy was disbanded at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War and didn't reform until 1797 to combat Barbary Coast pirates.
- Active duty (317K): 83% of the total Naval strength
- Reserves (62K): 16% of the total Naval strength
- Untraditional roles in the Global War on Terror

US Air Force

Mission: to provide strategic air lift and tactical air combat support

- The U.S. Air Force is the newest branch of the U.S. military; formed in 1947. Prior to 1947, the Air Force was considered a part of the U.S. Army
- Active duty (333K): 65% of the total AF strength
- Air National Guard (105.7K): 21% of the total AF strength
- Air Force Reserve (71K): 14 of total AF strength

US Marine Corps

Mission: Rapid deployment force; seizure of or defense of advanced naval bases for land operations

- The U.S. Marine Corps was established in 1775 when two battalions of Continental Marines were formed as naval infantry. Since then, the U.S. Marine Corps works alongside the U.S. Navy to project power from the sea. The Marine Corps is the smallest of the U.S. military branches and has participated in every U.S. conflict.
- Active duty (195K): 83% of total USMC strength
- Reserves (39K): 17% of total USMC strength
- Shorter but more frequent deployments

Other Branches

- US Coast Guard (Active: 42K, Reserve 9K)
 - Operates under the Department of Homeland Security
 - Can be transferred to the Navy during war
- US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (6K)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps (300)

Military Operations

- Global War on Terror (GWOT)
 - War in Afghanistan/Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 2001-present
 - Iraq War/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 2003-2010
 - Operation New Dawn in 2010
- War against ISIL (Islamic State Militants) in Syria and Iraq – Operation Inherent Resolve
- Korea
- Horn of Africa
- Homeland Defense

Core Values

- Army: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage
- Navy and Marine Corps: Honor, Courage, Commitment
- Air Force: Integrity, Service before Self, Excellence
- Coast Guard: Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty

Military Structure

- Rank
 - Officer (Commissioned): Overall management, planning and leadership; must have a bachelor's degree
 - Pay grades O-1 thru O-10
 - Enlisted: the specialists of the military, the ones that carry out most missions
 - Pay Grades E-1 thru E-9
 - Non-commissioned Officers (NCO): Enlisted members that hold a position of authority and leadership
 - Pay grades E-5 thru E-9
 - Warrant Officer: Highly trained specialists
 - Pay grades W1 thru W5
- Specialty: MOS, AFSC, Ratings

Status

- Active Duty: Full-time military
- National Guard:
 - Part-time. Minimum of 38 days/year.
 - Full-time force, Active Guard Reserve (AGR)
 - Dual mission; federal and state mission
 - Army and Air Force only
- Reserves:
 - Part-time
 - Full-time AGR

Branch of Service Differences

- Individual service cultures – rivalries
- Uniforms
- Rank/Insignia
 - Army, Air Force, Marines versus Navy

Example of Service Differences

Recruit Training

Marines: Rise at 0500, train until 2000

Army: Rise at 0600, train until 1900

Navy: Rise at 0900, train until 1100, lunch until 1300,
train until 1600

Air Force: Rise at 1000, breakfast in bed, lunch at 1200,
nap at 1400, training ceases at 1500

Differences between conflicts

- WWII
 - Dying at a rate of 670/day
 - Reunions are rare now but have had many years to share experiences with comrades
- Vietnam
- Korea
 - Very unpopular wars
 - Those who served, vilified and treated poorly
 - High incidence of alcoholism, homelessness, undiagnosed PTSD
- Gulf War Veterans: Desert Storm, OIF, OEF
 - Less lethal, survival rate with severe injuries is higher
 - Welcomed home and treated like heroes
 - Mental health issues, while just as bad, do not carry the stigma of previous conflicts

Positives of Military Service

- Leadership skills, especially under duress
- Maturity and focus
- Confidence
- Unit cohesion and Camaraderie

Demographics (active duty)

- 15% female
- 25% minorities
- 92.5% with High School diplomas or higher
- 89.3% with bachelor's degrees or higher
- Average age is 25-30

How to talk to a Veteran

- Thank them for their service
- Listen non-judgmentally
- Ask open-ended questions about their service and symptoms/disabilities, issues
- Be aware of the veterans feelings about shame, survivor's guilt, problems dealing with stress and civilian life, etc.
- Must follow through with offers of help
- Ensure their families are involved and know of services available to them also

How NOT to talk to a Veteran

- Don't act like you know how he/she is feeling
- Do not get into a discussion on your political analysis of the war
- Do not rush the veteran into anything (unless suicidal)
- Don't press for detailed accounts of traumatic events
- Don't tell them that they were lucky
- Don't make decisions for them

Combat Injuries

- Mortality Rates for injuries
 - WWII 30%
 - Vietnam 24%
 - OEF/OIF 10%

More Survivors
and disabilities



more survivors with long-term injuries

OIF/OEF

- 97% of injuries caused by explosions, mostly IEDs
- 50% of injuries were to head and neck
- 20% of wounded had some degree of brain injury

Signature Injuries OEF/OIF

- Eye Injuries
- Lower extremity injuries and amputations
- Traumatic brain injuries
- Repeated/serial traumatic brain injuries

Combat Exposure Effects

- Increased risk for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Increases with multiple deployments
- Increased risk for depression
- Increased risk for alcohol-related problems
- Increased exposure to injury, including TBI
- These problems are not mutually exclusive

What is PTSD?

An anxiety disorder:

- Characterized by emotional instability after stressful event(s)
- Trauma that overwhelmed the person's usual psychological defenses
- Trauma created an unmanageable memory that causes ongoing emotional outbursts and depression when reminded of event

PTSD symptoms

- Intrusive
 - Recollections, re-experiencing
 - Distressing dreams
- Avoidant
 - Detachment/estrangement
 - Loss of libido and initiative
- Hyperarousal
 - Sleep difficulties
 - Irritability/anger
 - Lack of concentration
 - Hypervigilance

Panic Attacks

- Palpitations
- Sweating
- Feelings of choking
- Chest pain
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Fear of dying/losing control

Traumatic Brain Injury

Symptoms/Consequences

- Sensory and/or motor problems
- Changes in behavior (personality, concentration, memory, perception, emotional control)
- Decreased mental efficiency
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Sleeping problems
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision

PTSD and TBI

Overlapping Signs and Symptoms!

Treatment Considerations

PTSD

- Medications (antidepressants, beta blockers), perhaps long term
- Psychotherapy (patient, family, group, cognitive behaviour)

TBI

- Mild, may resolve w/o treatment
- Rehab services
- Counseling for adjustment to permanent disability

Veterans Outreach

- County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs)
- Educational Institutions
- Veteran Service Organization (VSOs) such as American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), American Veterans (AMVETS)
- Active Duty or National Guard installations
- Job Fairs, especially those focusing on veterans
- Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC)
- Warrior Transition Units

Veteran's Outreach (cont)

- Veterans Health Administration (VHA) – Disabled Veterans Outreach coordinators (DVOPs)
- Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers
- Farmer Veteran Coalition
- Senior Centers or Homeless Shelters
- Vocational Rehab (state and/or VA)
- Posters/newsletters
- Yellow Ribbon events
- Blue Star or Gold Star Mothers
- Other veterans
- Social Networking

- [Veterans & Beginning Farmers \(agrability.org\)](http://agrability.org)
 - **Resources Specifically for Farmer Veterans**
 - [Training & Employment](#)
 - [Financial Assistance](#)
 - [Resource Guides](#)
 - [Other Resources](#)
 - [Conference Presentations](#)
- The Next Mission: Breaking Down Barriers for Veterans in Agriculture: nextmission.us

Questions/Comments?