Military Reference Guide

a resource for professionals

Military service members and their families often communicate in ways that are specific to military life and culture. This reference guide includes basic information that can assist you in understanding the different military branches, identifying insignia you might see on a service member's uniform, and understanding common terms, phrases or slang that might be used by the military families with whom you work.

For more information, visit: www.parentslead.org/professionals
TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 MILITARY BRANCHES
03 COMMON TERMS & LINGO
06 MILITARY TIME
09 ENLISTED INSIGNIA
12 OFFICER INSIGNIA

ND FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER LOCATIONS
U.S. MILITARY BRANCHES

ARMY
The Army defends the land mass of the U.S., its territories, commonwealths, and possessions. It does so through providing forces and capabilities for sustained combat and stability operations on land. The Army also provides logistics and support to other branches. The Army is the largest and oldest branch of the military.

NAVY
The Navy maintains, trains, and equips combat-ready maritime forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas. The Navy is America’s forward deployed force and is a major deterrent to aggression around the world.

MARINE CORPS
The Marine Corps maintains ready expeditionary forces, sea-based and integrated air-ground units for contingency and combat operations, and the means to stabilize or contain international disturbance. The Marine Corps is an immediate response force that can be used to overwhelm the enemy.

AIR FORCE
The Air Force provides a rapid, flexible, and when necessary, lethal air and space capability that can deliver forces anywhere in the world in less than forty-eight hours. It routinely participates in peacekeeping, humanitarian, and aeromedical evacuation missions. Air Force crews annually fly missions into all but five nations of the world.

COAST GUARD
The Coast Guard provides law and maritime safety enforcement, marine and environmental protection, and military naval support. Activities can include patrolling our shores, performing emergency rescue operations, containing and cleaning up oil spills, and keeping illegal drugs from entering American communities.
MILITARY IN NORTH DAKOTA

Military forces in North Dakota include all three components; National Guard, Active Duty, and Reserve Forces.

The North Dakota Army National Guard and North Dakota Air National Guard have both state and federal missions. The Governor may activate the National Guard in order to preserve peace and public safety, as well as respond to natural or man-made emergencies such as flooding, tornadoes, or blizzards. These missions provide protection to both lives and property. The National Guard may also be ordered to federal active duty in support of their respective service branches, the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force.

North Dakota also has two active duty air force bases; Minot Air Force Base and Grand Forks Air Force Base. Minot Air Force Base is home to the 5th Bomb Wing with its squadron of B-52H Stratofortress bombers and the 91st Space Wing with its fleet of Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. Grand Forks Air Force Base is home to the 319th Air Base Wing, which guarantees global reach and engagement for the United States and its allies through robust air refueling and airlift capabilities.

Reserve component forces residing in North Dakota include the U.S. Army Reserve, U.S. Navy Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and U.S. Air Force Reserve. The reserve forces are subject to federal active duty by their respective active duty components.
COMMON TERMS & LINGO

As with any large organization, the military has its own set of common terms and lingo. Here are some selected terms, acronyms, phrases, and slang terms that may be helpful to know when working with service members, veterans, and their families.

Members of the Military are Referred to Differently Depending Upon Their Specific Service Component

**Soldiers:** Members of the Army

**Sailors:** Members of the Navy

**Airmen:** Members of the Air Force

**Marines:** Members of the Marine Corps

**Coast Guardsmen:** Members of the Coast Guard

**Reservists:** Members of the Reserve

**Guardsmen:** Members of the National Guard
Official Acronyms

AWOL – Absent With Out Leave: not at one’s place of duty and not authorized to be absent
CDR – Commander
CO – Commanding Officer
CONUS – Continental United States
DoD – Department of Defense
IED – Improvised Explosive Device
GWOT – Global War On Terror
NCO – Non-Commissioned Officer: an enlisted person with command responsibility over soldiers of lesser rank
NCOIC – Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge
OEF – Operation Enduring Freedom: official name used for the War in Afghanistan
OIF – Operation Iraqi Freedom: official name used for the War in Iraq
OND – Operation New Dawn: new name for the War in Iraq starting in September 2010 to reflect reduced role of US troops
OCONUS – Outside the Continental United States
OIC – Officer in Charge
PCS – Permanent Change of Station
POC – Point Of Contact: the person to liaise with on a given matter
ROTC – Reserve Officer Training Corps
SOP – Standard Operating Procedure: the routine manner of handling a set situation
TDY – Temporary Duty
Phrases

Battle assembly – new term used for Army Reserve weekend drills, a unit training assemblies, or multiple unit training assemblies

Boots on the ground – to physically be in a location (some may use this to say that they want “boots on the ground” for a particular project, which means they want everyone physically in the office, rather than having people call in.)

Drill – preparation of military personnel for performance of their duties through the practice and rehearsal of prescribed movements; members of the National Guard and Reserve are required to attend one weekend drill a month (sometimes starting Friday night until Monday morning)

Extended drill – extended time for drill in preparation for a deployment

Liberty – authorized free time ashore or off station, not counted as leave, also known as a “pass/liberty”

Ma’am – proper method of addressing female officers

Sir – proper method of addressing male officers

Tour of duty – the length of the tour depends on the mission objectives, and can be a few months or a couple of years

Slang

Above my/your pay grade – expression denying responsibility or authority (indicating that the issue should be brought to higher-ranking officials)

Civvies – civilian clothing

Down Range – physically in a combat zone

In-Country – in a foreign territory, especially a combat zone

Say again (your last) – request to repeat a statement, question, or order, especially over a radio

Stay in Your Lane – stay within your boundaries; do your job as commanded and trust that you will know what you need to know when you need to know it

Wilco – Will comply
**MILITARY TIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Military Time Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midnight (12 a.m.)</td>
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<td>6 a.m.</td>
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<td>8 a.m.</td>
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<td>9 a.m.</td>
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<td>10 a.m.</td>
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<td>11 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 p.m.</td>
<td>1200 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
<td>1300 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>1500 hrs</td>
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<td>5 p.m.</td>
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<td>6 p.m.</td>
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<td>9 p.m.</td>
<td>2100 hrs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2200 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 p.m.</td>
<td>2300 hrs</td>
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**Military rank is more than just who salutes whom; it is a badge of leadership. As each rank increases, so does responsibility for personnel, equipment, and mission.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enlisted Rank</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Coast Guard</th>
<th>Marines</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Seaman Recruit (SR)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Airman Basic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Private E-2 (PV2)</td>
<td>Seaman Apprentice (SA)</td>
<td>Private First Class (PFC)</td>
<td>Airman (Amn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Private First Class (PFC)</td>
<td>Seaman (SN)</td>
<td>Lance Corporal (LCpl)</td>
<td>Airman First Class (A1C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Corporal (CPL)</td>
<td>Petty Officer Third Class (PO3) **</td>
<td>Corporal (Cpl)</td>
<td>Senior Airman (SrA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Sergeant (SGT)</td>
<td>Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) **</td>
<td>Sergeant (Sgt)</td>
<td>Staff Sergeant (SSgt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>Staff Sergeant (SSG)</td>
<td>Petty Officer First Class (PO1) **</td>
<td>Staff Sergeant (SSgt)</td>
<td>Technical Sergeant (TSgt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E7</td>
<td>Sergeant First Class (SFC)</td>
<td>Chief Petty Officer (CPO) **</td>
<td>Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt)</td>
<td>Master Sergeant (MSgt)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Enlisted Insignia**

- **ARMY**
- **NAVY**
- **COAST GUARD**
- **MARINES**
- **AIR FORCE**
Military rank is more than just who salutes whom; it is a badge of leadership. As each rank increases, so does responsibility for personnel, equipment, and mission. The “E” stands for “enlisted,” the “W” stands for “warrant officer,” and the “O” stands for “commissioned officer.” The corresponding number next to each letter indicates the pay grade for that position.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer Rank</th>
<th>Army Insignia</th>
<th>Navy Insignia</th>
<th>Marine Corps Insignia</th>
<th>Air Force Insignia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1 Warrant Officer 1 (WO1)</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="ARMY W1 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="NAVY W1 Officer Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="MARINES W1 Warrant Officer Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="AIR FORCE W1 Insignia" /></td>
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<td>W2 Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2)</td>
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<td><img src="image2" alt="NAVY W2 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="MARINES W2 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="AIR FORCE W2 Insignia" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3 Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CW3)</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="ARMY W3 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="NAVY W3 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="MARINES W3 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="AIR FORCE W3 Insignia" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W4 Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CW4)</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="ARMY W4 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="NAVY W4 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="MARINES W4 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="AIR FORCE W4 Insignia" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>W5 Chief Warrant Officer (CW5)</td>
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<td><img src="image2" alt="NAVY W5 Insignia" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="MARINES W5 Insignia" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Navy Coast Guard</td>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Second Lieutenant (2LT)</td>
<td>Ensign (ENS)</td>
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<td>Second Lieutenant (2LT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
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<td>Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG)</td>
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<td>First Lieutenant (1LT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Captain (CPT)</td>
<td>Lieutenant (LT)</td>
<td>Captain (CPT)</td>
<td>Captain (CPT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Major (MAJ)</td>
<td>Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
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<td>Commander (CDR)</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)</td>
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<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Colonel (COL)</td>
<td>Captain (CAPT)</td>
<td>Colonel (COL)</td>
<td>Colonel (COL)</td>
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</table>
# Officer Insignia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARMY</th>
<th>NAVY COAST GUARD</th>
<th>MARINES</th>
<th>AIR FORCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>07</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brigadier General (BG)</td>
<td>Rear Admiral Lower Half (RDML)</td>
<td>Brigadier General (BGen)</td>
<td>Brigadier General (Brig Gen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major General (MG)</td>
<td>Rear Admiral Upper Half (RADM)</td>
<td>Major General (Maj Gen)</td>
<td>Major General (Maj Gen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant General (LTG)</td>
<td>Vice Admiral (VADM)</td>
<td>Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)</td>
<td>Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General (GEN)</td>
<td></td>
<td>General (GEN)</td>
<td>General (GEN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Chief of Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>Air Force Chief of Staff</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>010</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General of the Army (Reserved for wartime only)</td>
<td>Fleet Admiral (Reserved for wartime only)</td>
<td>General of the Air Force (Reserved for wartime only)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE LOCATIONS

Family Assistance Centers (FAC) are operated regionally throughout North Dakota and provide support and assistance to service members and their families by offering information about military, federal, state and local resources.

Call 800-242-4940 for assistance 24 hours a day

MINOT
Armed Forces Reserve Center
3420 2nd St NE
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30AM to 4:30PM
Family Assistance Specialist
701-420-5861

Airman & Family Readiness Center
291 Peacekeeper Place
Minot Air Force Base
Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30AM to 4:30PM
701-723-3950

DEVILS LAKE
Camp Grafton
4417 Highway 20 Building 6400
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30AM to 5PM
Family Assistance Specialist
701-665-7896

GRAND FORKS
Grand Forks Armory
1501 48th St S
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8AM to 4:30PM
Family Assistance Specialist
701-792-4568

Airman & Family Readiness Center
Grand Forks Air Force Base
575 Holzapple Street, Bldg 207
Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30AM to 4:30PM
701-747-3241

BISMARCK
Military Service Center
1850 E. Bismarck Expressway
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8AM to 5PM
Family Assistance Specialist
701-333-4808

Airman & Family Readiness Program
Hector International Airport
1400 32nd Ave N
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8AM to 5PM
701-451-2112

FARGO
Military Service Center
2219 12th St N, Suite B
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8AM to 5PM
Family Assistance Specialist
1-800-460-1407

Sources:
VA Health Care: Understanding Military Culture: Structure & Branches -
http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/docs/structure_branches.pdf

VA Health Care: Understanding Military Culture: Common Terms & Lingo -
http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/docs/terms_lingo.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense: The United States Military Rank Insignia -
http://www.defense.gov/about/insignias/
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