

# 55 ) The armed forces

## The US Military

comprises five branches in its field of **operations**: the army, the navy, the air force, the marine corps and the coast guard, all under **civilian** authority. More than 1.35 million people **serve** in the professional

full-time military, with a further 800,000 in the **reserve** army. (There is no longer **compulsory military service**, though men aged 18-25 must register for it if the need arises.) The US military **distinguishes between** enlisted personnel, who **make up** about 85% of the armed forces and carry out **fundamental** operations such as **combat** and administration; and officers, who manage and supervise operations. The range of jobs is **vast**, but **encompasses** such **diverse** activities as running a hospital, **commanding** a **tank**, flying military **aircraft**, programming computers, maintaining **weapon** systems, etc.



tank



helicopter



parachute



missile

## GLOSSARY

<b>the military</b>	a country's army, navy and air force SYN <b>the armed forces</b> ; <b>military</b> <i>adj</i>	<b>enlisted</b>	(especially US English) relating to members of the permanent armed forces below officer rank. <b>Enlist</b> is to join the armed forces.
<b>branch</b>	a part of a large organization: <i>a branch of a bank</i>		
<b>operation</b>	an organized activity, often involving the military or police	<b>armed</b>	carrying a gun or other weapon <b>arms</b> <i>n</i> ( <i>pl</i> )
<b>guard</b>	a person or group of people who protect sth/sb <b>guard</b> <i>v</i>	<b>fundamental</b>	central and forming the necessary basis of sth
<b>civilian</b>	not belonging to the armed forces. A person is a <b>civilian</b> .	<b>combat</b>	fighting between forces: <b>armed/unarmed combat</b> (= fighting with/without guns, bombs, etc.)
<b>serve</b>	do useful work: <b>serve your country / in the army</b> , etc.	<b>vast</b>	extremely large: <b>the vast majority</b> ; <b>vast numbers</b> ; <b>a vast amount</b>
<b>the reserve(s)</b>	an extra force that performs part-time duties and is available if needed	<b>encompass</b> <i>formal</i>	include sth within an area or area of activity
<b>compulsory</b>	If sth is <b>compulsory</b> , you have to do it. SYN <b>obligatory</b> ; OPP <b>optional</b>	<b>diverse</b>	different from each other and of various kinds <b>diversity</b> <i>n</i>
<b>military service</b>	time spent serving in the military, especially as a compulsory period for young people	<b>command</b>	be in charge of sb. A person can also <b>be in command</b> (of sth/sb).
<b>distinguish between A and B</b>	recognize a difference between two people or things SYN <b>differentiate</b> (between) A and B, make a distinction (between A and B)	<b>aircraft</b>	any vehicle that can fly and carry goods or passengers
		<b>weapon</b>	an object such as a knife, gun or bomb that is used for fighting: <b>nuclear/chemical weapons</b> ; <b>a deadly/lethal weapon</b> (= that can kill sb)

### SPOTLIGHT *comprise, consist of, make up*

These verbs describe the way in which something is formed.

▪ *The group **comprises** / **consists of** / **is made up of** 30 people.*

*When you mention some of the parts first, use **make up** or **comprise**.*

▪ *Men **make up** / **comprise** the majority of the group.*

1 Answer the questions. Use the  to help you.

- 1 The pronunciation of the letter 'a' is the same as in *park* in five of the cases underlined. Which one is different?  
armed branch command encompass guard vast
- 2 Which three underlined letters are pronounced the same as in *bit*, and which three are pronounced the same as in *bet*?  
civilian deadly differentiate encompass enlisted weapon
- 3 The pronunciation of the letter 'i' is the same as in *bit* in nine of the cases underlined. Which three are different?  
civilian comprise distinguish diverse enlisted military missile obligatory

2 Use word(s) from the box to form nine compound words or phrases.

unarmed forces military (x 2)	majority combat weapon	the armed be in command	lethal a distinction aircraft	service make the vast	your country serve
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3 Replace the underlined word(s) with a single word that has a similar meaning.

- 1 To run an army requires a very large amount of money.
- 2 The decision will be taken by the armed forces.
- 3 A brigade is made up of approximately 5,500 men and women.
- 4 The right to self-defence is one of their central beliefs.
- 5 There was very little armed fighting.
- 6 The men are from very different backgrounds.
- 7 Six soldiers were on duty to protect the camp.
- 8 I wanted to serve my country, so I joined as a soldier.
- 9 This knife is a lethal weapon.
- 10 They don't recognize a difference between men and women.
- 11 The work includes many different tasks and responsibilities.
- 12 Is military service obligatory?
- 13 A brigadier is a high-ranking officer, and is in charge of a large group of soldiers.
- 14 Ensuring the safety of the ships will be a large organized military activity.

4 Complete the text with suitable words.

The British (1) ..... forces is (2) ..... of the army, the navy and the air force. As head of state, the Queen is theoretically in (3) ..... of the armed forces, but in practice that is the job of the British Prime Minister. Approximately 146,000 men and women (4) ..... in the professional armed forces (often referred to as the 'regulars'), with a further 36,500 in the (5) ..... . The armed forces are also supported by a number of (6) ..... agencies owned by the Ministry of Defence. The navy is the (7) ..... of the armed forces which is responsible for Britain's nuclear (8) ..... , which (9) ..... four Trident nuclear missile submarines.

5 ABOUT YOU AND YOUR COUNTRY Write your answers, or ask another student.

- 1 Has your country got a professional military? .....
- 2 Do you have a reserve army? .....
- 3 Do you have military service? .....
- 4 Are the police usually armed in your country? .....
- 5 Have you ever:  
stood next to a tank? ..... flown in a helicopter? .....  
owned or used a deadly weapon? ..... dropped from a parachute? .....  
been in a professional army? ..... done military service? .....

