

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

- 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
- 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
- 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	majority	the armed	lethal	service	your country
forces	combat	be in	a distinction	make	serve
military (x 2)	weapon	command	aircraft	the vast	

**3 Replace the underlined word(s) with a single word that has a similar meaning.**

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

- Has your country got a professional military? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you have a reserve army? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you have military service? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are the police usually armed in your country? \_\_\_\_\_
- 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? \_\_\_\_\_



TEST YOURSELF