

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

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