

Private contractors or private military firms (PMF) provide the military with services such as transport, security, tactical combat operations, logistical support, and construction. Singer (2005) noted that while using private contractors allows military service members to focus on fighting and reduces the need to deploy more military service members, the privatization of the military also poses dilemmas. Dilemmas include private companies profiting from war and falling outside the military's chain of command. For example, they can leave the area of conflict when they deem the risk too great. Additionally, many who work in PMF are former military personnel, which can raise the question about companies that "exploit skills learned at public expense for private profit" (p. 128). In addition, contractors can earn more pay, but perhaps reap fewer benefits, than military service members for similar work.

Branches of the U.S. Armed Forces

The branches of the Armed Forces depend upon one another, yet their missions and traditions make each unique. The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force each has a long military history and distinct customs that differ from its sister services. Each branch of the military has its own language, character, and terminology. For example, the Navy and Air Force call their **military installations** (i.e., facilities owned or leased and operated by the military) "**bases**," the Army refers to them as "**posts**," and the Marine Corps uses the term "**camps**." Even rank structures are not completely consistent from branch to branch. The differences in character, customs, and language are often the basis of much banter and competition between the services. However, what stays constant across the services is a commitment to the country and to the other members of the greater military community, as illustrated by their core values (U.S. Army, n.d.; U.S. Air Force, n.d.; U.S. Navy, n.d.-b; U.S. Marine Corps, n.d.-b).

Army—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage
 Air Force—integrity first, service before self, excellence in all we do
 Navy—honor, courage, and commitment
 Marine Corps—honor, courage, and commitment

Collectively the U.S. Armed Forces, under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief, engage in fighting wars, humanitarian efforts, peacekeeping, evacuations, and protecting the security of the United States. Each force has its specific mission. The Army defends the United States, its territories, commonwealths, and possessions. Army units are deployed to combat zones and to locations such as South Korea to help secure borders or to Kosovo to participate in peacekeeping. The Navy provides combat-ready naval forces. Navy carrier groups and vessels are stationed around the world to provide a deterrent and a quick response to crises and humanitarian emergencies. The Marine Corps, under the authority of the Navy, maintains a ready expeditionary force. Along with the Army, the Marine Corps provides ground troops in combat and humanitarian efforts. The Air Force provides air and space defense and is involved in peacekeeping, humanitarian, and aeromedical evacuation missions. It provides air cover for ground troops.

Generally, we think of the services in terms of their missions to defend separate domains: air space by the Air Force, ground by the Army and Marine Corps, and seas by the Navy. Despite the distinct missions of each of the services, however, they may use similar processes or use similar equipment to accomplish their missions. Both the Army and the Marine Corps are equipped with tanks; the Air Force, Navy, Army, and Marine Corps all use aircraft to accomplish their missions; and both the Army and the Marine Corps are trained in close-range and hand-to-hand combat.

Each branch of the Armed Forces has a Special Operations Command (SOC) that can deploy highly trained members rapidly for special operations missions such as reconnaissance, rescue, infiltration, and raids. Such forces are often the first sent into

TABLE 1.1 Reserve Component Categories

Ready Reserve	Active status	Selected Reserve	Selected reserve units Individual mobilization augmentees Active guard or reserve members of the selected reserve
	May be called to active duty	Individual Ready Reserve Inactive National Guard	Completing military service obligation Officer training programs/health scholarship programs Inactive ready reserve Muster once a year, do not need to train
Standby Reserve	May be mobilized involuntarily	Active status list	Maintain affiliation with military Key employees (e.g., removed from ready reserve because critical to national security in their civilian job) Other active status members place here due to hardship/physical disability
		Inactive status list	Retain reserve affiliation in a nonparticipating status May have skills which may be useful to armed forces
Retired Reserve	May be called to active duty	Reserve officers and enlisted retired and drawing or not drawing pay Reserve officers/enlisted eligible for retired pay but have not reached 60 Reserve physical disability retirees Other reserve retirees	

Source: Information compiled from Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (2005). *Reserve component categories of the reserve components of the Armed Forces*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://ra.defense.gov/documents/publications/RC101%20Handbook-updated%2020%20Sep%2005.pdf>.

combat situations and work behind enemy lines. Each branch has units that might sound familiar: Army Special Forces and the 75th Ranger Regiment, Air Force Special Tactics Squadrons, Navy SEALs, and Marine Corps Reconnaissance. Special operation units undergo the most demanding training offered by the Armed Forces. Although training is limited to the most highly qualified candidates, attrition rates are high.

The Reserve Component contains three categories: the Standby Reserve, the Retired Reserve, and the Ready Reserve (see Table 1.1). The **Standby Reserve** personnel are temporarily not in the Ready Reserves due to a hardship or disability, or due to being designated as having civilian employment critical to national security. The **Retired Reserve** personnel are those reserve officers and enlisted who receive retired pay or are eligible for retired pay but are not 60 years old or over, not members of the Ready or Standby Reserves, and have not chosen to be discharged. The **Ready Reserve** consists of the selected reserve, the **Individual Ready Reserve** (personnel who have served as active duty or in the selected reserve and still have time remaining on their military service obligation), and the **Inactive National Guard** (required only to muster once a year with their unit) (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, 2005).

The selected reserve consists primarily of the following: the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force Reserves, a federal force that is under the control of the President; and the Army and Air National Guard, which is a state force under the control of a state's Governor unless released by the Governor to the President at the latter's request. The National Guard has limited law enforcement power during crises. Reservists and National Guard members of the selected reserve typically drill one weekend a month and two weeks or more a year.

For decades, individuals in the selected reserve were known as “weekend warriors,” typically responding to natural disasters within the United States. Many families needed to know very little about the military culture in order to support their loved one as a member of the National Guard or Reserves. Also, families usually did not worry about their loved ones being activated to full-time service and sent to combat zones. However, with the advent of the Gulf War (1990–1991), reliance on the Reserve Component rose sharply. The total force concept emphasized the increased reliance on reservists for combat and peacekeeping missions (Knox & Price, 1999). As operational tempo has increased, reservists have continued to be vital to U.S. military capabilities. Nearly 30% of deployed forces for OEF and OIF have come from the Reserve Component (Institute of Medicine, 2010), requiring many family members, with little or no prior identity as a military family, to quickly learn a new culture and respond to new stressors.

THE CULTURE OF THE MILITARY

Successfully working and living within the military culture requires fluency in a new language; knowledge of the chain of command; comfort on military installations; respect for those who serve; appreciation of the strengths of and challenges faced by military families; and knowledge of the steps taken by the DoD and each branch of the military to make military life more family-friendly. Each branch has developed its own subculture based on its specializations and missions. The cultural nuances can be as simple as the difference between the Army battle cry “Hooah!” (which has come to stand for “heard, understood and acknowledged” or HUA, but is more often used to show motivation or to motivate other soldiers), the Marine Corps battle cry, “Oorah!” (also used to show spirit or enthusiasm), and the Marine Corps motto, “Semper Paratus,” which is short for the Latin *Semper Fidelis* or “Always Faithful.”

As you learn about the military as a culture, consider the following questions: What are its rituals and what meaning do these rituals hold? What are the rules for social interaction in this culture? What expectations do you have of yourself and others? Anthropologist and scholar Ward Goodenough (1981) defines culture as “a system of standards or rules for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting” (p. 110). For many of you, the military is a new culture to get to know. If you are part of the military, this book is an opportunity for you to step back and gain new insights into a familiar culture and perhaps yourself. As you study the military in the weeks to come, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Be aware of what you bring to your classroom or workplace. We each have expectations, values, biases, and prejudices that often are based in past experiences. These are part of being human. They may assist or interfere with knowing and understanding others. Being aware of them can help you remain open to learning more about another culture.
- Adopt the stance of being a learner. Listen. Observe. Ask questions of yourself, your classmates and colleagues, and military families.
- Be open. Try to withhold judgment. If something you hear stirs up feelings, ask yourself “why?” Continue to listen, observe, and ask questions.
- Remember, every family, every parent and child, is both unique and part of multiple cultures.

Language

Every occupation has specialized terminology, and the military is no different. Military language is replete with acronyms and abbreviations that can overwhelm civilian workers and family members new to military service. For example, what does an “E-5” refer to?