



# YOUR VISIT TO THE NVMM

This resource provides context to your group of learners on the mission of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM), encourages them to think critically about the Veteran stories they will encounter, and suggests ways to interact with the Museum exhibits and content during your visit.

## The NVMM is a storytelling museum, but what does this mean?

- ★ We pay tribute to the sacrifices of servicemen and women and their families. These stories are presented through photos, letters and personal effects, firsthand accounts, and a limited number of artifacts and reproductions from our Education Collection. Together, these elements link our national story to the larger context of world events since our country's earliest days, and demonstrate the importance of individuals in shaping our history.
- ★ We do not actively collect artifacts or have large military objects on display in the Museum.
- ★ Museum Educators are available to lead your students on a guided tour to enhance your students' understanding of the core exhibit space.

## Who is a U.S. Veteran?

*"The term 'Veteran' means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or re-leased therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable."*

TITLE 38 OF THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

- ★ There are more specific definitions of Veteran when considering federal benefits.
- ★ Reservists and members of the National Guard may also be considered Veterans. More information can be found in [this report](#) by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ★ **For the purposes of your visit, students should generally know that Veterans are those who served in the U.S. Armed Services and were honorably discharged.**

## Why do people choose to serve in the U.S. military?

- ★ There is no single answer to this question. The NVMM shares many unique perspectives, but students should be aware that everyone has their own reason for serving. However, there are two overarching reasons for military service:
  - ★ **Volunteer** - Since 1973, the U.S. military has been an All-Volunteer Force.
  - ★ **Conscription or the Draft** - During the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, and the Vietnam War, men of a certain age were drafted into the military.
- ★ Time-permitting, watch the video of featured Veterans who are displayed in the NVMM as they provide their own reasons for service.



## K-W-L Chart

Using the K-W-L Chart below, ask students to fill out the first two columns. As part of your post-visit activities, students can fill out the third column with what they learned from their visit.

[Download the chart here.](#)

What do you KNOW about Veterans?	What do you WANT to know about Veterans?	What did you LEARN about Veterans?

## Transition to Civilian Life

The NVMM presents the Veteran journey from joining the military, to active-duty service, and just as importantly, the return to civilian life. Here are questions for students to consider before and after visiting:

- ★ Why might it be hard to come back home after being deployed?
- ★ How is the transition to civilian life different for all Veterans? Why do you think that is?
- ★ It's important to keep in mind that the majority of service members do not go into combat. In fact, as of 2019, only 10% of those in the Armed Forces engaged in battle.

## Engagement During Your Visit



Even if you request a guided tour, students will have time to explore the Museum on their own. We encourage students to:

- ★ **Touch and try on** the military gear along the Timeline and in the Basic Training Alcove.
- ★ **Listen** to the featured Veterans provide insight into their unique experiences.
- ★ **Write** letters to Veterans (these letters can be directed to those who are no longer in the military or to those currently on active-duty service).
- ★ **Join** the Conversation by writing down questions they would like a Veteran to answer.
- ★ **Ask** the Museum Educators and Volunteers questions.
- ★ **Reflect** on the stories they heard and what it means to serve.

## NVMM Vocabulary

The following are terms that students can familiarize themselves with before visiting the NVMM.

- ★ **Active-Duty Service Member:** A person who is active-duty is in the military full time. They work for the military, may live on a military base, and can be deployed at any time.
- ★ **Air Force:** Founded September 18, 1947, the Air Force specializes in air operations, able to keep the skies safe, support ground troops, and quickly supply those in the field. The Air Force has many technical jobs such as pilots, navigators, aircraft mechanics, logisticians, and nurses.
- ★ **Airmen:** A pilot or member of a crew for an aircraft. It is a title given to all Air Force members.
- ★ **Armed Forces:** The different branches of the U.S. government that have military roles and responsibilities. They make up six of the eight Uniformed Services within the United States and are the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard.
- ★ **Army:** Founded June 14, 1775, the Army is the largest of the branches and focuses on fighting on land. Soldiers have many roles in the Army from combat operations to support roles like mechanics, logistics, or intelligence.
- ★ **Coalition Forces:** A temporary alliance for a specific purpose composed of military members from different countries.
- ★ **Coast Guard:** Founded August 4, 1790, the Coast Guard has both law enforcement and military responsibilities along the United States' coastline. When war has not been declared, the Coast Guard serves under the Department of Homeland Security and its Sailors can be found policing, performing drug interdiction, or search and rescue of ships in distress. During times of war or conflict, the president can transfer any or all assets of the Coast Guard to the Department of the Navy.
- ★ **Commission:** The action of becoming an officer in the U.S. Armed Forces. Officer commissions have a minimum requirement of service that depends on the type of job they are selected for, with some ranging up to 10 years.
- ★ **Conscription:** A state mandated enlistment in the military. Also known as the draft.
- ★ **Deployment:** Military deployment is the movement of armed forces. Deployment includes any movement from a military Service Member's home station to somewhere outside the continental U.S. and its territories. Deployment is not restricted to combat; units can be deployed for other reasons such as humanitarian aid, evacuation of U.S. citizens, restoration of peace, or increased security. Deployments can last from 90 days to 15 months.
- ★ **Dishonorable Discharge:** To be released from duty in the U.S. Military by conviction of general court-martial. This release only occurs when a service member is convicted for reprehensible behavior (i.e.: sexual misconduct or murder).
- ★ **Enlist:** The action of enrolling or signing up into the military services as an enlisted member. Most enlistments are four years in length with the option to extend.
- ★ **Enlisted:** A person who joins the military at the enlisted ranks. Enlisted members must pass a physical, take a vocational test, and have their high school diploma. Enlisted members make up the bulk of the Armed Forces.
- ★ **Guardian:** Title given to all service members of the Space Force.
- ★ **Honorable Discharge:** To be released from duty in the U.S. Military. Service members who meet or exceed the required standards of duty, performance, and personal conduct and who complete any tours of duty typically receive an honorable discharge.

## NVMM Vocabulary, cont.

- ★ **Marine Corps:** Founded November 10, 1775, the Marines serve as naval infantry for amphibious landings and allow for rapid deployments to get troops on the ground.
- ★ **Marine:** A member of a body of troops specifically trained to serve on land and sea. Specifically, the U.S. Marine Corps.
- ★ **National Guard:** A part-time force like the Reserves, but much of their funding comes from their State. The National Guard can be called up by its state for use during an emergency as well as by the federal government for overseas operations.
- ★ **Navy:** Founded October 13, 1775, the Navy conducts military operations and maintains security at sea around the world. Sailors have many roles such as navigation, weather, engineers, and radar operations.
- ★ **Officer:** An individual commissioned into the Armed Forces, officers assume positions of leadership over enlisted personnel and other officers as they advance in rank. Officers require a four-year college degree and take a physical and vocational test like those enlisting.
- ★ **Prisoner of War (POW):** A service member who is held against their will by an enemy force.
- ★ **Reserves:** Service members who serve part time and are trained and qualified to be called up for service to support or augment military operations when needed. Most reservists serve one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer.
- ★ **Sailor:** A person whose job it is to work on a naval vessel, especially one who is below the rank of an officer.
- ★ **Soldier:** A person who serves in an army.
- ★ **Space Force:** Founded December 20, 2019, the Space Force is the newest and smallest branch of the Armed Forces which focuses on satellite control and intelligence gathering. Guardians have highly technical jobs and are the only branch to have more officers than enlisted service members.
- ★ **Veteran:** According to Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations, "The term "veteran" means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable."
- ★ **Warrant Officer:** A highly specialized expert and trainer, who, by gaining progressive levels of expertise and leadership, operates, maintains, administers, and manages equipment, support activities, or technical systems for an entire career. Currently, only the Army, Marines, and Navy have warrant officers.