

RECRUITMILITARY

RESUME BEST PRACTICES

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RESUME BEST PRACTICES FOR MILITARY VETERANS

Your resume should paint a picture of a well-qualified candidate who can bring immediate results to the civilian workplace. It should focus on your skills, achievements, and qualifications, and communicate why you are the best candidate for a position. The items below highlight common mistakes that should be avoided, as well as best practices.

Misspellings and grammatical errors

First and foremost, errors like this say nothing good about your ability to pay attention to detail, and they make a poor first impression. Suppose, for example, your resume says you are a **wearhouse supervisor**. This type of error begs the question: “Is this person who has such a poor grasp of basic spelling capable of leading a team?” Consider too what it says about your lack of attention to detail. As a veteran, attention to detail is a trait you can proudly represent – so make sure your resume and cover letter do so.

Similarly, if this isn’t your first job out of the service, it is never a good idea to misspell the name of a past employer that has signed your paychecks (example: **JANE’S PEI EMPORIUM**, when you really worked at **JANE’S PIE EMPORIUM**).

Remember, too, that the spell check feature on your computer may catch a misspelling, but does not catch and correct **context** errors. For example, it will not catch “Thank you for **yours** consideration” because technically, all the words are spelled correctly. Proofread it, and then have someone else proofread it!

Inconsistent dates

Your dates must match up and be in order. There shouldn’t be any gaps.

Recruiting Station Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH

Sept. 2006 – Feb. 2009

Golf Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, Camp Pendleton, CA

May 2003 – Dec. 2005

An employer will wonder, “What were you doing between January and August of 2006?” Worse still, the employer may disqualify you from consideration without ever asking.

Unflattering e-mail addresses

Always think about the e-mail address you put on your resume. If your current e-mail is cannons shooter@hmail.com, consider creating another address just for resumes. Make it a plain e-mail address. **You should also clean up your LinkedIn, Facebook and other social pages.** They say a lot about you, and employers check them!

Boring language vs. verbs, verbs, verbs

Omit phrases such as “Responsible for...,” “Duties include...,” “In charge of...,” etc. These phrases are boring, redundant, and muddy the clarity of your message. Include concrete data, numbers, and percentages that clearly state your accomplishments. For example:

Before: Responsible for coordinating, planning, and executing Amphibious Raids and Water Survival Training. Served as lead instructor for Staff Planning Course for junior grade officers.

After: Developed and executed numerous realistic high-risk courses for nearly 1,500 personnel per year. Ranked as the number one instructor among fifteen by my superiors on numerous performance reports.

Use strong, active **verbs** that present your skills and abilities in a few words. For example:

- Devised new curriculum for a staff planning course. This new program enhanced the organization’s ability to conduct missions within a shorter timeline, thereby improving efficiency and relevancy on the battlefield.

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- Spearheaded the creation of a functional fitness and martial arts training room which increased the instructor's Marine Corps Martial Arts certification levels by 90%.
- Guided seven different joint combat operations with United States Special Forces along the Afghanistan/Pakistan border independent of parent Marine Company.

The importance of a cover letter

A cover letter serves as a good preface to your resume by allowing you to discuss your work ethic and ability to function as a team player. It also lets you provide more detail about one or two achievements from your military background or perhaps positions in the civilian world, post-service. Your cover letter supports your resume—it does not repeat it. Be sure to follow the rules of professional business correspondence in your cover letter, and use the same active voice and terminology you use for your resume writing.

“De-militarize” and “civilianize”

It's important for civilian employers to understand that your years in the service have prepared you well for the civilian world. However, if they have not served, it may be difficult for them to wade through a series of titles and acronyms they don't understand. It's important to translate your experience and skill sets into civilian terminology. A good test to see if your resume is understandable is to have a civilian read it. If he or she can't understand what you did in the service, you need to spell it out more clearly. Ask one or more non-veteran friends or family members for their perspective on your resume. Do they understand everything you did without needing more clarification?

Stand out with the right font

Use a typestyle (font) that is clean, conservative and easy to read. Times New Roman is the least-preferred font of professional resume writers, simply because it is so over-used. Choose a font that is between 9 and 12 points. Use spacing, as well as **bold**, *italics*, underlining and CAPITALIZATION to highlight certain information.

Some popular font types to consider include:

Tahoma Arial Verdana Century Gothic Lucida Sans

Get organized

The transferable skills that you learned in the service are the foundation of your resume. Begin with a Career Summary that lists your skills, qualifications, achievements, and technical abilities. This will capture your reader's attention and immediately communicate the value you could bring to the organization.

Top-performing management professional with experience in event coordination, finance, supervision, budgeting, planning, and food service. Active Secret Clearance (valid through 2015)

From that point, you should list your Professional/Employment Experience, listing your current position first, and then proceeding in reverse chronological order. Next, list your education, credentials and certifications.

EDUCATION

1990 Marine Corps University - Leadership, Aviation Maintenance Technology, completed 49 Semester Hours

Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Course

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Finally, you may also wish to include some “extras” that will distinguish you from other candidates and demonstrate your value to a prospective employer. These areas include, but are not limited to:

Equipment skills and certifications

FCC GROL certification with Radar Endorsement

Technical qualifications

PC Proficient with Word, Excel, Access, and WordPerfect

Languages

Fluent in English, Spanish, and German

Honors and Awards

Teaching and Training

Committees and Task Forces

Always remember that you are selling

Your years in the armed forces have given you specific skills, attention to detail, and an unparalleled work ethic that make you a desirable commodity in the civilian workforce. Understand and appreciate the value you bring to a prospective employer, and communicate that value. By focusing on your character as well as your achievements, successes, and unique skill sets, you can show that you are “the” someone who will make a difference at their company.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR MILITARY VETERANS

Jane Doe
1234 First St.
Anytown, USA 12345
Home: (123) 456-7890
Cell: (123) 555-0000
janedoe@email.com

Joe Smith
Human Resources Manager
Smith Manufacturing
6789 South Main St.
Hometown, USA 67890

Dear Mr. Smith:

As an individual eager to pursue a career in **XXX**, I am submitting my resume for your review. I have a strong interest and background in **XXX (list 2-3 skills or job titles)**, and would appreciate being considered as an addition to your staff.

As my resume shows, my **(# of years)** years in the U.S. Marine Corps have prepared me well to perform in a wide range of functions. Now that my military service has concluded, I am eager to take on a challenging position in the civilian world. It is my hope to build upon my military experience by working in a company such as yours. I am a team player with excellent leadership skills, outstanding organizational capabilities and the capacity to carry a heavy workload.

The enclosed resume provides important details about my background. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the needs of your company, and how I might meet them. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Enclosure: Resume

RESUME TEMPLATE FOR MILITARY VETERANS

Name

Address, Anytown, USA 12345

Work: (123) 456-7890

Home: (123) 456-7890

email@earthlink.net

CAREER SUMMARY:

This section summarizes and highlights your knowledge, skill and expertise, and lets you paint a picture of how you want to be perceived. You can use key words and phrases, several short sentences, or both.

Example: Disciplined and focused USMC Captain with strong interpersonal skills and proven sales and project management capabilities. Successful track record of meeting and exceeding goals, ability to establish rapport at all levels and laser-like focus and attention to detail.

		-	AREAS OF EXPERTISE	-	
LEADERSHIP	SUPERVISION		STRATEGIC PLANNING		TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

United States Marine Corps

Date-Date

Executive Officer, Recruiting Station, Sacramento, CA

Date-Date

- This will be the most time-consuming section to write, and where you will be most tempted to use boring language like "Responsible for..." or "Duties included..." Use active verbs that create a vivid image.
- Four bullets per duty station is an appropriate number
- The first bullet could demonstrate a measurable accomplishment such as, "Ranked first among nine peers by commanding officer."
- Another bullet point could include comments from a Commanding Officer in italics.
 - **Example:** "This Marine has earned the respect of his instructors and the confidence of his chain of command to ensure his courses are conducted with the highest degree of professionalism." – Executive Officer, Title

Lieutenant, Location

Date-Date

- Guided joint combat operations with United States Special Forces and other Coalition Forces along the Afghanistan/Pakistan border.
- Administered relations between Afghani law enforcement and political leaders to establish security to eight Afghan districts in a zone of over 1,550 square miles.
- Oversaw the leadership and employment of over 40 personnel and equipment valued at \$4.5 million.
- **Achievement:** Created tactics, techniques, and procedures to harvest information and intelligence from the local populace, which led to the recovery of countless weapons caches and the apprehension of several anti-coalition militia members.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

List special courses and training, as well as dates and number of hours completed

- | | |
|--|------|
| • 21 credits toward MBA, St. Leo College, Florida | 2008 |
| • Primary Leadership Development Course, location, 180 hours | 1992 |
| • Bachelor of Science, Louisiana State University | 1987 |

RESUME TEMPLATE FOR MILITARY VETERANS

"EXTRAS":

Technology Skills Summary

Proficient in Windows XP/2000, Excel and Word

Languages

Fluent in English, Spanish and French

Equipment Skills and Qualifications

Sigma Six certification

Honors and Awards

Track and Field Division I All American. Conference Champion, 800 meters.

Teaching and Training Experience

Committees and Task Forces

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

RESUME OF "JOHN DOE," A JUNIOR OFFICER

John Doe

222 Third St., Anytown, USA 12345

Cell: (123) 456-7890

Home: (123) 456-7890

jdove@yahoo.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

This candidate does not hesitate to cite those character traits and skill sets for which members of the service are known.

Former Marine Captain who possesses strong communications skills; experience in leading diverse groups of people under a variety of arduous conditions; superb problem solving and multi-tasking skills; and a tremendous work ethic.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS:

It is OK to insert some highlights like these to showcase the candidate's leadership in action. Achievements can also be noted at the end of each section of an employment history.

Maintenance Company Commander of one of the largest maintenance facilities on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and led a team of 110 Marines.

Company Executive Officer selected over 10 peers in Kuwait and Iraq for high visibility position, and achieved a 95% combat readiness rate for Marines and equipment.

Division Liaison Officer in Iraq selected over 20 peers to fill a position normally held by a Lieutenant Colonel. Successfully executed 50+ re-supply logistical missions (food, fuel, et al) under intense time constraints from Kuwait to Baghdad, Iraq.

Landing Support Platoon Commander who supported operations in Egypt. Reduced offload and reload time of 800+ pieces of equipment from goal of 12 days to 7 days.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

United States Marine Corps Officer – Captain

Maintenance Company Commander, CA

2006 - Present

Led a team of 110 Marines tasked with maintaining the combat readiness of 240+ pieces of tactical equipment valued at over \$95 million. Guided Company in a continually changing environment and exceeded Battalion Commander's goals.

Company Executive Officer, Kuwait & CA

2005 - 2006

Second in command of a 300+ Marine unit tasked with coordinating and tracking transportation needs for Marines from six battalions with over 200 different pieces of tactical equipment. Planned, coordinated, and executed relocation, safely moving 100+ Marines and 40 vehicles during Middle East deployment.

Liaison Officer – 1ST Marine Division, Kuwait and Iraq

2005

Handled all logistical requests and missions for the 1st Marine Division in war time environment. Assisted in planning and retrograding all Marine Infantry Battalions in and out of Iraq, traveling 500+ miles from Baghdad to Kuwait. Executed strategic plans for transporting and tracking supplies through numerous channels.

RESUME OF "JOHN DOE," A JUNIOR OFFICER

Platoon Commander, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, CA

2004 - 2005

Directed a platoon of 50 Marines and maintained 78 pieces of logistics equipment and vehicles valued at \$6.2 million. Oversaw the morale, welfare, training, physical fitness and daily performance of unit. Performed flawlessly in a stressful and fluid environment in preparation for prospective combat operations and in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Landing Support Platoon Commander, CA

2003 - 2004

Chaired operation of 15 Marines who embarked, palletized, and loaded equipment and supplies on military and commercial aircraft in support of combat operations in Afghanistan. Planned, coordinated and supervised three logistical embarkation operations. Ensured deployment, loading, and offloading from Navy ships of tactical equipment for three Marine Expeditionary Units deploying to the Middle East.

United States Navy (Enlisted)

2001 - 2003

Upon graduating from Ball State University, enlisted in the U.S. Navy to enter the SEAL training. After completion of Recruit Training, attended BUDS (SEAL training) in Coronado Bay, CA. Completed 14 weeks of training before failing a dive certification, but impressed Senior Officer enough at SEAL school to be recommended for USMC Officer Candidate School. Sole enlisted U.S. Navy candidate selected to attend the prestigious USMC Officer Candidate School in 2001.

EDUCATION:

This is an impressive achievement and should stand out.

Bachelor of Science, Ball State University, 2001 Muncie, IN

MILITARY SCHOOLS:

The Basic School, Quantico, VA
Officer Candidate School, Quantico, VA
Logistics Officer's Course, Camp Lejeune, NC
Navy and Marine Corps Intelligence Training Center, Dam Neck, VA

It would be good to include some "extras" after the listing of schools. Does the candidate speak a foreign language, have some special computer skills or other certifications?

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

RESUME OF "HOWARD SMITH," SENIOR ENLISTED

Howard Smith

333 Third St., Anytown, USA 12345

Cell: (123) 456-7890

Home: (123) 456-7890

hsmith33@cox.net

QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY:

Consistency is important. This information is not worded in complete sentences, but each piece of information begins with a capital letter and ends with a period.

Decorated USMC Gunnery Sergeant (E-7) with 20 years of professional maintenance experience with gas turbine engines, aircraft maintenance and various ground equipment. Experienced in adhering to exact maintenance standards and in creating and implementing preventative maintenance programs based on constantly changing operational needs. Strong supervisory and leadership skills, exceptional reliability and strong work ethic. Possess a secret security clearance.

Decorated for superior performance in leading and maintaining a squadron of 120 technicians and 16 F/A18 Fighter Attack Aircraft in a high state of readiness to deploy for combat operations at the discretion of the President of the United States.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Maintenance Material Control Chief – United States Marine Corps

- Directed seven managers who supervised 120 technicians performing scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, pre-flight, post-flight and turn-around inspections, while simultaneously conducting aircraft launch's and recoveries.
- Instituted an aggressive inventory reconciliation program for \$324 million of aeronautical and non-aeronautical assets.
- Trained expeditors in Naval Aviation Logistics Command Management Information System (NALCOMIS).
- Planned, scheduled and monitored inspections of 12 Fighter/Attack aircraft culminating in a total of 26 monthly inspections per aircraft, which ensured that Flight Life Expectancy and High Time Item schedules were met.
- Assigned shift schedules, determined priorities and focus of efforts as well as made adjustments based on constantly changing operational commitments.
- Conducted daily audits to ensure quality assurance compliance.

Because this is a senior enlisted Marine, here would be a good place to elaborate with a brief description of an achievement or a success--using active language.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

2007	Present	Component Engineers, Machine Operator
2001	2006	Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Engines, Operator/Maintenance Technician
1983	2001	USMC, held various maintenance positions.
1979	1983	Maintenance Assistance- Ashby Veneer Lumber Co.
1975	1979	USMC

Because this is a senior enlisted Marine, here would be a good place to elaborate with a brief description of an achievement or a success--using active language.

RESUME OF "HOWARD SMITH," SENIOR ENLISTED

EDUCATION:

It is not necessary to list your high school and say that you graduated. List only your post-secondary education.

1984 Marine Corps University - Leadership, Aviation Maintenance Technology 49 Semester Hrs.
Aviation Maintenance Material Control, Jacksonville, FL- 80 hours
F404-GE-400 Gas Turbine Engine Repair, Lemoore, CA - 260 hours
PW-J52 Gas Turbine Engine Repair, Cherry Pt, NC - 200 hours
Corrosion Control, Memphis, TN - 8 hours
Gas Turbine Engine Theory and Repair, Memphis, TN - 180 hours
Aviation Fundamentals, Memphis, TN - 30 hours
Personnel Administration, Quantico, VA - 13 hours
Marine Corps Recruiter School, San Diego, CA - 218 hours
Profession Selling Skills III, Learning International, San Diego, CA - 105 hours
Communication Skills, Quantico, VA - 18 hours

LICENSES, AWARDS, CLEARANCES:

These "extras" set the candidate apart and can tip the scale in his favor.

Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for Total Quality Management

Three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals for Superior Performance of Duties

12 Certificates of Commendation for Professional Achievement and Dedication

Secret Security Clearance

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

RESUME OF "SAM JONES," JUNIOR ENLISTED

Sam Jones

4444 Fourth St., Kissimmee, Florida 12345

Work: (123) 456-7890

Home: (123) 456-7890

samjones44@earthlink.net

CAREER SUMMARY:

Former Marine with strong avionics and equipment maintenance background; self-motivated supervisor who has been awarded progressively more responsible roles; and a strong communicator who is results-drive with an enthusiastic attitude toward supporting an organization's overall mission.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

CSX Transportation

This candidate has already transitioned to a civilian position. Note that he lists his employment in reverse chronological order, with no gaps.

Work Equipment Supervisor, System Production Teams

2003-present

- Supervised heavy equipment maintenance for three teams of 25 machines.
- Led a team of six mechanics, including scheduling and payroll.
- Oversaw budget, equipment moves and safe operation of three curve patch teams.
- Conducted safety inspection and documented observation periods IAW established CSX policy.

Assistant Work Equipment Supervisor, Bryan Park Roadway Equipment Shop

2002-2003

- Conducted pre-shop and in-service inspection of roadway equipment being rebuilt at Bryan Park Roadway Shop.
- Authored series of forms to organize tracking of progress through the rebuild process.
- Used various inspections to communicate machine problems and improve rebuild quality.
- Executed Safety Observations in accordance with SLP guidelines.

United States Marine Corps

Avionics Work Center Supervisor, VMA-542, MCAS Cherry Point, NC

1996-2002

- Supervised a crew of 20 technicians responsible for maintenance, repair and safe operation of a fleet of 15 AV8B aircraft.
- Assigned maintenance actions and balanced workload with flight schedule.
- Troubleshoot and repaired electrical portions of aircraft radar, communications, navigation, weapons, identification and flight control systems.
- Performed time-based inspections and preventative maintenance.
- Inspected (QA) all work and provided safe-for-flight sign-offs.

Chronology is confusing. If the assignment in 2001 was a special project, the candidate should say so.

Lead Avionics Technician, Mals 14 Modification Team, MCAS Cherry Point, NC

June-Nov., 2001

- Established startup procedures and guidelines for Joint Unit Major Modification Team.
- Dismantled aircraft, including engine, wing, avionics and equipment rack removal.
- Delivered hull to Naval Aviation Depot for modification. Reassembled upon return.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Navy Aircraft Electrical and Electronics Systems School (NAEES), Pensacola, FL

1996 – 1997

- NAEES Honor Graduate 3-97
- Successfully completed coursework in solid-state electronics, wire repair and electrical theory.
- Thorough hands on training including the operation and maintenance of aircraft electrical and electronics systems.

In the section at the right, the candidate describes his capabilities using terminology that resonates with a civilian audience, even though the experience was acquired in a military context.

RESUME OF "SAM JONES," JUNIOR ENLISTED

Navy trade school training in the following subject areas:

- Advanced Leadership Course including personnel management.
- Basic and Advanced O-level Aircraft Electrical Systems.
- Aircraft Wiring and Connector Repair.
- AV8B Aircraft Communications/Navigation/IFF/Radar Systems.
- Various Marine Corps Institute distance courses (transcript available upon request)

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS:

- Eight years of experience as a First-Line Supervisor.
- Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office and most desktop publishing programs.
- Background in mechanical and electronic theory, system schematics, troubleshooting and application.
- FCC GROL certification with Radar Endorsement.
- Experienced operator and repairer of turbine, diesel, and gasoline engines, hydraulic/electrical actuators and electronic systems.
- Skilled in wire/connector repair, electronic test equipment, fiber optic lines, soldering, and electrical sealing.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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