

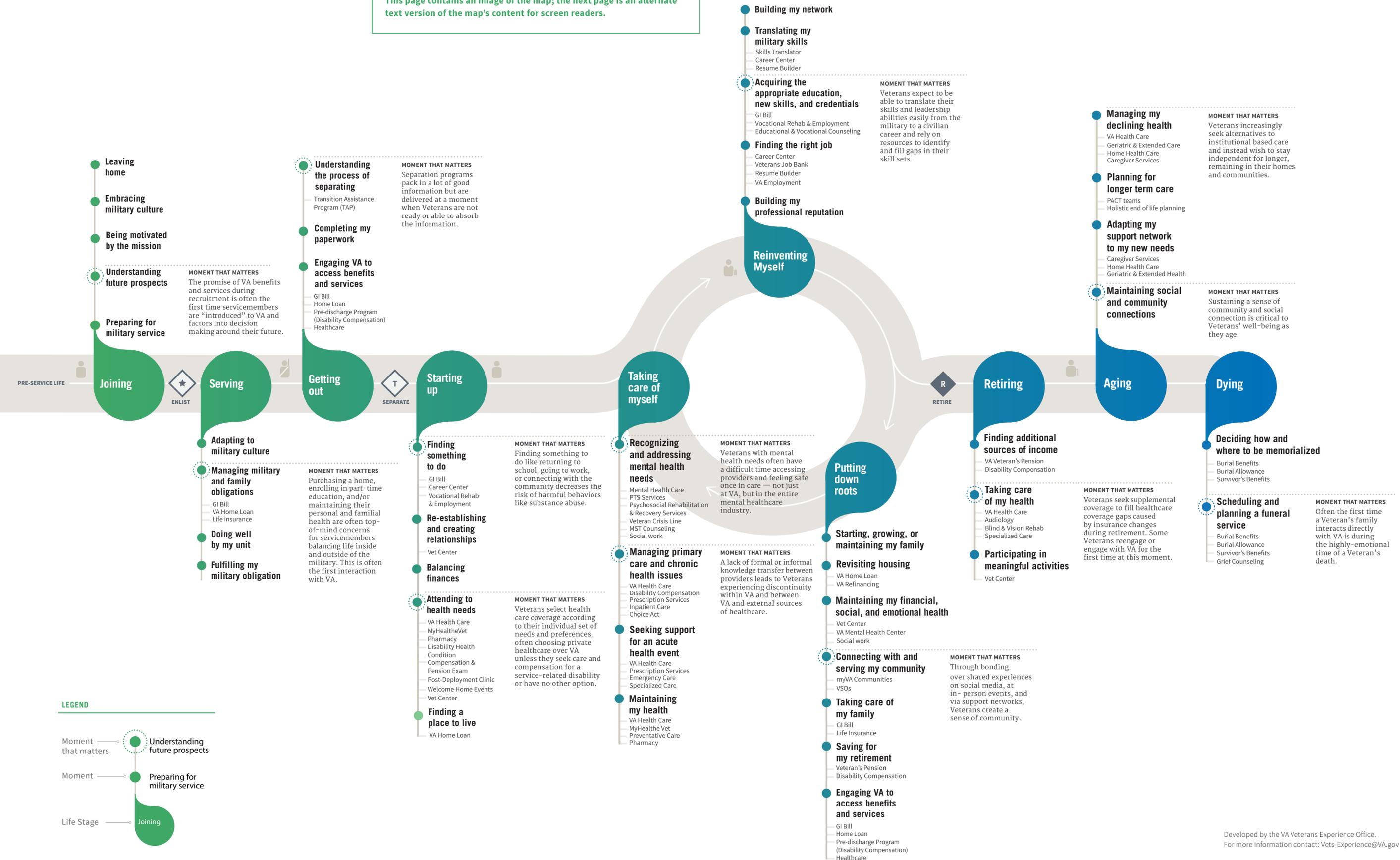
JOURNEYS OF VETERANS MAP

This map covers ten life stages any Veteran may encounter, from pre-service to end of life. These life stages are organized in three phases in which Veterans' goals and aspirations are distinctly different. Each life stage lists out moments Veterans typically experience and associated VA services, and calls out key "moments that matter" which may have significant impact on Veterans' experiences.

This page contains an image of the map; the next page is an alternate text version of the map's content for screen readers.

Not all Veterans are the same and there is no "one" veteran. There are, however, a broad set of shared moments many Veterans will encounter and live through. Different Veteran personas will experience and navigate these moments in varied and disparate ways. Using this journey as a guide to organize and align around, VA can plan for and design better experiences for Veterans.

Life events impact individual goals and change priorities. Events like marriage, divorce, widowhood, birth of a child, obtaining a new degree, loss of housing, empty nesting, major illness and so on have profound effects on people's priorities and how they approach their lives—as well as how they interact and perceive services. These events are unpredictable and may happen at any point across this journey.



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Phase 1: Serving in and Separating from the Military

Life Stage: Joining

- Moment: Leaving home
- Moment: Embracing military culture
- Moment: Being motivated by the mission
- Moment that Matters: Understanding future prospects*

* “Understanding future prospects” is a “Moment that Matters” because the promise of VA benefits and services during recruitment is often the first time Servicemembers are “introduced” to VA and factors into decision making around their future.

- Preparing for military service

[Enlist]

Life Stage: Serving

- Moment: Adapting to military culture
- Moment that Matters: Managing military and family obligations*

Associated VA services:

- GI Bill
- VA Home Loan
- Life insurance

* “Managing military and family obligations” is a “Moment that Matters” because purchasing a home, enrolling in part-time education, and/ or maintaining their personal and familial health are often top- of-mind concerns for Servicemembers balancing life inside and outside of the military. This is often the first interaction with VA.

- Moment: Doing well by my unit
- Moment: Fulfilling my military obligation

Life Stage: Getting Out

- Moment that Matters: Understanding the process of separating*

Associated VA services:

- Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

* “Understanding the process of separating” is a “Moment that Matters” because separation programs pack in a lot of good information but are delivered at a moment when Veterans are not ready or able to absorb the information.

- Moment: Completing my paperwork
- Moment: Engaging VA to access benefits and services

Associated VA services:

- GI Bill
- Home Loan
- Pre-discharge Program (Disability Compensation)
- Healthcare

[Separate]

Life Stage: Starting Up

- Moment that Matters: Finding something to do*

Associated VA services:

- GI Bill
- Vocational Rehab & Employment
- Career Center

*“Finding something to do” is a “Moment that Matters” because finding something to do like returning to school, going to work, or connecting with the community decreases the risk of harmful behaviors like substance abuse.

- Moment: Re-establishing and creating relationships

Associated VA services:

- Vet Center

- Moment: Balancing finances

- Moment that Matters: Attending to health needs*

Associated VA services:

- VA Health Care
- MyHealtheVet
- Pharmacy
- Disability Health Condition
- Compensation & Pension Exam
- Post-Deployment Clinic
- Welcome Home Events
- Vet Center

*“Attending to health needs” is a “Moment that Matters” because Veterans select health care coverage according to their individual set of needs and preferences, often choosing private healthcare over VA unless they seek care and compensation for a service-related disability or have no other option.

- Moment: Finding a place to live
- VA Home Loan

After “Phase 1: Serving in and Separating from the Military,” we move to “Phase 2: Living Civilian Life.”

Phase 2: Living Civilian Life

Life Stage: Taking care of myself

- Moment that Matters: Recognizing and addressing mental health needs*

Associated VA services:

- Mental Health Care
- PTS Services
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Recovery Services
- Veteran Crisis Line
- MST Counseling
- Social work

* “Recognizing and addressing mental health needs” is a “Moment that Matters” because Veterans with mental health needs often have a difficult time accessing providers and feeling safe once in care — not just at VA, but in the entire mental healthcare industry.

- Moment that Matters: Managing primary care and chronic health issues*

Associated VA services:

- VA Health Care
- Disability Compensation
- Prescription Services
- Inpatient Care
- Choice Act

*“Managing primary care and chronic health issues” is a “Moment that Matters” because a lack of formal or informal knowledge transfer between providers leads to Veterans experiencing discontinuity within VA and between VA and external sources of healthcare.

- Moment: Seeking support for an acute health event

Associated VA services:

- VA Health Care
- Prescription Services
- Emergency Care
- Specialized Care

- Moment: Maintaining my health

Associated VA services:

- VA Health Care
- MyHealtheVet
- Preventative Care
- Pharmacy

Life Stage: Reinventing Myself

- Moment: Building my network
- Moment: Translating my military skills

Associated VA services:

- Skills Translator
- Career Center
- Resume Builder

- Moment that Matters: Acquiring the appropriate education, new skills, and credentials*

Associated VA services:

- GI Bill
- Vocational Rehab & Employment
- Educational & Vocational Counseling

* “Acquiring the appropriate education, new skills, and credentials” is a “Moment that Matters” because Veterans expect to be able to translate their skills and leadership abilities easily from the military to a civilian career and rely on resources to identify and fill gaps in their skill sets.

- Moment: Finding the right job

Associated VA services:

- Career Center
- Veterans Job Bank
- Resume Builder
- VA Employment

- Moment: Building my professional reputation

Life Stage: Putting down roots

- Moment: Starting, growing, or maintaining my family

- Moment: Revisiting housing

- VA Home Loan
- VA Refinancing

- Moment: Maintaining my financial, social, and emotional health

Associated VA services:

- Vet Center
- VA Mental Health Center
- Social work

- Moment that Matters: Connecting with and serving my community*

Associated VA services:

- myVA Communities
- VSOs

* “Connecting with and serving my community” is a “Moment that Matters” because through bonding over shared experiences on social media, at in- person events, and via support networks, Veterans create a sense of community.

- Moment: Taking care of my family

Associated VA services:

- GI Bill
- Life Insurance

- Moment: Saving for my retirement

Associated VA services:

- Veteran’s Pension
- Disability Compensation

- Moment: Engaging VA to access benefits and services

Associated VA services:

- GI Bill
- Home Loan
- Pre-discharge Program (Disability Compensation)
- Healthcare

After Phase 2 “Living civilian life,” we move to “Retiring and Aging.”

Phase 3: Retiring and Aging

Life Stage: Retiring

- Moment: Finding additional sources of income

Associated VA services:

- VA Veteran’s Pension
- Disability Compensation

- Moment that Matters: Taking care of my health*

Associated VA services:

- VA Health Care
- Blind & Vision Rehab
- Audiology
- Specialized Care

* “Taking care of my health” is a “Moment that Matters” because Veterans seek supplemental coverage to fill healthcare coverage gaps caused by insurance changes during retirement. Some Veterans reengage or engage with VA for the first time at this moment.

- Moment: Participating in meaningful activities

Associated VA services:

- Vet Center

Life Stage: Aging

- Moment that Matters: Managing my declining health*

Associated VA services:

- VA Health Care
- Geriatric & Extended Care
- Home Health Care
- Caregiver Services

* “Managing my declining health” is a “Moment that Matters” because Veterans increasingly seek alternatives to institutional based care and instead wish to stay independent for longer, remaining in their homes and communities.

- Moment: Planning for longer term care

Associated VA services:

- PACT teams
- Holistic end of life planning

- Moment: Adapting my support network to my new needs

Associated VA services:

- Caregiver Services
- Home Health Care

- Geriatric & Extended Health

- Moment: Maintaining social and community connections**

**“Maintaining social and community connections” is a “Moment that Matters” because sustaining a sense of community and social connection is critical to Veterans’ well-being as they age.

Life Stage: Dying

- Moment: Deciding how and where to be memorialized

Associated VA services:

- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance
- Survivor’s Benefits

- Moment that Matters: Scheduling and planning a funeral service*

Associated VA services:

- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance
- Survivor’s Benefits
- Grief Counseling

*“Scheduling and planning a funeral service” is a “Moment that Matters” because often the first time a Veteran’s family interacts directly with VA is during the highly-emotional time of a Veteran’s death.



The Journey of Veterans map is project by the Veterans Experience Office.

The Veterans Experience team traveled across the country to meet and learn more about Veterans from all eras and branches of service. We listened to stories about their diverse military experiences and lives as Veterans. The stories we heard emphasized Veterans’ deeply positive relationships with VA, an organization dedicated to the well-being of Veterans and their families. We also heard about opportunities to improve the way VA delivers benefits and services, so we might form trusting lifelong relationships with Veterans on their own terms.

The purpose of this effort is to catalyze action through analysis of customer insights, so we can align what we do with the needs and expectations of who we serve.

For more information, email: Vets-Experience@VA.gov