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[How to Pick a Military or Veteran Association](#)

So you want to get involved in a military or veteran association. With literally thousands of organizations, associations, non-profits and for-profit groups and associations from which to choose, how do you decide which one is right for you?

Start by asking yourself these five crucial questions:

1. What kind of organization do I want?

Some organizations are developed for older veterans, some for younger ones. Among the options are organizations for veterans of current conflicts, veterans who ride motorcycles, ones who run marathons, ones who want to volunteer as first responders, female veterans, veterans from specific services and veterans who just want to drink a beer or two with their veteran friends. Simply doing a Google search of your interest and the word "veteran" can bring up a wide variety of groups for you to consider. Do a little reading about the different organizations and find one that fits your interests and needs.

You can also find veteran organizations registered with the VA [here](#) or [here](#).

2. Do they offer a wide range of services?

Veterans associations usually aren't just social clubs. Some of the larger organizations offer a various services as part of your membership, including [discounts](#), travel, scholarships, career assistance, help with navigating the VA and sometimes even an exclusive retirement community. Many of them also lobby lawmakers on behalf of their members. Other, smaller organizations might fixate their energies on one subject like physical fitness or volunteerism. Choosing where you want to be involved depends largely on the kind of services you'd like to access.

3. Does it have a local office?

If you're looking to dive into military or veteran association involvement, you might want to get involved with an organization that has a local office, chapter or hall. While many of the organizations are now based largely online, there's sometimes nothing like that in-person connection.

4. How much does it cost?

Military and veteran association membership costs vary by organization. Some are completely free to join while others may cost \$50 a year or more. The cost tends to depend on the size of the organization and the perks they give to members. Remember to factor in costs when picking your association.

5. Does it have a good track record?

A little Googling about your group of choice will show if there are any scandals or other information you probably would like to know. If you're joining an organization because you think membership will help you find a job or because you like their lobbying efforts, you'll want to know their record and reputation first.

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