

Veterinary Education: Army Veterinary Care Specialists vs Civilian Veterinary Technicians and Assistants

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The US military is known for its global power, presence, and developing the personal and occupational skills of its service members. Individuals, whether they serve a few years or build a long-term career, eventually transition to the civilian workforce. However, some military occupations do not transition to the civilian sector due to differing military and civilian education levels. This can lead to veterans being unable to find work at the same level or occupation as their previous military job. I investigated the Army MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) 68T (Animal Care Specialist) and compared it to the civilian occupations of veterinary assistant and veterinary technician. I researched the education required for each occupation by interviewing workers and reviewing academic resources. I created and administered a knowledge test at one military clinic and two civilian clinics to compare results. On the knowledge test, the vet technicians scored the highest, the 68Ts scored second highest on average, and the vet assistants had the lowest average score. Interview replies and online research revealed veterinary technicians receive the most comprehensive education, followed by 68Ts. Veterinary assistants do not require specialized education. These results suggest that 68Ts receive more education than veterinary assistants but not as much as veterinary technicians and that the military education is insufficient to transition to a veterinary technician job. This study highlights the need for further exploration into the educational contrasts between military and civilian jobs, their impacts on transitioning service members, and possible solutions.