

JOURNEYS OF VETERANS

Visual depiction of the experiences of ATO/JFO Veterans developed by Veteran Hub in partnership with IREX, as part of the Veteran Reintegration Program, supported by the US Department of State.

The model is based on the example of the [Veteran Lifetime Journey Map](#) developed by the US Department of Veteran Affairs.



September 2019 — November 2020

CONTENT

Ukrainian context	<u>03</u>
Project background	<u>10</u>
Our approach	<u>12</u>
Insights and findings	<u>20</u>
The journey	<u>26</u>
Caring for the well-being	<u>48</u>
Gratitudes and the team	<u>52</u>

A photograph of two men sitting on a bench against a wooden wall. The man on the left is wearing a green t-shirt and camouflage pants, looking towards the man on the right. The man on the right is wearing a green t-shirt and dark pants, smiling and looking back at the first man. The image has a dark, muted color palette with a semi-transparent dark overlay.

UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

“War cuts off the excess. It leaves only what matters.
When you see death and injuries, you understand
that life is valuable” – Vova, Veteran

When soldiers return home, war remains within

Veterans often don't know how to cope with the complexities of their return to civilian life, and may not understand that their reactions follow a natural or even predictable path

The experience of war leaves lasting traces for years to come

Long term adaptation and the differences between their expectation and civilian reality can wear Veterans out physically and emotionally

Veteran Hub is created to support Veterans and their closest circles in overcoming the burdens that combat experience might bear upon returning home

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The logic and structure of Ukrainian Veteran support systems (or the Veterans Affairs field) have been inherited from the Soviet approach of providing social benefits to Veterans.

Generations of Ukrainian soldiers, returning from past wars and military conflicts have not had an opportunity to integrate well into their civilian roles and had not developed an authentic Veteran identity.

Social benefits were portrayed as “gifts from the government”, and were supposed to grant political favorability to Soviet leadership. The list of benefits was expanded for the first time during Brezhnev's leadership (1960s), when most of the WWII Veterans had already entered a rather mature phase of their lives. It was also the first time authorities had attempted to shape a national veteran identity.

To date, the state policy towards Veterans has relied more on the existing capabilities of the government agencies, rather than the emerging needs of Veterans.

For example, the majority of social benefits for Ukrainian Veterans are regulated by a 1993 law that has replicated an identical soviet law.

The identity of the “old veteran of the Great Patriotic War” has been extensively manifested in Russia throughout the '90s, as a politically-motivated move, followed by a consistent state policy to privatize victory. Only in 1995, the traditional Victory Day Parade began to happen on a yearly basis around the post-soviet space. The youngest World War II Veterans (born during the late 1920s) were already late in their 60's by that time.

Today there are over
397,000 Veterans of the war caused by
Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine

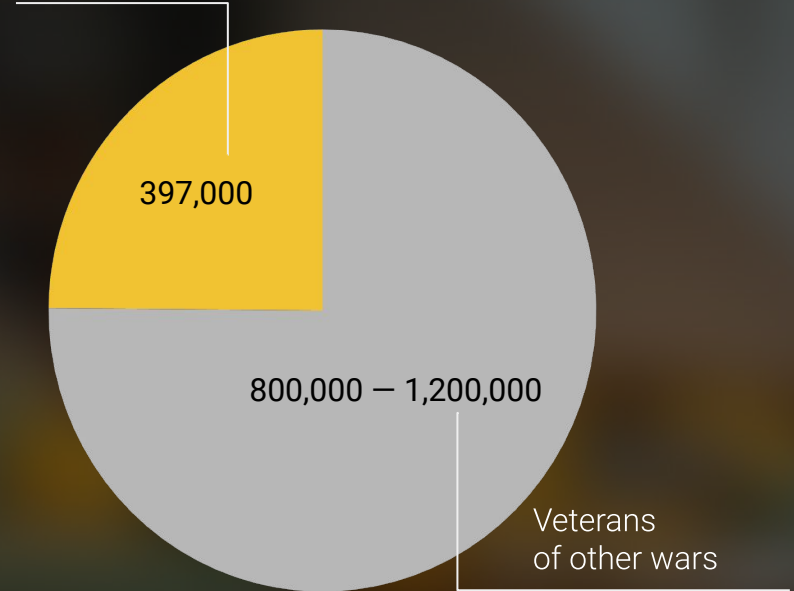
Based on the data from several sources, all generations of Ukrainian Veterans make up 1,200,000 to 1,600,000 people.

Most of them are middle-aged or senior adults, living through the stages of retirement, aging and dying.

The youngest generation of Veterans is living through the stages of adapting to civilian life, taking care of themselves, reinventing themselves and putting down roots in their new civilian reality.

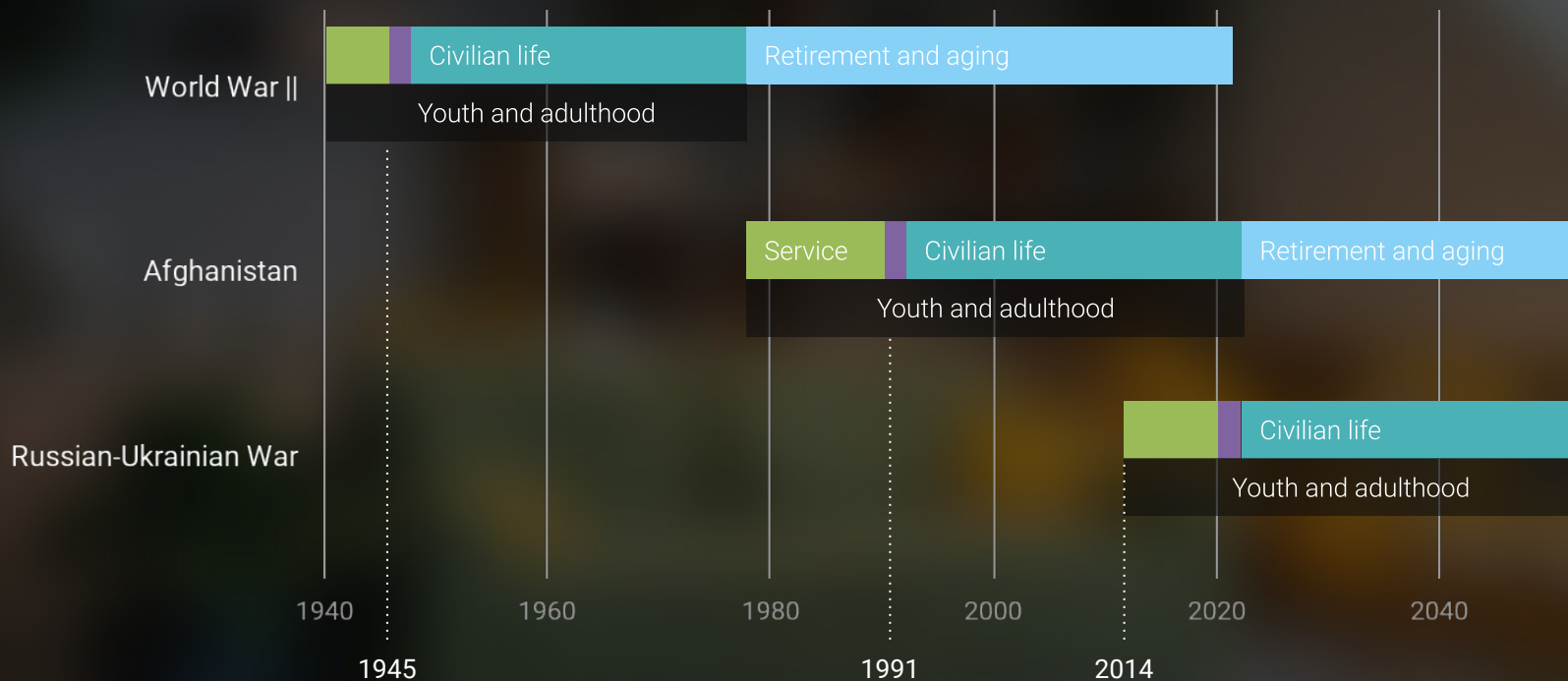
The circumstances and conditions of their lives differ greatly from the experiences older Veterans had during past decades.

Veterans
of the war caused by Russian aggression



LIFE JOURNEYS OF UKRAINIAN VETERANS

It is a map of a general lifetime journey of the 3 largest generations of Ukrainian Veterans. Personal life stories might differ greatly, but we are aimed at highlighting the historical context of the times when these Veterans were young.



BEGINNING OF SERVICE

SERVICE

TRANSITION

CIVILIAN LIFE

RETIREMENT AND AGING

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1

Deepen our knowledge about the experiences of Veterans, and their needs

We invite you to look at the support system for Ukrainian Veterans through the lens of their life experiences and needs. In the absence of a unified, and comprehensive national strategy on Veterans Affairs, we decided to gather the knowledge and experience of our team and international colleagues to propose this approach to the design and improvement of services, and other support for Veterans.

2

Coordinate the work of the stakeholders of the Veterans Affairs field in Ukraine

We have designed a basic map of veteran experiences, aimed at coordination of all the stakeholders of the Veterans Affairs field in Ukraine – the Journeys of Veterans map.

We hope that this tool will enable all parties to explain their goals and activities in a clear and visual way - to call a spade a spade.

Discover
needs

Design
prototypes

Launch a
pilot project

Gather
feedback

Actualize

Expand

WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE TOGETHER

AGREE

upon the roles of stakeholders in providing for different needs

Veterans and their close circles have a lot of needs at different stages of the journey. We are convinced that the narrow specialization of stakeholders and a deep understanding of the individual client needs is the right long-term strategy for the field of Veterans Affairs, in the case that quality coordination of efforts is provided.

PREVENT DUPLICATION

of efforts, funding, projects, and services

Until now, when planning projects and allocating funding, the field of Veterans' Affairs was guided mainly by empirically obtained data and did not have the opportunity to qualitatively compare different practices in support of Veterans. This map can help not only to identify duplication of effort but also to co-direct the activities of such projects to enforce the result.

EVALUATE

the quality of interaction, timeliness and relevance of support

Understanding client needs is the first step to an assessment of the quality of interactions. The Veterans Journey gives us a chance to have a comprehensive look at the needs of Veterans, to categorize the support provided, both in practice and at the legislative level, and then move to a unified and systematic evaluation of this support.

PLAN

project, support, cooperation, and services

During 2014-2017 in the Veterans' Affairs field, client demand has drastically expanded, and service providers hadn't yet had time to develop institutional capacity to meet it. In 2018, with the creation of the Veteran Hub, and a dedicated Ministry, along with other powerful organizations, together we have gained the opportunity to finally plan for the long-term support for Veterans.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

“Bridges, supermarkets, stores, community buildings – everything will need to be restored after the war. It can be the task for my generation”
– Oleg, Veteran

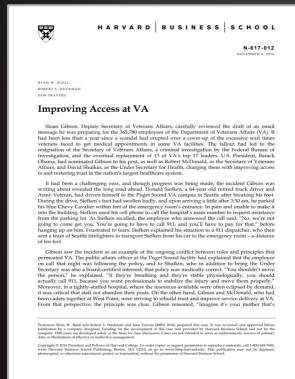


ORIGINS OF THE IDEA

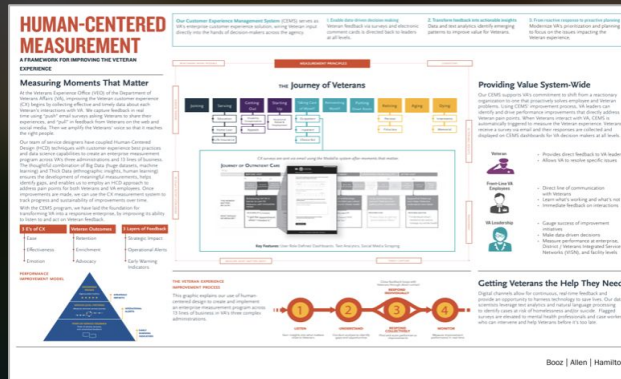
During one of the meetings at Veteran Hub in August 2019,
Robert A. McDonald

mentioned the Veterans Lifetime Journey Map that has been developed during his service as the 8th US Secretary of Veterans Affairs. It was aimed at transforming the usual way of service provision and implementing a Veteran-centred approach at VA.

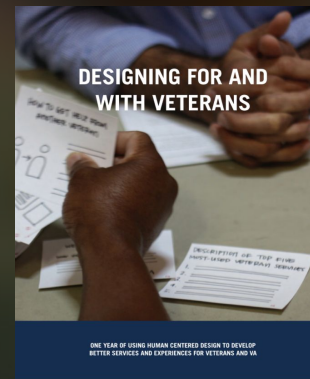
Robert shared the Map and 3 other documents with a broad expert community present at the meeting. It laid the foundation for a year of exploration, resulting in adaptation of the Map to the Ukrainian context.



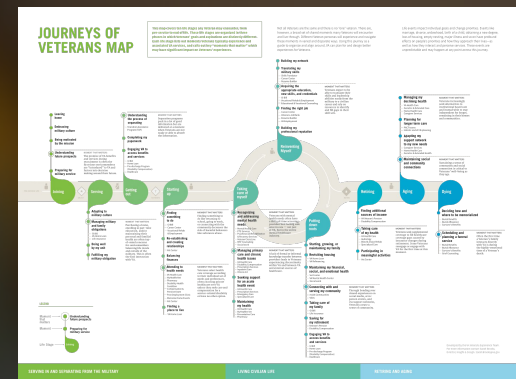
Improving Access to VA



VEO Placement Map Review



Designing for
and with Veterans



Journeys of Veterans map



OUR APPROACH

“It’s so important not to be rude, when you’re talking to a person who’s just waited in line for a few hours. It’s when you meet social workers who don’t spoil your day but try to improve it, you understand that waiting in line was at least worth it” — Volodymyr, Veteran

OPEN SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Veterans returning to civilian life is a natural process in which many different organizations and people interact with them

Most of these interactions are not aimed at helping Veterans adapt to civilian life. And that isn't bad.

During the past few years, a social stigma has been formed, saying that social adaptation for Veterans requires special conditions and special care. It also seems that providing this type of support should be a hard task that takes up a lot of time.

Veterans have more identities than their combat experience alone. They are people, citizens, clients of various organizations. They share most of their experiences and needs with all civilians.

Only some of these needs have been shaped or changed under the pressure of combat experience.

At Veteran Hub we are creating an open system of Veteran support.

We help Veterans feel that they are important for individual people, within organizations, in business and the State.

WHO IS THE MAP FOR

VETERANS, MILITARY, FAMILY MEMBERS

Subjects of the Journey of Veterans. Those who know their own needs and desires best.

EXPERTS

- Veterans' Affairs specialists
- People working with Veterans
- Organizations, whose clients are Veterans

DECISION MAKERS

- NGO leaders
- Civil servants
- Donor community

We can not and should not guide all 397,000 Veterans along every individual step in their journey, as they all are independent adults. We can, however, support them with information and resources at the key moments of their life stages, and provide deeper support to those who need it the most. We can also help other organizations “soften” the adaptation processes for Veterans, through their points of contacts.

War changes the lives of Veterans, but it shouldn't be the only thing their life is about

That's why we are aimed at learning to communicate about what comes after the war as good as we talk about war itself

From the first days at home, when it's still hard to focus, till family gatherings and plans for years to come – we invite Veterans to help us describe their stories

Together we will try to tell the civilian story in a way that no one but Veterans can

We invite the Veteran clients of Veteran Hub and those simply willing to share their story to dedicate an hour to an in-depth interview.

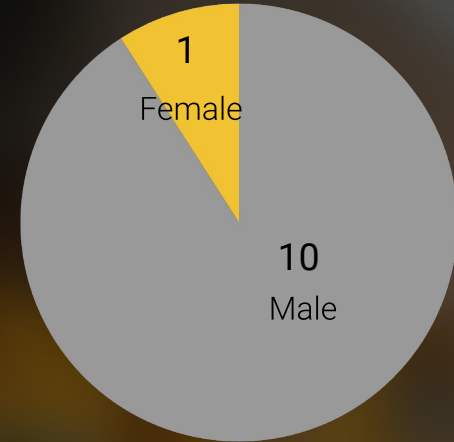
We invite fellow organizations to share knowledge and research, and together study the Veterans' Journey.

STUDYING THE VETERANS' STORIES



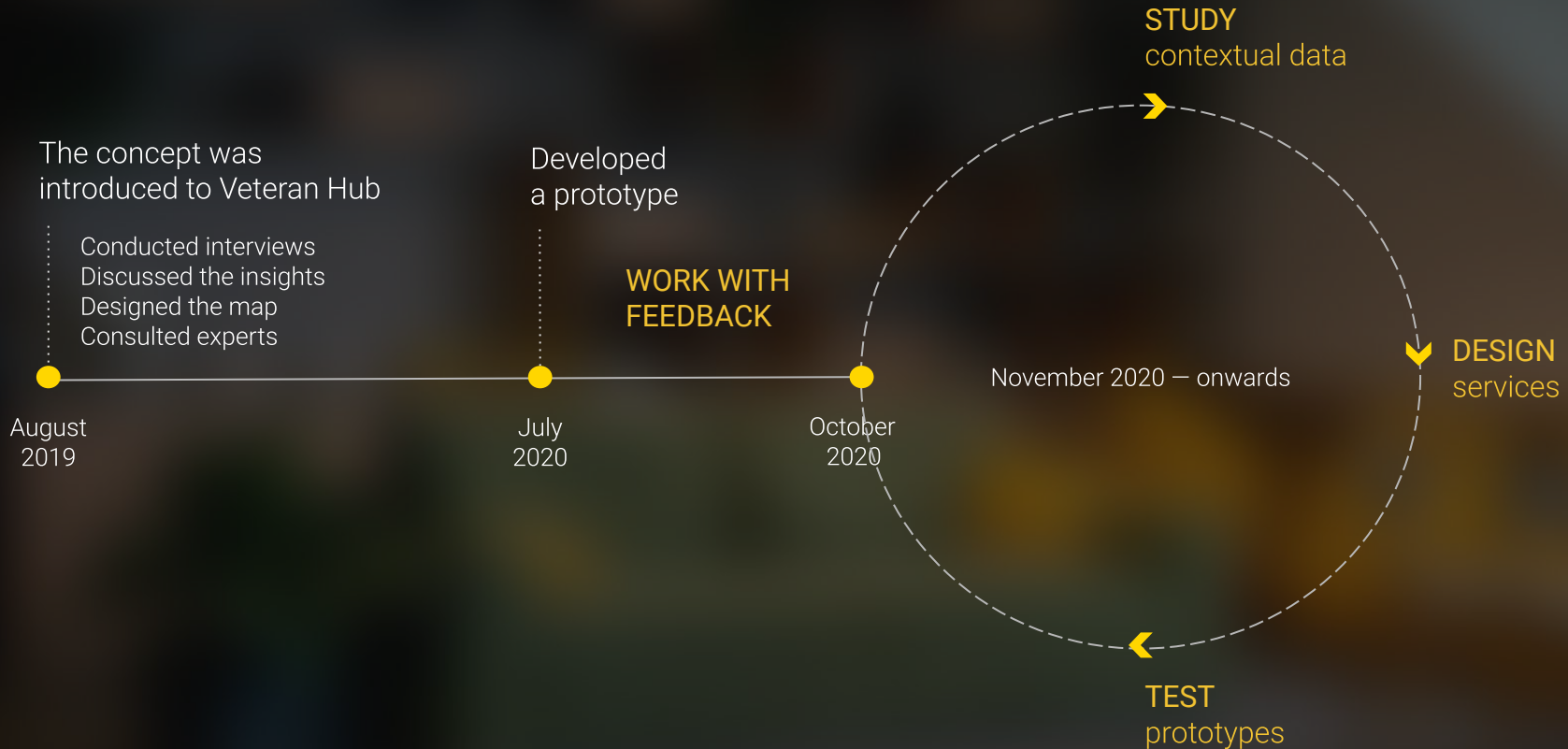
We have conducted preliminary interviews with 10 Veterans, divided into 3 groups, in order to test the relevance of the proposed Veterans Lifetime Journey Map approach in the Ukrainian context. All interviews were conducted at Veteran Hub in Kyiv, they were also audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Together with IREX, we have developed a form of sociological survey in order to test our assumptions on a larger sample of Veterans. Based on it, in October 2020 Veteran Hub front office employees in Kyiv, Vinnytsia and Dnipro, as well as the Mobile office in remote areas of the Kyiv oblast, began to interview Veterans. This process will be made into a regular Veteran Hub activity. All data will be processed and analyzed by the Veteran Hub head office team.



Average age of our participants
was 33 years old

SHORT-TERM TIMELINE OF THE PROJECT



DESIGNING FOR THE WELL-BEING OF VETERANS

JOURNEY OF VETERANS

A **qualitative** research method to study the life processes and client needs

To design relevant support and distribute it among life stages

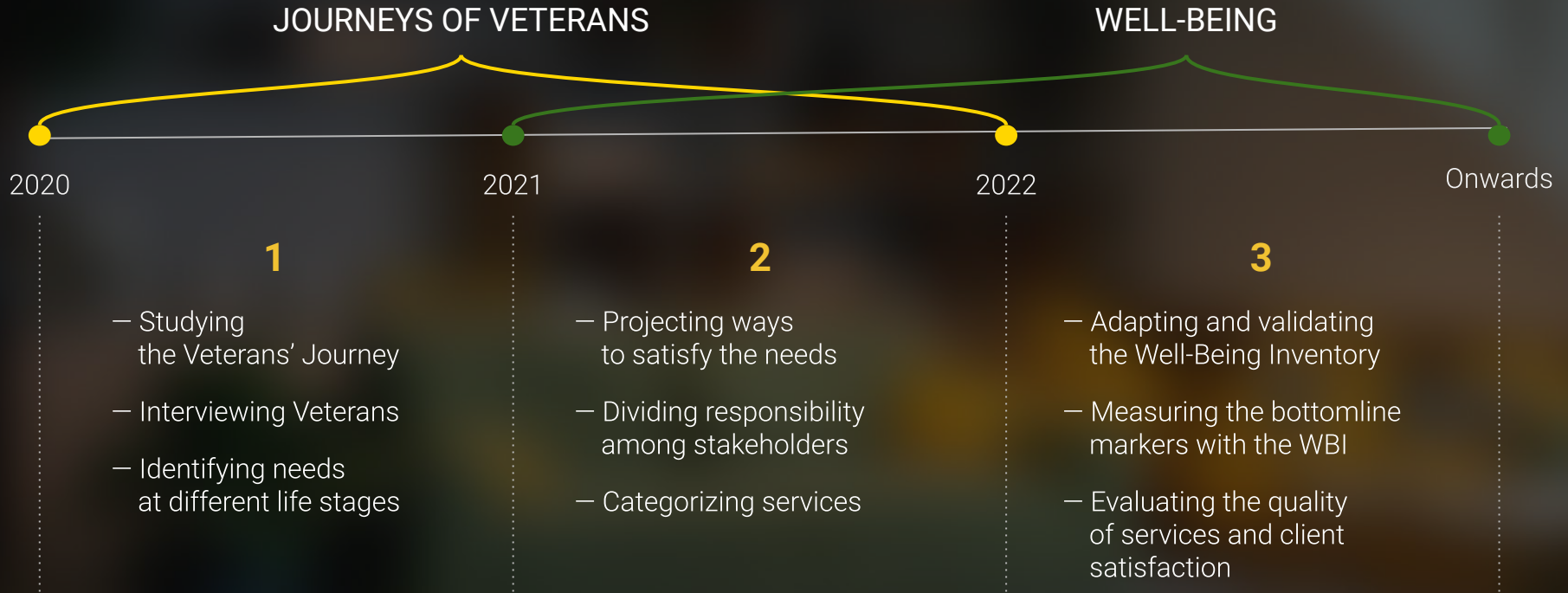


WELL-BEING

A **quantitative** research method to evaluate the status, functioning and satisfaction with the services provided

To assess the quality of interaction and the impact of support for the well-being and lives of Veterans

LONG-TERM TIMELINE OF CHANGE



A woman with blonde hair is holding a young boy. The boy has blue and green face paint on his face, resembling a superhero mask. Both are giving a thumbs up. They are in a room with a Christmas tree and warm lights in the background.

INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

"I have returned to the frontline 4 times so far. We've lost so many guys in 2014, and I feel I can do something, I can help, if only I learn new things and become more skilled. I avoid facing my civilian challenges by returning to the frontline, where it's more comfortable for me. When I returned home the last time I decided it's time to stop running away from myself. For two months I haven't left home, except to get groceries. I have a child and my mother needed help. That was my only motivation to do something other than lie down with a book. It's hard for me to be around people. And I'm still not sure I'll be able to stay at home for long" — Yuliya, Veteran


KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

The contemporary generation of Ukrainian Veterans is placed uniquely to develop a national Veteran identity

2

In the Ukrainian context, war should be seen as a separate element of the service life stage and can not be merged with other elements

A smiling man with a beard and a grey t-shirt with a logo. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and a fence.

EACH JOURNEY IS DIFFERENT

There are no identical Veterans

But there are moments and actions many Veterans share in common

Different Veterans live through these experiences in a different way

We do not judge any of the ways, and aim to understand as many of them as we are trusted with

to best support Veterans in
MOVING ON WITH THEIR JOURNEYS



GLOSSARY

STAGE

A generalized life stage, that unites a certain typical set of needs and aspirations



ELEMENTS

Each stage consists of elements – shorter and less filled components



MOMENT OR ACTION

Elements contain important moments, while one's life is affected mostly by external factors and decision, and actions, when there is less external influence



PROCESSES

Moments and actions have consequences and are thus followed by processes. Processes can be very prolonged in time



NEEDS

Our life processes cause establishment of needs and aspirations, that we have, conscious and not



WELL-BEING

Each need can be relatively categorized into a well-being domain, that serves as the root cause for a development of the need.
See more on slides 49 – 50



SERVICE

Development of services should be based on an in-depth analysis and understanding of the needs and life processes of the clients. They should also be reviewed periodically to stay relevant

WHY THE JOURNEY IS IMPORTANT

Every Veteran
is on a journey

This is a warrior's journey,
and everything that happened,
including the war itself,
is part of it

Same the return,
no matter how hard,
is part of the journey

**We believe that every
Veteran has the right to**

- 1 Not let the war conquer them after returning home
- 2 Know how to recover, and discover resources to continue the journey
- 3 Have just enough time to do so

JOURNEYS OF VETERANS

We've looked into the experience of other generations of Veterans,
and Veterans of other countries, and agreed upon 3 steps*
that should be considered when transitioning and adapting to civilian life

1

TAKING CARE OF ONESELF

Needs to be done soon
after returning home

2

REINVENTING ONESELF

Discovering inner resources
and continuing recovery

3

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

A state of self when important long-term
decisions are made consciously
and with inner readiness

*These steps were introduced by the US Department of Veterans Affairs in the original Veteran Lifetime Journey Map

A photograph of three men in a workshop or office setting. The man on the left is bald with a beard, wearing a dark shirt, and is smiling while looking towards the other two men. The man in the middle is partially visible, also smiling. The man on the right has short dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark button-down shirt, and is smiling and gesturing with his hands. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a computer monitor and some equipment.

THE JOURNEY

"I've only recently learnt how to talk about the war with my wife. It's so much easier to run around in a field with a machine gun, than to tell your wife: 'Honey, you've cared for me after my injury, but I'll run off to the war once again'. But I couldn't leave my brothers in arms. They were my family. How could they go on without me?" – Yuriy, Veteran

STAGES OF THE JOURNEY

It's helpful to segment the Veterans' Journey into key life stages. We highlight 5 such stages, during which Veterans experience different processes and develop different needs.

BEGINNING
OF SERVICE

SERVICE

TRANSITION

CIVILIAN LIFE

RETIREMENT AND AGING

DETAILS OF THE MAP



WHO IS IT ABOUT

People of very different ages and backgrounds took part in the war caused by Russian aggression. All Veterans are different, have a very personal experience, and outlook. This map aims at highlighting those moments in the lives of Veterans, that are more likely to be affected by the military and combat experiences they all share.



SEQUENCE AND LINEARITY

Elements of each stage are relatively sequential and can overlap. Each element consists of a set of priorities, and it is most important what each individual veteran perceives as relevant to their personal story. The Journey of Veterans is nonlinear and can be very quite variable.



DURATION OF STAGES

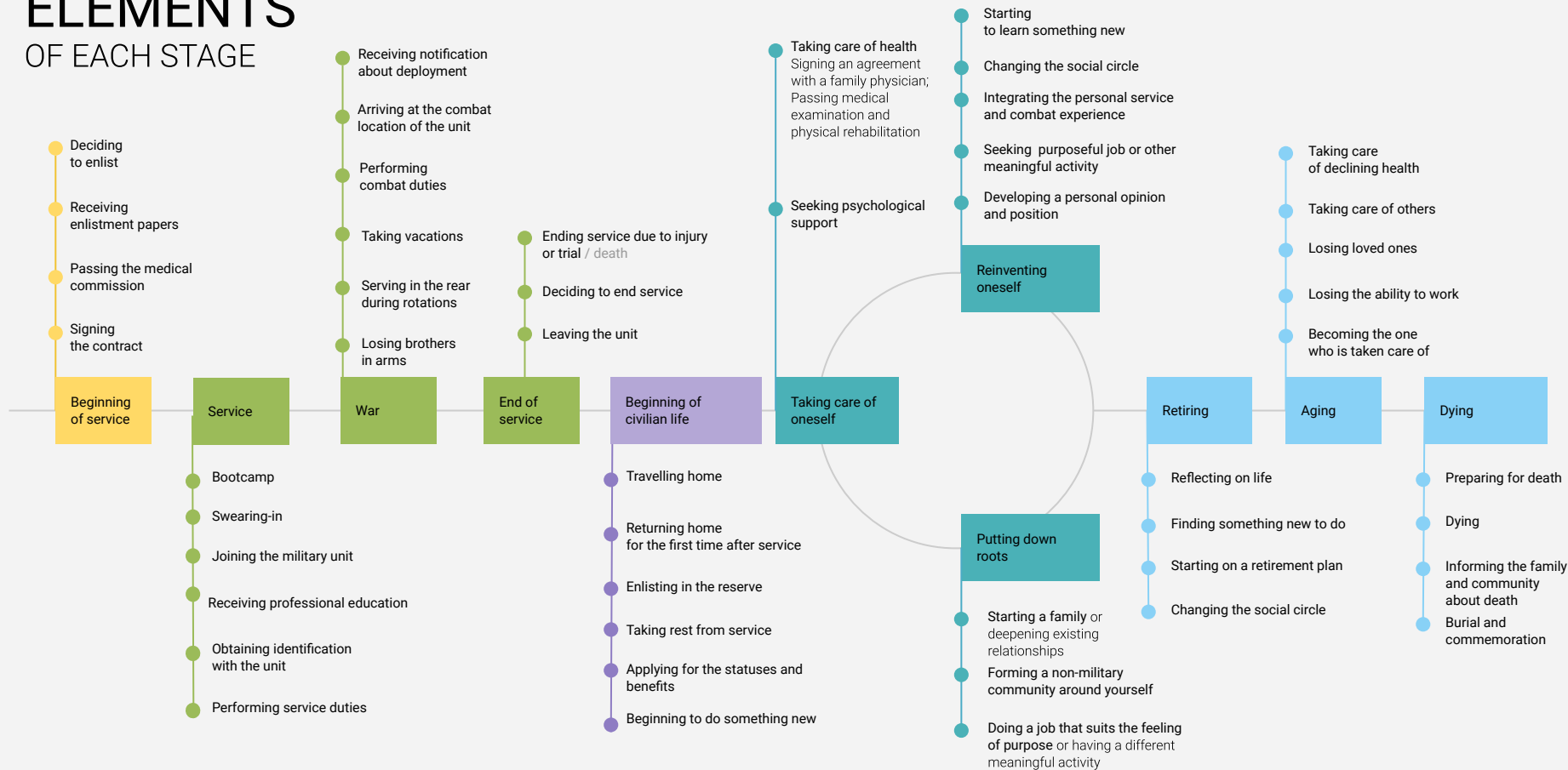
We cannot tell how long it should take to live through each given stage. It is an individual process for each Veteran. We don't intend to categorize Journey of Veterans by a time indicator as it is impossible to set a uniform norm. Each Veteran has a right to take as much time as needed to adapt to their new civilian reality. Thus, the only transition markers we offer are the actions of a particular person.



PERSONAL LIFE

Important personal events and decisions influence people, our social environment and our priorities. Getting married, losing close ones, divorce, birth of children, getting ill and other events will definitely influence one's life. However, such personal events are unpredictable and can happen at any life stage.

ELEMENTS OF EACH STAGE



BEGINNING OF SERVICE

SERVICE

TRANSITION

CIVILIAN LIFE

RETIREMENT AND AGING

A man in a military uniform with several medals on his chest is smiling and looking towards the left. He is in a crowd of people, some of whom are also in military uniforms. In the background, a sign with the word "VETER" is visible.

DEEP DIVE INTO THE STAGES

BEGINNING OF SERVICE

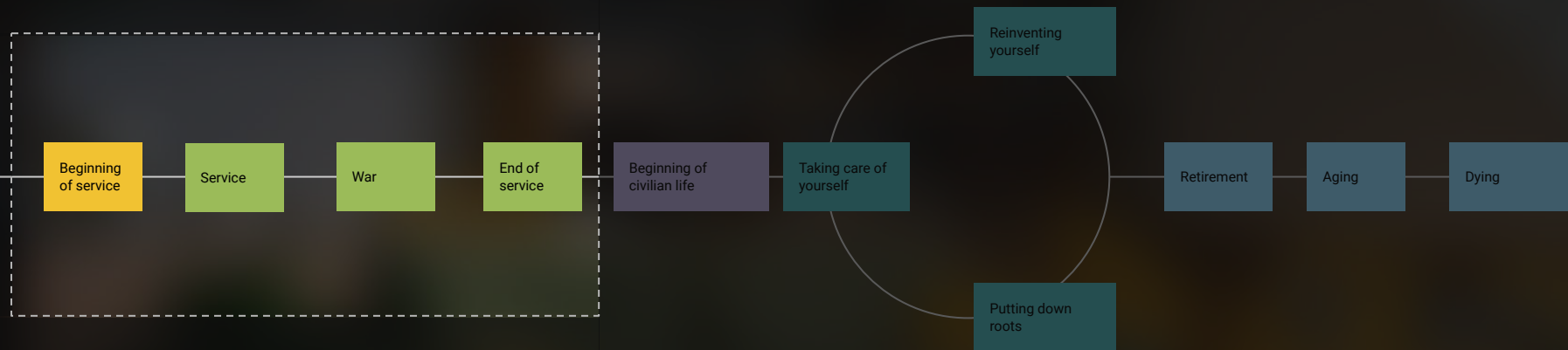
SERVICE

“I decided to serve but I didn’t really have a choice. They called me one day from the commissariat and said: ‘We want to offer you a job.’ I told them I’ve already had a job. They said: ‘Come anyway, we want to tell you something.’ I show up, they give me the ticket for the 4th wave of mobilization. ‘Tomorrow 9 am you’re being deployed,’ – they followed kindly. My mother was shocked. But we were both shocked twice as bad, when half a year into service I received my second mobilization ticket.” — Oleksandr, Veteran

BEGINNING OF SERVICE AND SERVICE

SERVICE is an integral part of the Veteran's journey and has implicit influence over the future civilian experiences

Even though at this stage the lives of future Veterans are mostly affected by the defence and security structures, the Ministry of Veteran Affairs should also pay attention to understanding the service conditions and processes, that future Veterans experience at this stages in life



We choose the moment one **decides to enlist** to be a defining point for the Journey of Veterans, as this moment is part of the journey of every veteran

In the past six years, Ukrainian defence and security structures have undergone a lot of systematic change. They have influenced not only the experiences of military and Veterans in relation to the State but also in other aspects of their lives. For the purpose of the map, we take for the basis the contemporary experiences at these life stages. At Veteran Hub, we are aware of the experiences of those Veterans, who started their military service in 2014-2017 and appreciate their unique stories. We also recognize the experiences of those Veterans, who started their service long before the war

At these stages, the life of a soldier is mostly regulated by external obstacles and State structures, and the personal planning horizon might be considerably narrowed

BEGINNING OF SERVICE

Moment in life	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding to enlist 	Selecting the type of troops and military speciality; Getting done with the paperwork at the military unit; Having an interview and getting checked by the military commissariat;	To have adequate physical readiness or simply be fit; To be psychologically ready for service; <i>This need might be unconscious;</i> To have understanding and support from my family and friends; To understand the career level and goals I might and want to achieve, while serving; <i>Do I need higher education to achieve my career goals?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving enlistment papers from the military commissariat 	Collecting the necessary documents; Ending your civilian duties: - informing your civilian employer or quitting; - getting an academic vacation; - dealing with accommodation issues; - informing the close ones; - closing financial debts.	To have a safe amount of money for the transition stage; Might need to involve my social connections to deal with the paperwork and bureaucratic obstacles;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passing the medical commission 	Passing the medical commission at your military commissariat;	To receive a qualified in-depth health check-up; To secure medical support during service; ; To understand my future military experience and the states of self I might obtain while serving;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signing the contract 	Getting to know the bureaucratic details and conditions of your future service;	To understand my rights and obligations as a recruit, conscript, contract or mobilized soldier; To understand my next steps as a contract soldier and the short-term plan for my service;

SERVICE

Moment in life	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
● Bootcamp	Getting trained; Grasping new knowledge and facing internal competition; Adapting to the new physical environment; Radically changing your social environment;	To keep in touch with family and friends; To be well trained for my future service experience; To have time and know the instruments to digest the new information; To get along with my brothers in arms / feel accepted by the new social group;
● Swearing-in	Getting appointed to a particular unity; Obtaining a military identity;	To understand the value of military oath; To undergo a dignified and meaningful swearing-in process; To feel the support of my close circle;
● Joining the military unit	Adapting to the service conditions; Getting to know your brothers in arms; Undergoing combat coordination with your unit;	To have access to the information about my rights, duties, opportunities and processes, as a service member;
● Receiving professional education	Envisioning a future military career; Getting certification for the skills you develop;	To plan my military career; To receive deep professional knowledge and skills; To understand how I can use my new skills and knowledge both during service and in my future civilian role;
● Obtain an identification with your unit	Developing close friendship and comradery within the unit; Feeling yourself a member of a pack or tribe; Beginning to form an "us-them" attitude towards people from the out-group;	To be recognized by my brothers in arms and feel respected, as a service member; To define social ties with a particular group and unit;
● Performing service duties	Gaining new professional experience; Taking vacations at home; Partaking in joint training operations;	To have a qualified and timely medical support; To be busy; To understand future prospects;

WAR

Moment in life	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
● Receiving notification about deployment	Getting ready to depart for the combat zone; Taking part in the logistics and relocation planning; Preparing equipment and weapons; Preparing psychologically for the future combat experience; Informing family and friends about the planned departure (if allowed);	For my friends and family to understand and accept my decisions; To understand the preparatory process and boundaries of personal responsibility; To understand the future combat experience and related states of self; To be aware of the situation in the area, where I'm being deployed; To be psychologically prepared for deployment;
● Arriving at the combat location of the unit	Arriving at the combat zone; Adapting and managing the day-to-day; Networking with the locals and fellow service members from other units in the neighbourhood;	To have relevant equipment and supplies; To know the history of the area and understand the moods of the locals;
● Performing combat duties	Working at the contact line; Locating and performing duties beyond the contact line; Reflecting on your life and dreaming about future civilian activities; Developing strong personal bonds with your brothers in arms; Getting identified with and by your combat nickname; Obtaining a combat reputation among your service generation; Gaining higher responsibility and Military rank;	To keep in touch with my family and friends; To feel, that my country needs me; Might feel an urge to leave a heritage, start a family or have children; For my family to be safe;
● Taking vacations	Confronting with the odds of civilian reality; Meeting the close civilian circle and noticing the changes in their lives without you; Exploring the narrative of your own experience;	To feel recognized and respected by my community for my service;
● Serving in the rear during rotations	Developing an "us-them" identity towards non-combat service members; Performing less meaningful duties and feeling underestimated; Facing the odds of regular service;	To feel appreciated and respected by my command and colleagues; To understand the meaning of tasks that I am performing;
● Losing brothers in arms	Experiencing sudden loss of brothers in arms; Grieving and sadness; Communicating with the close circle of the fallen brothers in arms;	To have time to overcome the loss and have psychological support; For the burial process to be dignified; To be informed about the loss in an ethical and dignified manner; For there to be dedicated people and roles in place to take care of the informing and burial processes;

END OF SERVICE

Moment in life	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending service due to death 	<p>The unit gets informed about the death; Getting the paperwork related to death in order; The body gets transported to the hometown; Informing the family and community about the death;</p>	<p>To be buried in a dignified manner; To be remembered and recognized; For my family to be taken care of; For my religious and personal beliefs to be considered during the burial;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending service due to a trial <p><i>* Further lifetime journey might differ greatly</i></p>	<p>The court rules on detention; Being fired in absentia; Undergoing trial processes and getting a sentence;</p>	<p>To have protection in court; To understand the future experience and related states of self; To feel supported by my close circle; To be aware of all the circumstances of my own case;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending service due to an illness or injury <p><i>* Further lifetime journey might differ greatly at the "Beginning of civilian life" element.</i></p>	<p>Receiving a diagnosis and related paperwork; Being evacuated; Getting treated at military hospitals; Undergoing a special medical commission;</p>	<p>To receive appropriate compensation for the lost health; To find out all the details about my personal health condition; To have all the required documents about the circumstances of my illness or injury; To receive dignified medical care; Not to worry about financial safety and prospects;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding to end service 	<p>Feeling moral fatigue from service; Planning treatment at military medical facilities; Planning on withdrawal and civilian life; Dealing with the paperwork; ; Passing the medical commission; Submitting a report to receive all the compensations;</p>	<p>To understand what to do in civilian life To feel supported and welcome by family and friends; To receive all provided benefits and compensations; To have a chance to say goodbye to my unit;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving your military unit 	<p>Feeling scared to enter the transition phase; Seeing the world in black and white; Not having a developed opinion on civilian issues that you've missed;</p>	<p>To have an opportunity to fix the personal change of roles from military to Veteran; To have a short term plan of activities; To have enough savings for the transition stage;</p>

A photograph of a man and a young girl in a crowd. The man is leaning forward, smiling, and holding the girl's hand. The girl is standing and smiling. Other people are visible in the background, some sitting and some standing. The image has a dark, slightly desaturated tone.

DEEP DIVE INTO THE STAGES

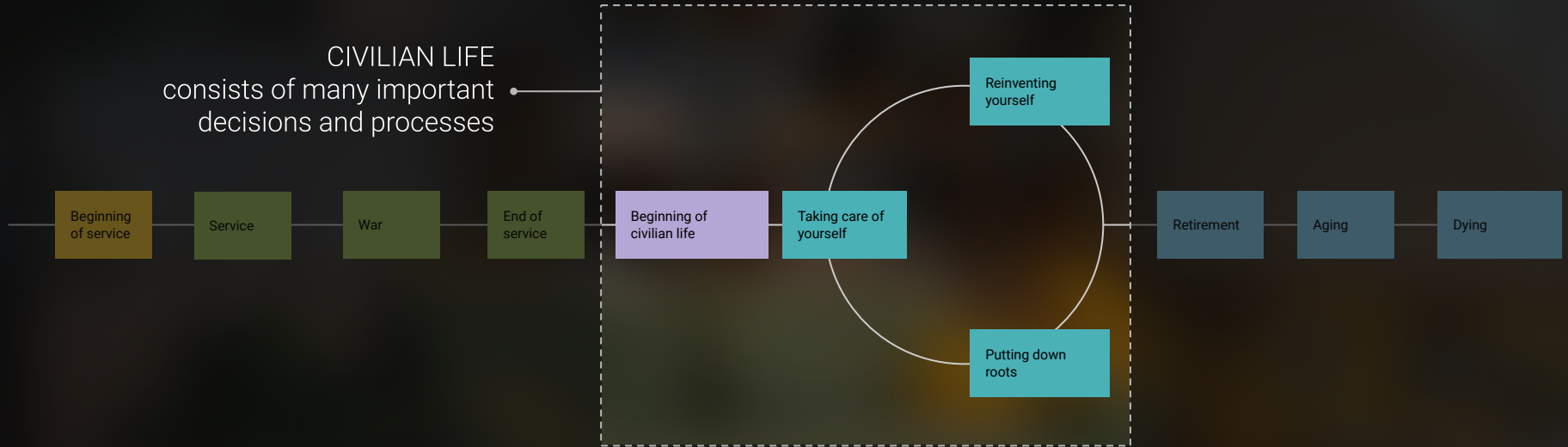
TRANSITION

CIVILIAN LIFE

“I was first evacuated to Dnipro, then to Odesa on a AN-26. I spent 1.5 months in a hospital, while they took out the fragments. At war you don’t pay much attention to the comforts of life: they take care of the minimum, the food, and water. Your task is to survive and perform service duties. After the evacuation, I was surrounded by people right away. I couldn’t understand what was happening. I enjoyed the attention but it felt weird at the same time. People in civilian life are so different from the people at war” — Valentyn, Veteran

CIVILIAN LIFE

CIVILIAN LIFE
consists of many important
decisions and processes



The Veteran's Journey, same to the journey of every person, is never linear – all of us live through many experiences and have a right to return to the same stages as much as we want.

In the military, Veterans obtain a lot of useful skills, many of which translate to civilian life. Some of these skills help them in putting down roots in civilian life. In other words, achieving a state of self, when long-term responsible decisions can be made consciously and with internal readiness.

Putting down roots can be a good benchmark in life but not a target or sole objective to reach. All elements of life are equally important and exciting.

BEGINNING OF CIVILIAN LIFE

Action	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
● Travelling home	Adapting to sounds in civilian life; Suddenly noticing a lot of civilians around;	To have a place to return to; Not to be bothered by strangers too much;
● Returning home for the first time after service	Gaining access to the comforts of home; Unpacking military belongings; Re-establishing family relationships; Losing the military social surrounding, can feel as not being part of your pack (tribe); Changing dietary habits;	To reduce the number of attention stimuli; To have a "roof over my head", a place to sleep and drop stuff without any particular demands to comfort; To feel accepted and understood by my family and friends; For my close ones to understand my needs and state of self; To know, how normal is everything that is happening to me;
● Enlisting in the reserve	Can feel that your military career had no logical ending;	To understand my rights and obligations as a reservist;
● Taking rest from service	The list of daily responsibilities and significance of everyday problems is expanding: household, family obligations; May experience related anxiety; Undergoing sanatorium treatment; Adapting to a new daily schedule, especially sleeping hours and conditions;	To take a break "from everything"; To have time to do nothing; To have some private time, be alone away from others; To seek relief from dealing with civilian problems; To have enough time to integrate the experience; To establish a new daily schedule and stick to it; To understand the boundaries of personal responsibilities;
● Applying for the statuses and benefits	Communicating a lot with civilians, might feel aggression or anger towards them; Finding it hard to distinguish personal desires and needs; Being confronted with social injustice;	To take control over my life; To help my peers and stay related to my unit; To change and re-imagine the type of relationships I have with my brothers in arms;
● Starting to do something new	Thinking of returning to service; Could be replacing real communication with extended screen time; Can be travelling a lot and changing locations, just not to adjust to the space place and avoid permanent responsibility;	To begin communicating with my civilian community; For my community to understand what I'm going through; To have just enough money for food and entertainment; To fulfill material needs I formed during service;

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Action	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of your physical health 	General deterioration of physical health; Abruptly gaining or losing weight; Considering personal diet and nutrition schedule; Establishing new ways to regain health and stay healthy;	To improve my health and the way I feel; To establish rules of interaction with my family; To understand, how my health was affected by service and combat; To accept the changes in my body;
Signing an agreement with a family physician; Passing medical examination; Undergoing intensive physical rehabilitation;	Resuming sports and physical activity; Getting fit; Beginning to eat more consciously; The health problems that you didn't notice or were able to ignore during service begin to manifest themselves; Aiming at improving personal income and working at a comfortable job; Adapting my home to suit my needs and habits, can be renting out an apartment or securing some privacy in a shared household;	To understand my condition and be well informed about my physical health; To have enough money to cover personal needs; To have personal space; To improve my household comfort; Shy away from social interactions and connectivity;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking psychological support 	Dedicating more time to yourself; Spending money on personal needs; Facing sleep deprivation; Psychological consequences of your service and combat experiences begin to manifest themselves; You begin to select people in your community;	To understand that I am normal and things happening to me are normal too; To understand that many people go through a similar experience; My experience is unique but not special; To feel safe and secure; To have independence in decision-making; To understand my psychological reactions and know how to cope with them;

REINVENTING YOURSELF

Action	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting to learn something new 	Choosing a hobby and developing new interests, new types of entertainment; Looking for educational opportunities; Developing new habits; Beginning to travel in order to expand a personal outlook;	To grasp new knowledge and try different forms of entertainment, find a hobby or activity that makes me happy; To try on different roles, be able to change and constantly move forward;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the social circle 	Beginning to separate a “self” from the community; Reinventing the role of family in your life; Expanding the social circle, making many new acquaintances; Identifying your close social circle; Presenting yourself more often by name than combat nickname;	To be surrounded by new and interesting people; To spend enough time with my family and elderly, if they are still alive; To be able to present myself from a broader perspective, than my military or combat background alone;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating the personal service and combat experience 	Learning to live along with your combat and service experiences; Looking for ways to use your combat and service experience in civilian life; Describing your personal experience and looking for new way to shape and formulate it; Might want to forget everything, feel rejection of your military or combat identity;	To understand how my military and combat experience influences my life and to learn how to cope with it; To remember and have opportunities to tell my story: have options to choose different forms to tell it; To feel that my experience is valuable;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking for a purposeful job or activity 	Making more responsible decisions that have longer lasting consequences; Can be changing the team or industry quite often, leaving uninteresting jobs; Soughting for a purposeful activity through education and trying to work with different teams and tasks;	To discover an activity that makes me feel good; To improve my income and finances; To work with people I like; Behave in different ways, not only as a military or Veteran; To understand which military and combat skills can be useful in my civilian job and translate military and combat skills into those understandable by private sector employers;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a personal opinion and position 	Beginning to identify yourself in a new way; Looking for life senses and ground for civilian life; Changing your style and appearance; Developing an opinion for events and discussions you’ve missed while serving;	To manifest my personal position and opinion; To find like-minded people and be accepted by them; To like myself for who I am;

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Action	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Starting a family or deepen the existing relationships 	Maintaining permanent habits and developing rituals and traditions; Sticking to a set daily schedule; Taking on long-term commitments; - getting a pet, - taking care of children and elderly, - volunteering; Getting to know your ancestry and family history; Can be feeling, as if you are getting to know your relatives all over again; Consciously choosing to take on a parental role or not; Distinguishing the closest circle and community;	To take care of others; To spend more quality time with family and friends; To have a comfortable home for myself and my loved ones / to build a home; To feel confident in my future; To have a fixed income and feel financial security; To understand the personal budget and the scope of material needs; To explore and understand the future or current parenting experience; To know how my military and combat experience influences the lives of my close circle; To feel connected and belonging to my close circle;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forming a non-military community around yourself 	Joining social events and activities; Communicate with people whose company you like; Can be living in civilian surrounding with your combat experience; Taking care of your peers and keeping in touch with them; Feeling a member of a community;	To be useful to my community; To partake in the life of my community; To feel that I am where I want to be and that my community accepts me; To know how my experience influences my community; To know how my community can benefit from my experience;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doing a job, that suits your feeling of purpose or having a different meaningful activity 	Understanding your wishes and desires; Doing something meaningful that brings you income and/or satisfaction; Making long term investments: making savings, planning vacations, establishing a retirement plan, building a house, etc; Aimed at building something solid and sustainable; Obtaining professional reputation in the selected field; Thinking about retirement and coming up with a plan;	To make savings for the future and have a positive financial balance; To do the things that bring me pleasure and make sense for me; To reflect on my personal and professional growth in a chosen field; To know, how I can use my experience in my professional role; To feel that I am fulfilling my purpose;

A background image showing a group of people at a social gathering. In the foreground, a young woman with long brown hair is smiling and looking towards a man. Behind her, an older woman with blonde hair is also smiling. To the right, a man with a beard and short hair is smiling back at the young woman. They are all holding white disposable cups. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and warm, bokeh-style lights, suggesting an indoor event or party.

DEEP DIVE INTO THE STAGES

RETIREMENT AND AGING

“It’s a very personal story, but one of the main questions I would ask a psychologist would be about the loss of meaning and sense. What was it all for? There are times when I feel the drive, but they are so short, as compared to the rest of time, when I need nothing, I’m okay with doing absolutely nothing. What is the meaning of life? I would have lived and would have died. What’s the difference if I do something or not?” — Bohdan, Veteran

RETIREMENT AND AGING

We believe that attentive evaluation of current aging experiences of the World War II Veterans, Veterans of Afghanistan and other wars Ukraine has taken part in, will allow us to design better support for the younger Veterans at later stages of their journey



Numerous international studies point out that the military experience of Veterans has a significant impact over their entire life journey, including the retirement and aging stages

Despite the large number of Veterans living through the aging stage, there are few studies in Ukraine that would cover it in the Veterans' lives. The following description of these stages is a set of preliminary assumptions made by our team, which we have not been able to verify yet

We assume that the experience gained by Veterans not only through the service stage, but also in civilian life will have a significant impact on their aging experience. To test our assumptions, we plan to conduct a series of interviews with older generation Veterans to learn about their current state and needs

RETIREMENT

Action	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on your life 	<p>Reflecting on the personal military history through the prism of civilian experience; Defining your own skills, competencies and knowledge; The general health deteriorates, and normal body reactions can fail from time to time; Seeing the doctors more often; Reinventing the role of family in your life and your own role within the family;</p>	<p>To feel that my life wasn't useless; To know about the possible age-related consequences of service and combat, and how to deal with them; To re-establish family relations from the perspective of a new role; To be able to adapt to the changing life conditions;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding something new to do 	<p>Work is taking up more time and resources; Adapting to the new working reality; Having more time for yourself;</p>	<p>To understand personal professional barriers and future career perspectives; To feel useful for my community; To feel, that my professional experience is valuable and meaningful; To understand, how I can fulfill my purpose, according to the new life conditions;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting on a retirement plan 	<p>Saving up for the future; Planning your future life within the new age group; Aimed at understanding your personal financial perspectives;</p>	<p>To know and plan for personal material needs and desires; To know my legal needs and understand the ways to fulfil them;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the social circle 	<p>Losing contact with the old professional community; Attempting to stay in touch with your community; Looking for new acquaintances; Redefining the boundaries of the close circle; Having fewer social interactions than in the past;</p>	<p>To keep in touch with friends and family; To feel accepted and welcome by the community;</p>

AGING

Action	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
● Taking care of your declining health	Health is deteriorating and the effects of long-standing illnesses/injuries are manifesting themselves; Chronic and age-related diseases appear;	To be well informed about my health conditions and possible scenarios for the future; To understand my physical boundaries; To have access to timely and dignified medical support; To feel that my state of self and worries are being payed attention to; To manage to avoid physical pain;
● Taking care of others	Striving to take care of children and grandchildren; Taking care of pets and plants;	To spend time with family and close friends;
● Losing loved ones	Saving up for your own burial and the burial of loved ones; The close circle is getting smaller and you feel lonely more often; Buying a plot at the cemetery;	For my community to understand and share my feelings of loss and grief; To be able to share memories of the loved ones; To feel belonging within community;
● Losing the ability to work	Your savings are running out; Life conditions are worsening; Having a hobby;	To feel needed; To have something to do;
● Becoming the one, who is taken care of	Finding it hard to get along with younger generations; Struggling to maintain independence;	Having somebody to take care of me;

DYING

Action	Processes that follow	What needs do I have and what should be considered?
● Preparing for death	Health is rapidly deteriorating; You depend mostly on others;	To live through health complications with dignity and comfort; To be surrounded with loved ones; To have access to qualified healthcare;
● Dying	Life processes are slowing down;	To be free of physical pain; To be surrounded by loved ones; To feel comfortable and dignified;
● Informing about death	Informing the family and friends; Registration of death-related documents; Informing the community;	To be remembered; For my family to be taken care of;
● Burial and commemoration	Transportation of the body; Burial and memorial service;	To be buried with dignity; For my religious beliefs to be considered at the memorial service and burial;

At Veteran Hub we maintain a stable linear structure, to support our clients in their nonlinear life processes and the Veteran culture itself

We remain a stable professional center that guarantees sustainable support to Veterans on the way to putting down roots.

Linearity and stability of Veteran Hub is sustained by the professional approach and consistent decisions. We are moving forward and are helping Veterans move forward too. We are not shaken by political, ideological and religious discord. We are not shaken by the societal attitude towards Veterans.

We are working with the experience of war and its consequences for the civilian development of our clients and their ability to put down roots. Their past experience is constant for us, and it can not be judged, criticized or doubted. We work with their current state of self and support Veterans in moving forward. We are building such a system, in which Veterans will be supported in putting down roots, according to the highest ethical and professional standards. With dignity at every stage.

“Only your actions can define your future. It’s ok that today you don’t need all these services and knowledge. But when you do need support, yes, even 10, 20, 50 years from now, you should be able to receive it.

You don’t use the basic life support skills on a daily basis, but you must know them for that one time you need them. You might help yourself or somebody else – nobody knows.

But what we know for sure is that being a Veteran is forever. And you need to learn to get along well with this. You, your experience and your story are very valuable.”

A young man with short brown hair, wearing a brown tactical-style jacket, is seated and looking slightly to his left. He has a neutral expression. In the background, several other people are seated but are out of focus. The lighting is soft and indoor.

CARING FOR THE WELL-BEING

“Almost everything positive that happened to me, happened because of the war. All educational opportunities, all courses, huge conferences. Imagine: war, then the hospital, and then you’re at Yalta European Strategy! I doubt any of this would’ve been possible, if not for the war” – Pavlo, Veteran

DESIGNING FOR THE WELL-BEING OF VETERANS

JOURNEY OF VETERANS

A **qualitative** research method to study the life processes and client needs

To design relevant support and distribute it among life stages



WELL-BEING

A **quantitative** research method to evaluate the status, functioning and satisfaction with the services provided

To assess the quality of interaction and the impact of support for the well-being and lives of Veterans

STUDYING WELL-BEING

The term “well-being” has varying meanings that are unique to different contexts. Most commonly, particularly in identity research, the term refers to psychological well-being, meaning subjective state of contentment, happiness or quality of life, but there are other meanings that are broader and include objective measures*

In general, well-being can be considered a broad categorization of human needs.
All of these needs are manifested to a different extent at every life stage.

Veterans Affairs Canada



VAC has a composite well-being construct ... [that] includes subjective psychological well-being, objective economic well-being and others (Thompson et al. 2016).

The model takes into account the subjective and objective well-being of a person in 7 domains: employment or other main activity, finances, health, life skills and knowledge, social integration, housing/physical environment, and sociocultural environment.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



VA took part in The Veterans Metrics Initiative: Linking Program Components to Post-Military Well-Being Study (TVMI Study), that evaluated the status, functioning, and satisfaction among Veterans within the 4 well-being domains: health, vocation, finances and social relationships.

As a result of the Study, HJE has published a Well-being inventory – an evaluation instrument for the the status, functioning and satisfaction of Veterans in the highlighted domains.

*Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life – A Resource for Policy Analysts, Program Designers, Service Providers, and Researchers / James M. Thompson, et al. 01/07/2017.



This well-being model is used for internal planning at Veteran Hub but needs to be studied additionally and adapted to suit a broader Ukrainian context.

A photograph of two young men smiling and posing together in what appears to be a social gathering or event. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and giving a thumbs-up. The man on the right is wearing a red and black plaid shirt and has his arm around the other's shoulder. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and warm lighting.

GRATITUDES AND THE TEAM

"I trust people around [me] a lot more now. How can't you trust them: today you are sleeping, and others are guarding your sleep, and tomorrow your peers sleep and you are the one on guard. Before the war I thought that the feeling of brotherhood was a stereotype, but it turns out that it is absolutely vital in extreme situations" – Oleksandr, Veteran

GRATITUDES

We are grateful to the US Department of Veterans Affairs, as owners, Doblin Deloitte, Public Policy Lab, and the Veterans Experience Office, as authors of the original version of the Veteran Lifetime Journey Map

We are personally grateful to:

ROBERT A. MCDONALD

The 8th US Secretary of Veterans Affairs, who has introduced the original Veteran Lifetime Journey Map to us

JOHN BOERSTLER

CEO at Combined Arms, who introduced us to Robert A. McDonald

CHELSEA MAULDIN

Executive director at Public Policy Lab, for the provided consultations and support in adapting the map

NATALIA RADYWYL

Research & Evaluation Director at Public Policy Lab, for support with the project development and editing

SARAH BROOKS

Former Chief Design Officer at the US Department of Veterans Affairs, for sharing personal experience in creation of the map

MYKHAILO LOPATIN

For ongoing strategic consultations and a global outlook at our mission

TETYANA LIUBYVA

Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at IREX, who developed the Survey forms for an upcoming qualitative study

OKSANA SOKOLENKO

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator at IREX, for dedicating time and expertise to the Survey development and guidelines for the Survey team

JAMES M. THOMPSON

MD CCFP (EM) FCPP, for all provided educational materials and scientific studies, and broad consultations along the way

DAVID PEDLAR

Scientific Director at Canada Institute for Military and Veterans Health Research, who guides us through the complex global scientific context

ALL VETERAN HUB TEAM MEMBERS AND VETERANS

who trusted us with their expertise and knowledge at any stage of this project, and took part in the first focus groups

IN OUR WORK WE ALSO RELIED ON

Mykola Borovyk,
Tyzhden, "Veterans a-la
Soviet",
8 May 2013

[Link](#)

The Veteran Metrics
Initiative

[Link](#)

Veterans' Experience
Public Policy Lab

[Link](#)

Veteran Mental Health
Public Policy Lab

[Link](#)

Designing the invisible,
Lara Penin

Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life –
A Resource for Policy Analysts, Program Designers, Service Providers,
and Researchers / James M. Thompson, et al. 01/07/2017

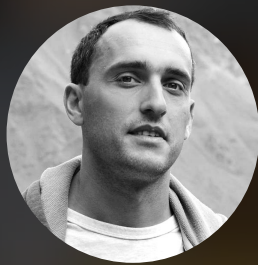
We also relied on the years of experience
and expertise in Veterans affairs within our teams, and
the personal veteran experiences we were
trusted with throughout the journey

PROJECT TEAM



Ivona
Kostyna

Head of Board
at Veteran Hub



Artem
Khorunzhyi

Manager of veteran relations
at Veteran Hub



Tetyana
Rudenko

Senior service
Manager at Veteran
Hub



Artem
Denysov

Executive Director
at Veteran Hub



Tetyana
Liubyva

Senior Monitoring and
Evaluation Specialist
IREX



Oksana
Sokolenko

Monitoring and
Evaluation Coordinator
IREX