

# EDUCATION & TRANSITION

December 2019

STARS  STRIPES.

## MCAS IWAKUNI GUIDE

YOU WANT A  
**SO** FEDERAL  
, JOB?

UNIT, PERSONAL, AND  
FAMILY READINESS

**4** STEPS TO TRANSITIONING WITH  
YOUR PROFESSIONAL LICENSE

CONNECTING  
**Marines** TO  
EMPLOYERS!  
Near You!

MARINE FOR LIFE NETWORK ENSURES SMOOTH TRANSITION

AN ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO STARS AND STRIPES



# MCAS Iwakuni Education Office Here for You!

By Jessica Perdew AFC, CFEI  
Education and Career Program Manager

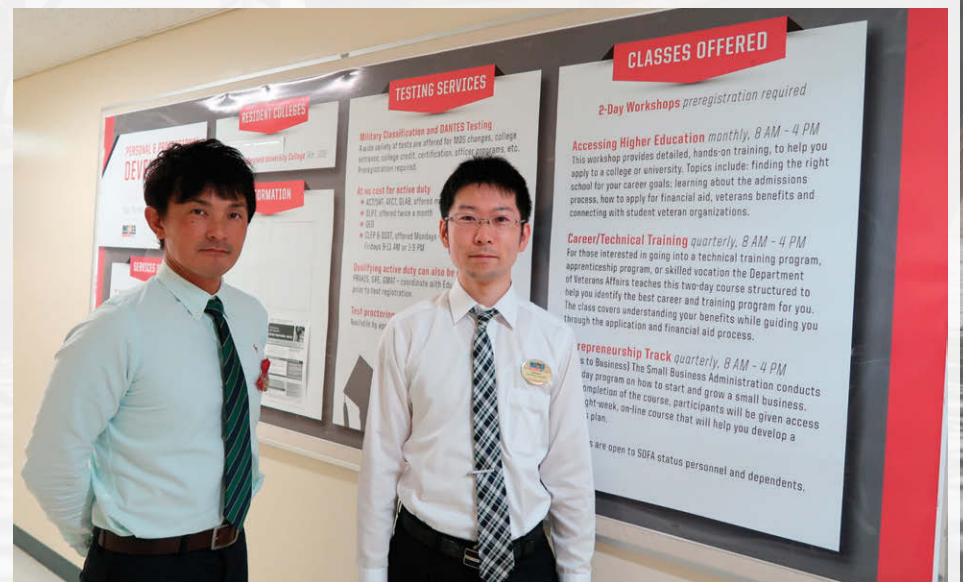
**W**elcome to MCAS Iwakuni, the hidden gem of Japan. While our location may be a bit remote, Iwakuni is the perfect place to solidify your personal and professional goals and then achieve them. When you're ready to explore the possibilities, stop by Building 411 and explore all that Marine and Family Programs has to offer. While we are Marine and Family Programs, we provide services to all uniformed servicemembers and their families.

The Education Office, located in room 127, provides education advising and a full array of military testing opportunities plus SAT and ACT. And, through the National Testing Center operated by UMGC, the Iwakuni community has access to CLEP, DSST, Pearson VUE, Microsoft Certifications, and third party exams. We work very closely with our University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) office to help you maximize credit via testing and ultimately save time and money in pursuit of your educational goals. UMGC offers online and face to face classes along with advising and enrollment support. In addition, we are preparing to welcome Embry Riddle Aeronautical University—Worldwide to our community in early 2020. Embry Riddle will be offering education advisement and classes both online and face-to-face.

If you're still defining your plan, or you're preparing to use Tuition Assistance for the first time, register for College 101. This class is designed to walk prospective students through the process of identifying educational objectives, selecting majors, choosing the right school, navigating the application process, funding educational goals, GI Bill information, and Tuition Assistance (TA) process. This class meets the requirement for first time TA users as well. If you'd like an even more in-depth exploration of education opportunities, we offer the two-day Accessing Higher Education class on a regular basis.

Not sure a traditional degree is the right path for you? Speak with our advisors to explore credentials, licensure, or vocational education.

While you're visiting the Education Office, stop by our Cultural Adaptation desk and explore opportunities to learn more about our host nation and culture. From Survival Japanese language classes to tours and cultural exchanges, we can help you make the most of your time in Iwakuni.



Photos courtesy of MCAS Iwakuni Education Center  
Our Education Office staff is ready to assist you in identifying and realizing your education goals.

Our Education Office also houses the Veteran's Affairs (VA) Overseas Services Coordinator. Our full-time VA Specialist can help you access all of your VA Benefits including GI Bill and disability claims.

Our Office hours are 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or by appointment outside normal business hours. To make an appointment, please contact us at 253-3855.

## Located in

Building 411  
Room 127

## Onsite Testing

- ACT/SAT
- CLEP & DSST
- GED
- LSAT
- GMAT
- DLPT, DLAB, & AFCT



## Who Can Take Advantage

- Active-duty
- Veterans & Retirees
- IHA & MLC Employees
- DoD Civilians
- Reservists
- Military Family Members

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Alexandra Amor Santos Arambulo

## STARS AND STRIPES

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# Resources for *Transitioning Troops and Spouses Leaving MCAS Iwakuni*

## 1. Career Coach Tips

Find Telework Positions with MSEP (Military Spouse Employment Partners)  
<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/content/view/2795>

## 2. Take advantage of personalized Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) coaching packages

Explore your interests, refresh your resume and jump-start your career by working with career coaches on specialized coaching packages.  
<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/>

## 3. Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families has partnered with Grow with Google to help spouses across America grow their skills, careers, or businesses. They will provide in-person and online training for its members throughout the year leveraging the suite of Grow with Google tools that help job seekers learn the skills they need for flexible and remote careers.  
<https://bluestarfam.org/tech-training/>

## 5. Call your 2-1-1 agency

(or search for the nearest one to you at [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)) to be connected to resources in your community that will assist with your transition.

Source: Information, Referral & Relocation Program

## 4. AMVETS

A Veteran Service Organization committed to enhance and safeguard entitlements.

AMVETS has over 1000 posts nationwide and offer a wide variety of services including:

- Healthcare, Evaluation, Advocacy and Legislation support
- National Service Officers who provide free assistance for claims to the VA
- Career Center to connect veterans and spouses to employment
- Certification and Scholarships for veterans, spouses and dependents
- Reintegrating Warriors Program workshops
- Healing Heroes to support wounded warriors

[www.amvets.org](http://www.amvets.org)

Email for more information: [amvets@amvets.org](mailto:amvets@amvets.org) or call 1-877-726-8387

## So, You Want a Federal Job?

By Jamie Chapman, *Stars and Stripes*

The Federal Government is the largest U.S. employer with over 2.7 million employees and Walmart is next in line with 2.3 million employees nationwide.

For those who are new to the concept of working in government, the application process via USAJOBS.gov comes as a total surprise. Often, first-time applicants apply for federal jobs with a regular, corporate style, one or two-paged resume only to receive the dreaded "Not Qualified" message in response to their applications. Unbeknownst to new federal applicants, the hiring process requires a very different style of resume to be qualified.

### **Don't believe everything you hear.**

Upon the initial shock of receiving the "Not Qualified" message, many applicants turn to their favorite resource—friends. Unfortunately, seeking advice from friends can create confusion because federal applications are not well understood by the general public. The enigma of federal applications creates a lot of untrue rumors, below are a few examples:

*"You have to lie to get hired on USAJOBS."*

*"If a job is only posted for 5-days, don't bother applying because they've already selected someone."*

*"It's the good ole boy system, you can't get a job unless you know someone."*

*"USAJOBS scans your resume for keywords."*

*"Your resume can't be longer than 2-pages."*

*"You have to use the builder to make your resume."*

Many of the rumors have a shred of truth. Consider the child's game telephone, when the original whispered statement is, "The resume I used to get my job was 2-pages." By the time the rumor travels through the grapevine to the last child it becomes, "All resumes have to be two-pages."

### **Follow the instructions.**

To qualify for a federal position, it is crucial to read every vacancy announcement thoroughly. There are over 500 different federal agencies, and each agency has slight variants within the hiring process. For example, one agency may require an applicant to list salary and other agencies may not.

Before doing anything, read the full job announcement first.

### **Familiarize yourself with the hiring process.**

Search for federal application classes on your local installation and online. The Office of Personnel Management hosts frequent classes online to teach people about the federal hiring process and how to write a federal style resume. Being a well-informed applicant will ease the stress of applying and avoid initial failed application attempts.

Explore the USAJOBS.gov website and research the application process, FAQs and articles about applying.

### **Tailor your resume.**

Every. Single. Time.

Be forewarned, effective federal style resumes are often five or more pages in length. Job announcements require a lot of detail that must be included in the resume, a simple example is, "The ability to use a telephone, fax machine, printer and scanner to create correspondence, send and organize documents." Normally, this skill is assumed by corporate employers—but the federal hiring process does not allow for assumptions.

Each vacancy announcement is different, even for similar position titles. To qualify, a resume must validate the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities and Specialized Experience outlined in the announcement. A resume must also include basic elements such as dates of employment listed in month/year format and hours worked per week—all of these details are listed in the announcement.

### **Be patient.**

The federal hiring process is slow. There is a popular myth that USAJOBS is automated and scans resumes for keywords, oh contraire. For a whopping majority of agencies, the hiring process is manual, meaning that human beings, primarily government Human Resources Specialists, read every single resume to determine the list of qualified applicants that is forwarded to the hiring manager. There is no average length of time for the process, some agencies are tiny and relatively quick while others are massive and have thousands of applicants to sort. HR Specialists do the best they can to quickly sort applications, so be respectful of their time and the process as a whole. Patience is key.



# Wisconsin Welcomes Veterans and their Families with Generous Benefits

Looking for the best place for your family to put down roots after your military service? Wisconsin welcomes returning service members with open arms and a generous state GI Bill that, among other benefits, offers eligible veterans, their spouses and their dependents free tuition and fees at public universities and technical colleges.

Two of the biggest contributors to Wisconsin's exceptional quality of life are its educational and career opportunities. Not only does Wisconsin have one of the best job markets in the country, the state's top-notch schools offer educational excellence from pre-K through Ph.D.

## A solid educational foundation

Wisconsin is one of the best states in the nation to raise a family, due in part to a strong educational system. Wisconsin was home to the nation's first kindergarten—established in 1856—and continues to lead in pre-K education more than 160 years later. The state has one of the nation's best high school graduation rates, and Walleshub ranks its public schools among the top-rated in the country in terms of performance, funding, safety, class size and instructor credentials.

Plus, when it's time to enroll your kids in college, the Wisconsin GI Bill offers eligible veterans' dependents full tuition forgiveness at any school in the UW or technical college systems.

Marine Corps Sgt. BJ Ganem served four years of active duty before moving to Wisconsin in 2000 to start his transition. "The Wisconsin educational system is phenomenal," Ganem said. "I have two older kids, and only having to pay the fees, books and dorms is a huge relief."

## Generous post-secondary benefits

With University of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Technical College campuses, not to mention quality independent and private schools in every corner of the state, no

matter where you choose to settle, you and your family are never far from quality post-secondary education. Thanks to full tuition forgiveness for eligible veterans, their spouses and dependents through the Wisconsin GI Bill, these post-secondary educational opportunities are always within reach.

In fact, there are more than 65 state universities, technical colleges and private schools to choose from, many of which offer academic credit for courses completed through the military. Whether attending a public or private university, eligible veterans pursuing a bachelor's degree can be reimbursed for course tuition and fees through the Wisconsin VetEd grant program.

"The opportunities for education are noteworthy," said Marine Corps 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Tim LaSage, a 22-year veteran. "Wisconsin has a state GI Bill available in addition to the Federal GI Bill. So, for any job-related skill that you need, you can go to school to get the qualification you may not have on your resume."

## Continuing education and job training

Wisconsin understands that transitioning service members and veterans are looking for meaningful work, not just a job. The state's employers appreciate the talents you've honed during your service, with many earmarking jobs specifically for veterans or offering accelerated training programs to get you on the job faster.

You can have a real impact in Wisconsin, in industries that are making the world a better place. Wisconsin's global leadership in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, aerospace and other cutting-edge sectors, means opportunities for family-supporting jobs that make use of the skills you've acquired in the military.

In addition to national programs like Troops to Teachers and Veterans in Piping, Wisconsin is also home to several veteran-focused job training initiatives, like the 9-week Combat to Construction program run by Operating Engineers Local 139 in partnership with the state Department of Workforce Development. The Academy of Advanced Manufacturing, a joint program of Wisconsin-based companies Rockwell Automation and Manpower Group, trains a thousand military veterans in advanced manufacturing each year.

Veterans are given preference when applying for state civil service jobs. Various state professional or occupational licenses can be satisfied by already



Wisconsin is one of the few states with a GI Bill that offers free tuition benefits for eligible veterans, spouses and dependents.

completed military training, and initial licensure fees are waived for veterans.

As part of Wisconsin's participation in the U.S. Department of Labor's Hiring our Heroes program, the state is also a designated Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone (MSEEZ). This collaboration between state agencies, local stakeholders and military-friendly employers is working to bridge the challenges transitioning service members and their spouses often face when seeking meaningful employment. The Wisconsin MSEEZ is the first such zone that reaches beyond active duty military spouses to also focus on the spouses of Reserve and National Guard members.

## Unmatched quality of life

Wisconsin's quality of life and commitment to education make it the perfect place to transition from active duty to civilian life and build a solid future for your children. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation works with state and local partner organizations to provide assistance every step of the way, from finding a place to call home and landing a quality job to making sure your family can access all the educational and professional benefits and programs available.

Wisconsin's livable cities, charming small towns and beautiful rural landscapes are even more attractive for veterans and their families thanks to refundable state property tax credits. Military retirement benefits are exempt from state income taxes, adding to Wisconsin's already low cost of living.

It's an easy state for anyone to fall in love with, but with more veterans programs than any other state, it's especially true for veterans. For more information on Wisconsin's quality of life and the benefits it provides to veterans and their families, visit [InWisconsin.com/Veterans](http://InWisconsin.com/Veterans).



Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges offer more than 500 degree and certificate programs on 49 campuses across the state.





# RUCKSACK *to* BACKPACK

The Wisconsin GI Bill takes you further. We're one of the few states to offer free tuition benefits for eligible veterans, spouses and dependents. Pursue your education at your choice of over 65 state universities, technical colleges and independent schools. Wisconsin. It's more **you**.

THINK • MAKE • HAPPEN IN WISCONSIN®

InWisconsin.com/Veterans



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# Marine for Life Network

## Connecting Marines to Employers Near You!

Courtesy of MCAS Iwakuni Education Center

*How one sergeant took advantage of lessons learned during the Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS), the Personal & Professional Development Advisor, and the Marine for Life Network during his transition. Poised and ready to learn every day during the seminar, he was locked in and trying to soak up everything. However, there was desperation in his demeanor, and you'll soon found out why.*

The week after Sgt. Adams completed TRS we got together to go over a few things as he was working through transitioning from the Marine Corps. Our meeting went a little like this. He came into the office and dropped into a chair in front of my desk.

So, I asked, "What's going on? You seem troubled."

He told me there was a problem and that he needed some guidance because he could not afford to make any mistakes. He then proceeded to unleash his problem in a frazzled way.

*"I joined the Marine Corps later in life. I'm 34 years old now."*

*"I don't want to move back to where I'm from." "I'm applying for jobs with Lockheed Martin in the Fort Worth, Texas, area."*

*"I'm getting interviews with them, but not getting the job."*

*"I need to know what I'm doing wrong because I'm running out of time!"*

Usually in a situation like this, I would look over the Marine's resume and compare it with the job description for which they are applying, find any issues, help them correct those issues, and then utilize an employer POC (if we have it) to get a second opinion on things. However, this Marine's resume was immaculate and effectively matched to the jobs he was applying for.

After discussing this with him, he asked, "So, what's the problem?" I told him that I could only come up with two possible conclusions: (1) He was simply being beat out in the interviews or (2) someone knows somebody he doesn't know; networking is key for finding employment.

He said, "Well, I think I did okay in the phone interviews, at least that's what they told me."

Must be networking issues, I suggested.

*"I don't know anyone in the Fort Worth area who works for Lockheed Martin," he exclaimed.*

*"Neither do I," I replied.*

So, I asked, "Do you remember that Marine For Life Network brief I gave during TRS last week?"

*"Honestly, Chris, I wasn't even paying attention," he said. "My mind was so full of other things from that week and my life that I was fried by the time that brief happened."*

I gave him a quick run-down on the Marine For Life Network, the resources and connections it offers, as well as its ability to leverage networking through LinkedIn.

*"Remember that 30-second professional introduction you created and practiced during TRS?" I asked Sgt. Adams. "You know, the one where you had to go greet someone in the class, shake their hand, and have an elevator-speech conversation?"*

*"Yes, I remember that ... it was actually a useful activity," he said.*

*"Well, let's take that 30-second introduction you wrote out, go onto your social media, link you up to Marine for Life, and post that 30-second introduction out there," I suggested.*

*"You never know what could happen."*

**SEE NETWORK ON PAGE 7**



Major Stephanie Drake (Houston, TX), MSgt Heydo Zando (Chicago, IL), Major Paul Pintek (San Diego, CA), and Major Jason Kemp (Raleigh, NC)—our incredible M4L Representatives of the year!



company/marine-for-life-network



marineforlife.org



866-645-8762



/MarineForLifeNetwork



# Network: Make a Plan!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

He was bit reluctant because he didn't see how it could help. After posting that information on the M4L LinkedIn Central Regional Group, we closed out our meeting and he departed my office.

About a week later, Sgt. Adams returns to my office and flops right down in the chair again.

*"I've got a problem,"* he said.

*"What is up with you, man? Every time you come to my office you have a problem,"* I exclaimed jokingly.

He proceeded to tell me that the introduction he posted to the M4L LinkedIn Central Regional Group caught the eye of a retired master sergeant he used to work for. The retired master sergeant works for Lockheed Martin in the Fort Worth, Texas, and was scouring the Marine For Life Network to find transitioning Marines who were interested in coming to that area.

*"That's great!"* I said. *"How is this a problem?"*

*"They want to do the phone interview tomorrow,"* he grumbled.

*"That's awesome!"* I said.

*"No, it's not,"* he said. *"I haven't been faring well with the phone interviews lately."*

*"Well, let's practice right now,"* I said.

So, we turned our chairs back-to-back in my office. I was interviewer and he was the interviewee. We practiced for about an hour or so.

Afterwards, I asked him, "Do you think you're ready?"

*"Nope, not at all,"* he replied.

I then flopped down in my chair.

*"Okay, get out and nail this interview tomorrow!"* I encouraged him. *"You've got the skills and everything the job requires. The transferable skills are there."* (He belonged to an F/A-18 squadron and was nervous that he would not get the job because he had not worked on F-35Bs)

The following week, he came back to my office. He didn't sit down this time. Instead, he extended his hand for a handshake.

*"I got the job,"* he said with a big smile.

*"Thank you, thank you,"* he said.

I replied, *"Don't thank me ... thank the Marine For Life Network."*



- What can we take away from this?**
1. Make a plan for transitioning. Visit your installation's Transition Readiness office and talk to a Personal & Professional Development Advisor.
  2. Join the Marine For Life Network and connect with the Regional Network Coordinator and local M4L Representative.
  3. Network early and network often.

**Connect with us on Social Media, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.**

## 4 Steps to Transitioning with Your Professional License

Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Labor

Military families are 10 times more likely to move across state lines when compared to their civilian counterparts. This mobile lifestyle can create barriers to meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities. Between frequent relocations, striving to enter, re-enter or remain in the workforce, maintaining the household, and supporting the community you live in, there is no denying that military spouses live a unique life and make extreme sacrifices every day.

Thankfully, many states have recognized that the highly mobile military lifestyle can create barriers to consistent employment for spouses in licensed occupations. There are laws in place that require or encourage licensing boards to grant military spouses expedited applications, temporary licenses, and/or license reciprocity. Significant advances have been made across the country to ensure military spouses can pursue their careers no matter how many times they relocate.

Here are four steps for licensed military spouses and spouses interested in licensed occupations. More information about these steps can be found in the U.S. Department of Labor's License Recognition for Military Spouses Resource Guide.

- STEP 1:** Learn about license recognition options by visiting the map at [www.veterans.gov/MilSpouses](http://www.veterans.gov/MilSpouses). Hover over each state to learn about the specific laws and resources offered to military spouses who work in licensed occupations.
- STEP 2:** Explore occupation-specific guidance by visiting Military OneSource. Many states have joined interstate reciprocity agreements for certain occupations. These agreements allow licensees to practice in multiple states more easily.

**STEP 3:** Find Your Licensing Board by visiting the CareerOneStop License Finder at [www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-licenses.aspx](http://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-licenses.aspx). The CareerOneStop License Finder provides state-specific information about occupational licenses required, such as the license name, description, and issuing agency contact information.

**STEP 4:** Contact your Licensing Board. Start by following any specific instructions for military spouses that may be posted on the licensing board's website. If you still have questions after visiting the website, contact the licensing board using the tips in the License Recognition for Military Spouses Resource Guide.

You have worked hard to earn your professional license and credentials. Understanding how to navigate these requirements and resources will ensure that you are set up for success prior to your next relocation.

To learn more about military spouse license recognition, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor's military spouse website at: <https://www.veterans.gov/MilSpouses>.







# Marine for Life Network Success Story

By Jono Yososoegito

A critical component to every successful transition is networking. For me, the Marine for Life Network (M4L) was a great place to start and acted as a 'home base' as I went through the transition process. Looking to start a new career in a new city, M4L served as a trusted foothold for contacts, information, and friendship.

I first learned about M4L during the Transition Readiness Seminar aboard Camp Lejeune. After a brief class, I decided to schedule a one-on-one meeting with the local Representative. During our meeting, the Representative explained in more detail what the program did and how it could help me during my transition. Although I didn't act on the information immediately, I walked away knowing that there was a trusted Marine Corps advisor in every part of the country that could help me find employment.

Once I left the Marine Corps, I reunited with my wife who was working in Louisville, KY. I decided to attend business school at night and held an internship during the day. About half-way through business school, my wife accepted a position in Raleigh, NC. Faced with the challenge of finding a new job in a new city, I thought back to my one on-one meeting with the Camp Lejeune M4L Rep.

After a quick search on LinkedIn, I was connected with the local Rep in Raleigh. During our initial call, Jason and I discussed my background and goals. I immediately felt reassured knowing there was someone that could help me get plugged into my new city.

Based off our conversation, Jason quickly put me in touch with several contacts in my interested career field. These connections, who were often Marine veterans, provided targeted advice and guidance that proved to be invaluable. Many of these contacts became mentors that I maintain today.

My conversations with Jason weren't strictly career focused. We also discussed our families, friends and pursuits outside of the workplace. Jason's holistic approach and leadership style will be familiar to every Marine.

After a few stressful months of phone calls, meetings and interviews, I finally accepted a position as a Consultant with Deloitte. When I first began my transition, I never dreamed I could work at a firm like Deloitte. Through the conversations and connections I gained through M4L, it turned into a reality.

Every veteran, especially Marines, knows we can always accomplish more as a team. This is why it is important to leverage the many resources available to transitioning veterans, especially M4L. Not only do these

programs provide a direct contact around the country, they also create an opportunity to continue serving in the future.

If I can be of any service to our transitioning service members, please don't hesitate to reach out. Feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/jonoyososoegito](https://www.linkedin.com/jonoyososoegito).

"Thank you M4L!"

## What can we learn from Jono?

1. Be Proactive: join the Marine For Life Network and connect with a local M4L Representative.
2. Brush up on your 30 second elevator speech, networking skills, and interviewing skills.
3. Be job search ready with these 6 tips: *Google yourself, Clean up your social media, Take stock of changes in your professional life, Update your resume, Update your LinkedIn, Expand your network.*
4. Pay it forward! If you are in a position to provide mentoring, employment opportunities, or other community connections for Marines and family members, connect with the M4L Network today!

Still searching for more in-depth assistance with your job search? Contact your installation's Transition Readiness staff and join the Marine For Life Network by completing the form. You can also follow the Marine for Life Network on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.



"Thank you M4L!"

—Jono Yososoegito





Photo courtesy of MCAS Iwakuni Education Center

# The One *Killer* Secret To Feeling Comfortable In An Interview

By Nina Semczuk, *Military.com*

The night before an important interview, I desperately researched all the latest news in the company’s industry. I tried to memorize all the skills the job description outlined and internally recited the finer details on how to operate certain software systems the position required.

On the way to my interview, I pulled up my notes on my phone and tried to cram my brain with everything I wanted to remember like I was going into a pop quiz. In the waiting room, I felt more and more nervous because my mind was just not retaining the finer details of certain programs I was barely familiar with that I desperately wanted to sound knowledgeable about.

The names of competitors and the company’s mission statement and leadership swam around in a blur with the other companies I had researched for older interviews. My expectations for my chances at the job started to tank.

But then, right at the brink of full-blown panic, I took a breath and thought to myself, Screw it, I’m just going to be honest.

That, my friends, was one of the best interviews I had.

## How to Win the Interview Battle

I walked in confident that I’d only talk up the skills I was 100% solid on, that I’d describe my past jobs with truth, and that I wasn’t going to do a tap dance to make it seem like I was someone I’m not. Throwing out my mental checklist of things to say allowed me to focus on my interviewer’s words, body language,

and tone. I was able to have an actual conversation with her, not a stilted one-sided audition.

It seems so simple, it’s almost stupid. But being honest gives you confidence. Simple advice often holds the most truth. Get enough sleep, exercise, and sunshine, and you’ll be healthier and happier; common sense that’s been scientifically proven in recent years in countless studies. Being yourself, the advice heard from grade school on up still holds true.

## Final Word

While I’m all for next-level career advice, negotiation tactics, and arming yourself with the latest interview hack research, you need a solid foundation. And that foundation is simply to be honest. You don’t have to highlight certain shortcomings, but you don’t have to boast over them, you can simply leave them out. And if you don’t know something? Use trick my Army intel taught me. Say “I don’t know the answer to that, but I can follow up with you after.”

Nina Semczuk served as an Army officer from 2011-2016. She earned a B.S. from Boston University prior to military service and now lives in New York and works as a writer and editor. Find her work on SmartAsset, The Muse, The War Horse, Fast Company, and at [ninasemczuk.com](http://ninasemczuk.com).





# CHANGES ROLL OUT FOR TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*U.S. Department of Defense*

The first significant alterations to the Defense Department's Transition Assistance Program since 2011 are taking effect with the new fiscal year.

The Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act mandated the changes, which took effect October 1, 2019.

The purpose of DoD's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) remains the same, officials said, but the new requirements will reflect a different process of execution.

"It is our hope that these changes will provide ample time for transitioning servicemembers to begin thinking about their transition and begin planning accordingly," said Tamre H. Newton, director of DoD's Transition to Veterans Program Office.

DoD TAP is an outcome-based program that bolsters opportunities, services and training for transitioning servicemembers in their preparation to meet post-military goals, and should not be confused with TAPS, an acronym for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, officials noted.

The mandatory components of TAP are applicable for all servicemembers who have at least 180 continuous days or more on active-duty; including members of the National Guard and reserves.

## What TAP will look like

**1** TAP now starts no later than 365 days prior to transition for those who are separating or retiring. Officials recommend that retirees begin the transition process at least two years prior to retirement. In the event of an unanticipated separation or retirement, or if a member of a reserve component is demobilized with less than 365 days, TAP must begin as soon as possible within the remaining period of service.

**2** Individualized initial counseling (IC) between the servicemember and a TAP counselor is now the official start to the transition process. During the IC session, servicemembers complete their personal self-assessment and begin the development of their Individual

Transition Plan (ITP) to identify their unique needs of the transition process and post-transition goals.

**3** Once the individualized IC is complete, pre-separation counseling commences. Pre-separation counseling, just like IC, must start no later than 365 days prior to transition. Pre-separation counseling covers by-law information to include benefits, entitlements and resources for eligible transitioning servicemembers. Caregivers and spouses are especially encouraged to attend pre-separation counseling with their servicemember.

**4** The DoD Transition Day follows pre-separation counseling, and is mandatory for transitioning servicemembers. This portion of TAP includes curriculum modules on building resilience by servicemembers managing their own transition via MyTransition, a military occupational code crosswalk to help define and translate military skills and the financial plan for transition module, which fulfils the mandated financial literacy requirement.

**5** The Department of Veterans Affairs will continue to provide the VA benefits and services briefing, formerly known as VA Benefits I and II, on the VA benefits and services available to servicemembers and veterans.

**6** The Labor Department (DoL) will provide a required one-day briefing on preparation for employment, which is a change from the current three-day DoL employment workshop.

The new changes with TAP also include a servicemember election of two days of instruction; these include the: DoL Employment Track, DoL Vocational Track, DoD Education Track and the Small Business Administration Entrepreneurship Track. Transitioning servicemembers must elect at least one track, but may attend more than one based on their ITP and post-transition goals.

The capstone event, which is the culminating event in which commanders verify achievement of career readiness standards and a viable ITP, must happen no later than 90 days before separation or released from active-duty. Capstone remains the culminating event for TAP.



# UPFRP Helps You Navigate Military Life

MCAS Iwakuni Education Center

## What is the Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program (UPFRP)?

It is a unit program specific to every Commander and the unit's mission intended to assist Marines and Families navigate the military lifestyle. The main goal of the UPFRP is to assist the family members in building the skill sets necessary to not only be independent when duty calls, but to thrive in their military communities.

Every unit has an UPFRP. Every Commander infuses his/her own flavor into the unit's program. However, every program will include the same benchmarks of the UPFRP: Communication, Deployment Support, Readiness and Resource Support, and Volunteer Management.

## Who is the POC for the UPFRP?

Within each unit is a POC to manage and implement the program. Within the Marine Expeditionary Forces, the Marine Forces Reserves, the Marine Recruiting Commands, and HMX-1 there are civilian Deployment Readiness Coordinators (DRC) to assist the Family Readiness Command Teams to provide ongoing communications and provide deployment support to the family members. For units that do not have a civilian DRC assigned to them, a Uniformed Readiness Coordinator (URC) works with the Family Readiness Command Team to implement a program consistent with the needs of the unit and its mission. In all unit types, the DRCs and URCs provide communications, readiness and resource support, and support the volunteer initiatives in order to build a healthy family readiness environment.

## How does the DRC/URC get the family member's information?

When Marines join a unit, they are required to check-in with the DRC/URC. During the check-in process the Marine provides his Authorized Contacts' information to the DRC/URC for UPFRP communications.

## Does UPFRP only support the Marine's dependents?

Nope! The UPFRP supports anyone the Marine lists as an Authorized Contact during his/her check-in with the DRC/URC. That can include parents, siblings, significant others, non-dependent adult children, roommates, best friends... basically anyone that supports the Marine and his/her military lifestyle. For

Marines living overseas, there are many family members living stateside that receive UPFRP support from the units.

## How do the units communicate with the families?

Most units utilize email for communications. There are also several that use various social media platforms. A few send hardcopy newsletters via USPS. There are others that call the families periodically. For family members and Marines not currently receiving information from their DRC/URC, the Marine should speak with the DRC/URC to ensure his/her family's information is correct.

## How does one get involved with the unit's UPFRP?

Volunteers are ALWAYS welcome! They are the heart of the program. Volunteer involvement provides a plethora of additional benefits to the UPFRP. Volunteers may welcome new family members, mentor other family members, assist with communications/newsletters, recruit other volunteers, assist with administrative tasks, coordinate/plan unit family events, and most important- provide necessary feedback to the Family Readiness Command Team on what keeps our Marines and family members up at night.

For someone wanting to volunteer with their Marine's UPFRP, they should contact the unit's DRC/URC. Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community, as well as build valuable skill sets.

## Does this UPFRP cost anything?

Nope. It is FREE!!!

## Why should family readiness be important to the Marine?

Family readiness is a force multiplier. When the family is ready, the Marine can focus on the mission. The Marine is less stressed when having to deploy, travel, or go in the field, when he/she knows his/her family is able to handle the separation or deployment. Having someone within the unit to assist the Marines and families with those challenges reduces the risk and number of Marines that may be deemed undeployable-deployable. The Marine Corps lifestyle is unpredictable, so understanding the unpredictability and having the skill sets to handle unexpected challenges is paramount to success.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Gloria Lepko



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Teagan Fredericks



# Making the Most of the Holiday Season

By Erin King, Family Member Employment & Volunteer Program Manager HQ PPD and Family Readiness

♪ It's the most wonderful time of the year ♪

Not every Marine or Marine Corps Family will hum along with you as you sing this classic Christmas carol. Holiday time is not always a joyous occasion for every Marine. The holiday period sometimes means duty that will not allow Marines to visit family. It also means that some Marines do not desire or that it may be detrimental for them to visit family. Finances are also a determining factor when it comes to heading home during the holidays. The great news is there are many alternatives for Marines and Families that will be on a Marine Corps Installations and in the surrounding community during the holidays:

- **LIVE ENTERTAINMENT** take in some of the outstanding shows and concerts that are offered during the holiday season. You might find a local rendition of the Nutcracker or a high school show choir offering some festive performances. "The President's Own" United States Marine Band and Marine ensembles also offer concerts across the Corps during the holiday season. Each installation typically hosts a tree lighting event that includes food and prizes.
- **HOLIDAY DECORATIONS** enjoy some of the decorations that are close to you. Each installation and city will typically decorate for the season. Venturing out to malls and local venues will also give you a glimpse at some of the sparkling lights and decorations that make

the season. Don't forget a warm drink to go along with your decoration viewing.

- **VOLUNTEER!** give back during the holiday season by donating your time to a group that you enjoy. Love helping people, spend some time at a VA retirement home or hospital. If service is more your thing, organize a coat drive or work in a soup kitchen. Love animals?, the local shelter is always looking for help walking and playing with the animals.
- **HOLIDAY RACES** what better way to celebrate the season than to dress like Santa and run a charity race. Most areas will offer a "fun run" during the holiday season that requires a little creativity and a lot of fun and camaraderie.
- **HANG OUT** there will be other Marines and Families around during the holiday season. Use this time to make new friends. Visit the rec center and gym for their events and say hello to a new face. If you notice another family in housing, invite them over. No need to be fancy, just enjoying chips and juice can make someone's day.
- **PARTY** keep an eye out for events hosted by programs geared especially toward those Marines and Families that don't leave the installation. Don't be shy! Attend these events and enjoy yourself. Sometimes its holiday movies or a gaming competition. It gets you out enjoying some of the best parts of the season.



It can be one of the most wonderful times of the year, even if you have to stay put. Enjoy what your area has to offer and try some new things. You may discover that you've found new traditions to incorporate in your holiday celebration.

## Be A Volunteer!

Are you looking for a way to give back this holiday season? Volunteering may be just what you are looking for. Volunteering is a great way to get involved in your community, work together as a family, and spread some holiday joy!

Consider volunteering for activities such as soup kitchens, angel trees, or delivering meals to needy families. These organizations are always looking for help, especially during the holidays.

This holiday season think about these three reasons to participate in volunteer activities.

### 1. Volunteering is Great for the Mind, Body, and Soul

Helping others is a great way to increase your levels of happiness and appreciation. Volunteering can get you active outside of your home or family unit. It also allows you to spend quality time with friends or loved ones while helping those in need.

### 2. Connect with your Community

Volunteering is the perfect bridge to your community. If you are newly PCS'd or hoping to meet new people, volunteering is a great way to get started. If your Marine is deployed and you are looking for other spouses or families, volunteering is a great place to make those connections!

### 3. Expand your Horizon

Are you thinking about a career change? A great way to test out a new career field is to volunteer. You may find that your passion is just what you thought or you may find a new passion! Either way, you are fostering self-growth while assisting others.

Remember, the holiday season is a great opportunity to volunteer. Volunteering is an ideal way to spread joy while having a positive impact. Volunteering can have a huge influence on your life and your community. What a wonderful way to share the spirit of the holidays!

Please contact your installation Volunteer Coordinator for details on volunteer opportunities.

By Erin King



# Marine for Life Rep Former Radio Operator Recieves *Two Job Offers!*

*The Marine for Life Network has over 60 representatives sprinkled throughout the United States. When transitioning Marines, veteran Marines, or family members reach out to M4L looking for assistance in their personal or professional goals outside of the Marine Corps, we connect them to their hometown's closest representative. Our reps are USMC Reservists with full-time civilian positions. They offer career guidance, local resources, and access to the community's veteran-friendly employers and services. Here is a short narrative by Norfolk, Va., Representative Capt. Ryan Cunningham, who assisted a former Radio Operator in the Marine Corps who had found himself in a tough spot and desperately needed a change.*

By Capt. Ryan Cunningham

Serving as a Marine for Life Representative and fulfilling my duties as a United States Marine Corps Reservist can be incredibly rewarding at times, yet quite frustrating at others. Being able to assist and guide transitioning Marines, prior-service Marines, as well as veterans of other services as they navigate their way through a major life change, can be a massive undertaking—You can quite literally be the link between a successful transition, or one that leaves much on the table.

James reached out to the Marine for Life Network on Jan. 10, 2019, stating that he needed “assistance with a job or career.” I reached out to James via email, introducing myself as the local Marine for Life Representative, and requesting three things: 1) James’ resume, 2) a description of his desired fields of employment, and 3) his experience as a Marine. Shortly after, I received a reply describing his situation and how he urgently needed change, along with his resume. The next morning, I began reaching out to established contacts in my network who might be able to provide additional assistance. I also sent James a flyer for an American Job Center Hiring Event that was taking place the next morning. James and I spoke on the phone in order to properly understand his situation, as well as go over a bit of interview preparation and guidance as he had committed to attend the hiring event that was being put on by Virginia Career Works.

While attending the American Job Center Hiring Event, James had received an on-the-spot interview after speaking to an employer who was impressed with his professionalism and resume. That interview led to a same-day job offer which he accepted, leveraging his skills and qualifications he earned as a Marine. Later that afternoon, James sounded both excited and relieved, and I felt like I had accomplished something by assisting a Marine in need. I also took the time to mention that if he was interested, I had a lead on a potential career in welding, which I had researched earlier in the day. He was and so I sent him the information regarding Newport News Shipbuilding’s off-the-street hiring event for welders.

James applied to attend Newport News Shipbuilding’s hiring event Jan. 18. Days later, he was invited to come in for testing for Phase 1. Not surprisingly, he passed. That guaranteed him an interview for Jan. 26. After a short text exchange over the next few days and a feeling of optimism regarding his in-person interview, we anxiously waited for the results. On Feb. 8, 2019, I was greeted with the following text message:

“Good morning Ryan, I just wanted to let you know that I received the email last night with the offer letter and they started my background check. I don’t think I could thank you enough for all your help with this!”

Oftentimes as a Marine for Life Representative, I receive requests for assistance regarding new employment opportunities for Marines and veterans, but not all of them exhibit the drive to make it happen on their end. In cases like James’, where a motivated individual is willing to do what it takes, combined with career assistance expertise provided by the ever-expanding Marine for Life network – success is a foregone conclusion.

If you are a transitioning active-duty or Reserve Marine, Marine with prior service, or a veteran and looking to alter your career path, please don’t hesitate to reach out to a Marine for Life Representative. It is our job to help those willing to put in the effort to make a positive change or smooth transition.”



Emily Lamb, Marine for Life Network Outreach Specialist, at an Information & Referral event

**Are you looking for assistance in your military transition? Contact your installation’s Transition staff and reach out to the Marine for Life Network.**

**[Be sure to insert the appropriate programs hyperlinks. P&PD Programs include: Credentialing Opportunities Online , Family Member Employment Assistance , Information, Referral, and Relocation, Leadership Scholar Program, Library, Marine For Life Network, Personal Financial Management, Transition Readiness, Voluntary Education]**

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# Marine for Life Network

## Smooth Transition into Civilian Life for Marine



By Erik H. Shepard

"I wanted to take some time and thank the Marine for Life Network for exposing me to professional and personal possibilities that I didn't know existed, which has ensured a smooth transition into civilian life for me and many others."

— Erik H. Shepard

Over the last three and a half years, I've been transitioning to a sustainably balanced civilian life from 21 months of service in Afghanistan, 21 months of service in Iraq, and 4 years in the United States Marine Corps. I knew it would not be easy given the pervading narratives that exist for veterans transitioning, but I knew the strengths of leveraging my network to create synergies between my community, and my personal and professional life. The Marine for Life Network (M4L) delivered a new, purposeful direction for me to drive my career and identity.

I was fortunate enough in my networking endeavors to stumble into the sphere of influence of the Marine for Life Network through the outreach efforts of North Carolina M4L Representative Maj. Jason Kemp and Southeast Regional Network Coordinator Mark Munger. Maj. Kemp and Mark acted as an epicenter of knowledge-sharing and access to resources for a broad spectrum of different generations of Marines. It has been a network with a potent ability to deliver relevant results to the individual needs of Marines, regardless of age, gender, profession or education.

During my time with M4L, I've been linked with employers looking to hire veterans and Veteran Service Organizations like Onward to Opportunity, Bunker Labs, and HireHeroes USA, who were able to help me earn my project management certification, create a professional resume and cover letter responsive to applicant tracking systems, explore entrepreneurial endeavors with a wide variety of veterans, and connect me with like-minded individuals. I even got to play as an extra in a movie due to an M4L connection.

Quite possibly most importantly, I've been exposed to previous generations of USMC heroes from Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, and Desert Storm to instill the concept that the Devil Dogs who came before me made it through their transitions with smiles on their faces and a perpetually optimistic attitude, which showed me that I could, too.

Through M4L's relevant networking events, resources needed to exist in the civilian sector have been amplified to Marines, and I've been postured, equipped and curated as a connector to help veterans in my personal network who choose to not attend networking events or reach out. The M4L system for creating successful post-career Marines has been able to trickle down into the trenches of veterans who do not have a desire, or time, to reach out.

The longevity and stamina of the efforts M4L executes has proven to be highly impactful in my life and other veterans that I come in contact with in the North Carolina Triangle area. M4L has given me the time and materials needed to solidify my desired identity in the civilian sector, and it speaks to M4L's commitment to ensure that no Marine be left behind. Thank you Mark, Jason, and M4L Network.

Still searching for more in-depth assistance with transition? Contact your installation's Transition Readiness staff and join the M4L by completing the form. You can also follow the M4L Network on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.







# VA IS CHANGING GI BILL PAYMENT AMOUNTS FOR SOME ONLINE CLASSES

By Jim Absher, *Courtesy of Military.com*

GI Bill students enrolled in courses that combine distance and in-class learning will now get paid a full housing allowance thanks to a change by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The change impacts “hybrid courses,” which the VA defines as any course that combines both classroom training and distance learning, often conducted online.

The program began August 15, 2019 and hybrid courses are now considered residence training for GI Bill purposes, triggering the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) to be paid accordingly. Until recently, a student enrolled in hybrid classes was eligible for only half the national average MHA, a much lower payout than the full residence rate in

almost all cases, unless their class met these stringent requirements:

1. The course must have had at least one classroom session every two weeks.
2. The total amount of classroom sessions for a term must have been equal to at least the credit hours multiplied by the weeks in the academic session. For example: A three-credit hour class meeting over a 12-week quarter was required to meet in-classroom for at least 36 hours over the entire quarter.

All GI Bill recipients taking hybrid courses using the Post-9/11 GI Bill will now be paid the MHA amount for the

location where they take the majority of their classroom training. In the past, to receive the MHA rate for the location of their training, students would have to be enrolled:

- Solely in classroom training
- In a combination of classroom and online training
- In a hybrid course that met the rules above

Students who aren’t enrolled as a greater than half-time student do not receive any housing allowance, no matter what the situation or location. That is not changing.

The change to hybrid class housing payments is not retroactive; it applies only to classes that began on or after Aug. 15, 2019.





## MARINE FOR LIFE NETWORK

### MARINE FOR LIFE NETWORK

Connecting transitioning Marines and their family members to education resources, employment opportunities, and other Veterans services that aid in their career and life goals outside of military service.

ONCE A MARINE,  
**ALWAYS A MARINE!**

Marine for Life Network can guide your search for:



Career & Technical  
Opportunities



Educational  
Opportunities



Entrepreneurial  
Endeavors

### NETWORKING IS KEY

#### Linked in



Our online network utilizes LinkedIn to help Marines network with one another and connect with employers who want to hire Marines.

#### Face to Face Network



We focus on connecting Marine Veterans to local and national resources, as well as encouraging networking through Marine For Life events and meet ups.



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