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FALL 2020

Transition Guide

November 12, 2020

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HIRE VETERANS**

**FIND A MENTOR
WHILE SEEKING
CIVILIAN
EMPLOYMENT**

**SUCCESSFULLY
TRANSITION FROM A
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Find a Mentor While Seeking Civilian Employment

When looking into civilian employment you do not have to do it on your own. Many veterans are getting into the civilian world by having a mentor. There are plenty of places that you can find a mentor.

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Leaning on Your Community During Your Military Transition

By Amy Bernard, Major, USMC (Ret), George W. Bush Institute Military Service Initiative Senior Program Manager

In December 2019, I heard General Jim Mattis share his thoughts on the military Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and his words stuck with me. His general message was that transition isn't the mission of the military, but a civic responsibility to develop the civilian community that accepts transitioning veterans and family members. He made a point to say that the military needs to connect transitioning servicemembers to a support network; friends and family; meaningful employment; and assistance with financial, physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being.

In the past, I was quick to hold the military and TAP responsible for my successful transition. His words and my experience have provided me with a much clearer understanding of the importance of community, veteran service organizations, and their role in the transition process.

While on active duty, I discovered the mountain of resources available—there are approximately 45,000 veteran service organizations—and it quickly became overwhelming. I had no idea what I needed, what I didn't, and how to find the appropriate resources. It wasn't until I started working in a job that's part of the veteran service environment that I understood the importance of a community serving those going through their transition.

For example, finding a job in the area that you want to settle in can be tough. The local veteran community, employment networks and recruiters are critical. These individuals can connect transitioning servicemembers to veteran representatives in specific industries and corporations.

Additionally, housing benefits vary from state-to-state. By connecting yourself with a local real estate agent specializing in serving veterans, you can more easily navigate what each state offers. These individuals and others in the community can also assist with schools, religious organizations, and local community events.

Peer networks and camaraderie are not top of mind when transitioning, despite being essential. You can find this through organizations that work out together or do community service together, but most importantly these organizations and the members understand, encourage and look out for one another.

Your community and veteran service organizations can also help with your health and well-being. While the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) offers quality mental health care, there are also programs that provide high-quality veteran centric health care outside of the VA. These organizations can help you seek treatment and support for challenges associated with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, depression, anxiety, etc.

The transition process is confusing. If you are starting to consider a timeline of separation and/or retirement, it's time to start checking out the resources available to you and your family. Reach out to a representative and learn what's available in your area. The community is passionate about providing support to every veteran no matter the need. Take advantage of that. Here are a few organizations to get you started on developing these relationships.

- **Combined Arms** – A Texas based organization that connects veterans to the right veteran-focused nonprofit. These organizations help

veterans lead the successful civilian lives they want, making our community stronger than ever. <https://www.combinedarms.us/services/>

- **2-1-1 San Diego** – 2-1-1 serves as a single access point for information, referrals, navigation, and ongoing care coordination in San Diego for active-duty military, veterans, and their immediate families. <https://211sandiego.org/military-veterans/>
- **America Serves** – Any servicemember, veteran, and their family can easily access the full range of comprehensive services required to achieve their unique goals, and to provide a first-class service experience to match the service-member and veterans' first-class military service. <https://americaserves.org/>
- **America Warrior Partnership** – A nationwide organization connecting community organizations with local veterans to understand their unique situations. The ultimate goal is to create a better quality of life for all veterans by empowering local communities to proactively and holistically serve them. <https://www.americaswarriorpartnership.org/>
- **United Way Mission United** – A case manager can connect you and your family to local services and resources and make sure you receive the support you deserve. They help with everything from finding a stable job to securing affordable housing to accessing free legal services, and more. <https://www.unitedway.org/mission-united/veterans-and-families#>

Q&A: Retiring From the Army

During COVID-19

By Amy Bernard, Major, USMC (Ret), George W. Bush Institute Military Service Initiative Senior Program Manager

U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Robin Johnson retired after 21 years of service. While a successful retirement is typically celebrated with a ceremony, a new normal set in as she navigated her military-to-civilian transition during COVID-19. We asked Robin to discuss her experiences and share advice for other transitioning servicemembers.

Tell us about your time in the military.

I grew up in a rural Ohio community and longed for diversity and exposure to different cultures. After hearing my grandparent's military stories, I realized the U.S. Army was the most progressive and diverse employer with opportunities to travel the world. I enlisted in the Ohio National Guard at 17, enrolled in Ohio State University, and was commissioned as an active duty Quartermaster (Logistics) officer.

By request, my first assignment was to Korea. I fell in love with the people and culture. My second assignment was at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in the 101st Airborne Division. There I met my husband, an Apache helicopter pilot. After we both completed an eight-month deployment in Afghanistan we got married and soon after we deployed to Iraq.

After our fourth deployment, we transitioned to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and we both attended the Command and General Staff College. During this time, we both completed our MBA's and had our daughter, Annabelle. In 2013, while my husband was deployed, I gave birth to our son. The challenge of dual-military life with small children was felt, and was only made bearable with the support of family and friends.

In 2014, I was selected to serve as the Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Martin E. Dempsey. I coordinated Soldier and Family Readiness policy issues with the Joint Staff Directorates, Combatant Commands, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the White House. I also coordinated and executed all official and diplomatic travel and engagements for the Chairman's spouse—that included over 50 trips.

I then served in the Office of the Secretary of the

Army. While there I made recommendations on how to effectively reintegrate veterans and military families into civilian communities. I concluded my 20 plus year career as the Employment Director for the U.S. Army's Soldier For Life Program.

Tell us about your transition plans from military-to-civilian life.

I plan to enroll in Georgetown or Cornell's diversity and inclusion professional certificate program. After being part of the Army's gender integration efforts and a participant in the Women in The Army pilot program, I am convinced that inclusive cultures give organizations a competitive advantage.

I also believe comedy and IMPROV techniques can reduce pain and promote physical and mental wellness. I currently perform stand-up comedy and volunteer with the Armed Services Arts Partnership. I want to spend some of my transition developing ways to integrate various types of comedy into corporate team building and hospital treatments.

How's your transition been going and how's COVID-19 impacted your plans?

I severely underestimated the emotional and physical toll that transition takes on a person. Even though I was retiring on my terms, it still felt like an amicable divorce.

The disappointment of retiring during COVID-19 set in the day my separation paperwork (DD-214) was delivered. After 21 years of service, I received an email with no ceremony or "congratulations." It simply stated, "See attached." I had low expectations for my retirement, but was surprised by the business-like exchange. There are many retiring from the armed services who should prepare for minimal



celebration due to COVID-19 and social distancing.

Every veteran's experience is different. In my case, I was struggling with the anxiety of finding employment and the opinions of others telling me what I should do.

I also had very little experience with rejection. As I was rejected for jobs I applied for, my self-doubt increased. I had potential employers not wanting to hire me because I'm a veteran, military spouse, or the fear that I could be recalled due to COVID-19.

Fortunately, I was accepted to participate in the Armed Services Arts Partnership's storytelling and stand-up comedy boot camps.

That experience helped me navigate the emotions and anxiety of transition.

Many companies are on a hiring freeze, so the number of jobs available are limited. Companies moving forward in the hiring process are only doing virtual interviews and are slow rolling decisions on candidates. Additionally, while organizations and companies are continuing with virtual hiring fairs and interviews, nothing can replicate the in-person experience.

I also hadn't anticipated that the civilian-military divide was as great as it was. Despite my work consulting employers, I was having trouble connecting to hiring managers, and, to be honest, I wasn't

interviewing well. I spent more time than expected translating my skills and experience to civilian jargon.

As a transitioning military member and from your experience with Soldier For Life, what should veteran organizations and communities do to help veterans transition?

If the veteran's termination of service is voluntary, be candid with them on the current employment landscape and help them weigh the benefits of remaining in the military. I wouldn't

recommend transitioning out of the military unless you've financially prepared and have a solid plan for higher education or employment.

Connect the veteran to state and local resources. This will help them get information on how that state is handling COVID-19 and if there are any travel advisories in place.

Veteran and Military Service Organizations should help employers think about childcare. Veterans and their spouses can be highly productive employees through remote work or flexible schedules. Additionally, organizations that provide free or reduced costs for internet and home office equipment may also be valuable.

What advice do you have for transitioning veterans?

It can be overwhelming and confusing. Take time to figure out what you need most—mentoring, resume writing, LinkedIn profile updates, networking, up-skilling, education etc. Then build a list of the resources available at your transition location and where you want to transition

to. A few places to start:

- Soldier For Life's podcast has episodes diving into the most common concerns and questions during transition.
- National Resource Directory is a searchable database of resources vetted for servicemembers, veterans, family members, and caregivers.
- Connect to the state work force agency and American Job Center closest to where you will transition for state and local specific resources. Also, use this resource to determine if you are eligible for unemployment compensation.
- Network with people located where you want to move to, not where you transition from.
- Create a one-page resume, even for executive level positions, and be prepared to expound on any topic that you were not able to address in detail.
- Maximize the websites you are job searching on by completing your profile and setting alerts for jobs within the desired industry.
- Don't procrastinate on filing

your VA claim. The sooner you get your disability rating, the sooner you can leverage the points for veteran preference for government jobs.

- Don't eye roll at financial resources. I attended an extremely helpful virtual course with David Piatek, hosted by USO Pathfinder.
- Use this time to ace behavior based interviews—look at YouTube for videos that coach you on how to do this. Also, write out your responses to frequently asked interview questions and rehearse.
- Set daily goals and hold yourself accountable.
- Make sure you are exercising and taking care of your mental health.
- Participate in career preparation virtual events. I've been following the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Hiring our Heroes Program, Corporate Gray, and RecruitMilitary.

Interviews may be done virtually. Here are some tips:

- Have a quiet space in your home.

- The background should be professional and neat. Use a virtual background if you need to hide a bed or laundry.
- Familiarize yourself with Zoom, Skype, and Google Meet. If you want to share product samples during the interview, have them ready to screen share.
- Do a test call with a friend to ensure audio/video work, your camera settings show a headshot view of you, and lighting is adequate. Prop up your computer camera to be eye level and rehearse talking while looking into the camera instead of looking down at the person on screen.
- Be engaging during the conversation, whether virtual or in person. Rehearse acting natural and comfortable while answering questions so that you present yourself with a steady confidence.
- If you have children at home, see if another adult can watch them during that time or invest in a good headset and use the mute button.
- Just because your interview

is virtual, that doesn't mean that you shouldn't look your best. I still interview in a full suit.

Manage your expectations. If you don't have a strong healthcare, IT, cyber, or engineering background, you may need to up-skill to be competitive against the millions of Americans looking for work. And don't get discouraged. Finding employment is hard work. If you are fierce about it, you will find a job. Don't stress if it's not your dream or forever job. It's OK to accept a feasible option versus the best option.

If you receive a job offer, ask questions about telework, health coverage, and sick leave. And do your research on what similar companies are offering.

Remember, job loss is survivable. Even if you don't get employment immediately, look at where you can volunteer and get valuable job experience. I've tripled my volunteer hours with the Women's Mentorship Network, Armed Services Arts Partnership, and The All Glory Project and it's really helped keep my skills sharp.

Find a Mentor While Seeking Civilian Employment



It can be disheartening once you have exited the military and find yourself as a veteran in the civilian world. When looking into civilian employment, you may feel as though you are tackling this hurdle on your own, but you do not have to do this on your own. Many veterans are getting into the civilian world and coping with this by having a mentor. And there are plenty of places that you can find a mentor or simply find other veterans in your area that can become good friends.

Courtesy of Military.com | By Courtney Trusty - Hire Our Heroes

The VFW

The VFW, which stands for Veterans of Foreign Wars, is a great way to meet other veterans in your local area. Almost every state and city has several branches of the VFW that are around for veterans to join. Not only are you going to meet other veterans who are older and have made a success in the

civilian world, but they have programs to help you adjust to civilian life. For example, they have job employment assistance to help get you in contact with who you need to talk to, as well as preparation for taking college exams for civilian employment at a later date. Many veterans who join find friends and mentors in several members, and have

gotten their assistance at getting employment.

Veteran Mentor Network

This is a fairly new group that is located on LinkedIn and is a private network to join. Those who join are veterans and others who are helping veterans to reach their civilian career goals. Those who join are connected with others

across the nation who are looking for employment, or employers looking to hire vets with certain skills. It can be a great way to not only find employment, but to connect with someone who has been in your shoes and can help mentor you through this process.

American Corporate Partners

This group is a non-profit organization with the goal of helping veterans find civilian employment through mentorships and connecting them with veteran friendly businesses throughout the nation. Their mentoring program helps a veteran apply for college, as well as networking the veteran with those who can be helpful in job placement.

The American Legion

The American Legion is mostly known for their contributions to society, and this is a great group for a veteran to get involved in. Though they do not specifically state that they are about mentoring veterans into finding employment, those who are members can be of great assistance in adapting to civilian life. In many cases, they have networked individuals with others who have helped with finding a

job, even though this may not have been the goal of the veteran.

The Military-Civilian Career Coaching Connection (MC4)

This group is also found on LinkedIn and is a private group to join. These mentors that are on the site to help are civilians and are screened before they are allowed to help. They help the veteran in seeking a job, getting their resume perfect, and basically giving them advice on what they should be doing. It can be a great resource for those who are looking to find employment in the civilian world.

For every veteran that is seeking employment in the civilian world, a mentor can be a way to have success with whatever job he or she may be wanting. In addition, they are going to learn valuable information that is going to help them get a job even sooner, and perhaps find one in which they will be happier with.

For more information, contact our partners at HOH www.hireourheroes.org

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE EXIT STRATEGY

Start planning now for life after service

By Mick Mahon and Sel Stephens
Joint Base Charleston Military and Family Readiness Center

Whether you are leaving the military next month, in three years or in 25 years, you will eventually hang up the uniform and need to decide what comes next.

Many servicemembers don't know where or how to begin. Most members have never completed an interest profile, conducted career exploration, written a resume, interviewed for a job or heard the term "Labor Market Information." If this sounds like you, don't worry, you aren't in this alone and there is help.

As the old adage declares, "Find a job you love, and never work a day in your life." Remember, "The world is your oyster," so dream big! You need to decide what you are passionate about and what you want to do with the rest of your life. An interest profile can help. You may even discover a passion for a career path that you never considered.

Once you know what you want to do after the military, begin developing your plan to reach your goals. A large part of your plan will be researching Labor Market Information, or LMI. This

will help you acquire facts about your potential career path, such as job availability of your desired career in the area where you want to live; the skills required for the career you desire; and whether your career goal provides you and your family with the necessary resources for your desired standard of living. Your local transition team can help with your LMI research.

Keep in mind, a great plan considers alternatives and options for you and your family. An effective plan begins now by discussing your separation or retirement

with those most affected: your family and loved ones. Be sure to involve your loved ones in the process. Invite your spouse to attend the Transition Goals, Plans, Success workshop, or any other transition workshops with you.

Your family will also experience major changes to what has been their "norm," and they will experience many of the same emotions you're having about transitioning. Having discussions regarding career demands, relocation and departure from the military community may be helpful to have up front and throughout the process. There is ample support and access to resources for your loved ones through the transition team at your local family readiness center.

Exploring your local center together will be helpful and every center offers transition classes for the family. Your center staff will also have family resources, such as the School Liaison Officer and Exceptional Family Member Program coordinator. These professionals can provide valuable information and resources for school-age and special needs programs locally or in your new location. Including your family in the transition

process helps reduce personal stress, adds to your family support system, and prepares all of you for the next adventure. There is absolutely no time like now to build a plan for your family's future after the military.

Transitioning from the military can be an anxious time. There is so much to do and before you know it, it is your final day. Remember, with any significant life event, you can develop strategies that will assist you in your success. Look at life after the military with a positive attitude. Focus on the things that you can control, and don't stress about the things you can't. Knowledge is power; learn to overcome challenges and stay focused. It will be a daunting task to try to remember all of the information you will receive in this process. Get organized, take notes, ask pertinent questions, and involve your family — own your transition!

Advertorial

SERVE, HONOR AND PROTECT WITH THE U.S. SECRET SERVICE

For many servicemembers, life after the military can seem overwhelming and choosing a career path can be daunting. Opportunities are endless, but for many, the U.S. Secret Service has provided a pathway to continue serving long after their military service has ended. For Scott Myza, becoming a Counter Sniper for the U.S. Secret Service has proven to be more than a career.

What were the roles and responsibilities of your last position in the Marine Corps?

Assistant Detachment Commander of American Consulate Munich, Germany. I was responsible for the operational response plans for the security of the Consulate performed by the Marines, as well as all scheduling, training, living quarters, and morale/welfare of Marines assigned to defend the Consulate.

What were your two biggest transition hurdles?

Adjusting my schedule to meet agency timelines for testing; and transitioning from the military to a civilian mindset in order to better communicate and work alongside colleagues.

What are some cultural similarities and differences between the USSS and USMC?

Some of the similarities between the USSS and USMC cultures are that there is a rank structure, uniform, code of conduct and sense of purpose and higher calling. There is also strong camaraderie, life-long friends, teamwork, and the mix of many different talents, backgrounds. The many "Type A" personalities makes us a strong and a fun group. To the world, Secret Service Officers and Agents are these upstanding, physically fit, smart, and highly trained professionals, which is true. However, to me, just like when I was in the Marine Corps, they are the funniest, most normal people I know.

Describe your current duties at USSS.

I am a Counter Sniper (CS) within the Special Operations

Division of the Secret Service. As a CS Technician, I am responsible for securing an area in which the protectee is located from long range single threats or coordinated assaults. I also provide long range observation and real-time intelligence information in support of the protective detail. In doing so, we travel both domestically and internationally in support of the mission and provide 24/7 protection for all secret service protectees.

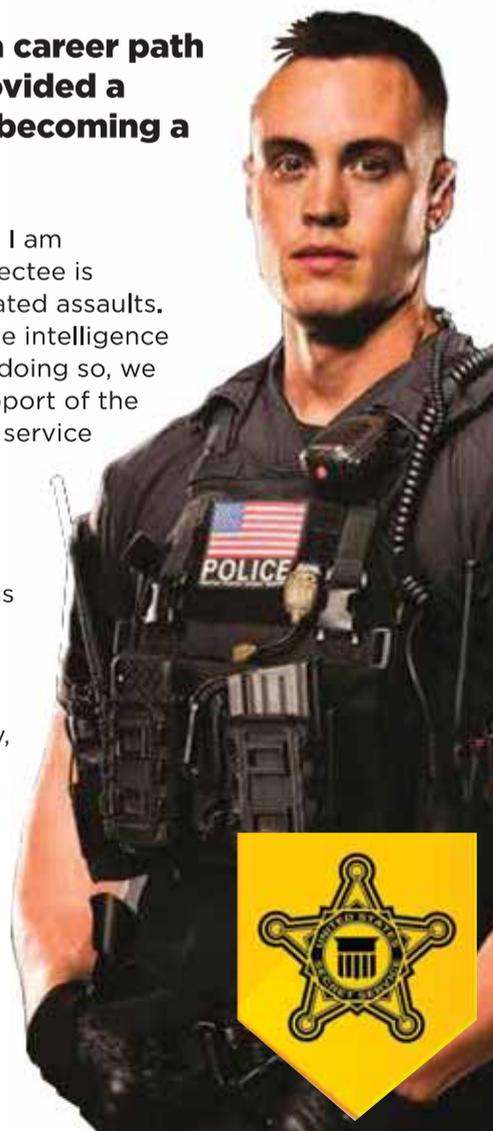
What advice would you give to veterans looking for a career after the military?

Have a plan with three additional backup options and start planning a year and a half out from your end of service date.

If they want to go to school afterwards, knock out as many classes while they are still active duty, using the military tuition assistance so that they get a head start.

I also would stress that not everyone gets a job doing that they love right away. Get a job locked down even if it isn't your dream job so that you have solid income, and then work your way to what you want.

Finally, be open to seeing things from a different perspective. Bringing the tools the military has given you is encouraged, but know that your way isn't the only way.



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Military Retirement: Do You Have This Covered?

Courtesy of Military OneSource

Transitioning to civilian life is just like everything else in military life. Doing it successfully takes preparation. Give yourself plenty of time to complete all the required tasks before you officially retire. There are four basic steps to take:

Separation requirements: Must-dos before your retirement date

Start with the Transition Assistance Program. You'll find detailed information at <https://www.dodtap.mil/> about what's included and how to connect with the program for your service branch.

Pre-separation counseling:

You need pre-separation counseling at least 90 days before separation, but you can schedule it up to 24 months before your retirement date. Pre-separation covers the basics about medical insurance, relocation assistance, life insurance, Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and more.

Employment workshop:

Attend a Transition Assistance Program employment workshop. It can be extremely useful, with information on job-search strategies, resume writing, interview skills, salary negotiation and more.

Final medical exam: Schedule your mandatory, final medical and dental exam with your installation's medical clinic 90 days before you separate.

Scheduling final move: You will have one year after leaving active duty to complete your final move. But the sooner you can schedule, the greater the chance of getting the dates you want. See below under benefits for more.

Plan your post-retirement budget: Know what you'll have to work with

Review your military retirement pay, benefits and expenses to plan your budget and calculate what you'll have each month.

Income: You'll receive one of three types of non-disability retirement pay:

- Final basic pay – for servicemembers with an entry date prior to Sept. 8, 1980.
- High 36 – for servicemembers with an entry date between Sept. 8, 1980 and July 31, 1986, or for those with dates after

Aug. 1, 1986 and before 1 January 2018 who didn't elect REDUX or opt in to the Blended Retirement System.

- CBS/REDUX – for servicemembers with an entry date after July 31, 1986 who accepted a mid-career bonus at the 15-year mark and agreed to remain active duty for at least 20 years.

Note: servicemembers enrolled in the new Blended Retirement System will have slightly different retirement payments than the three outlined above, including a different monthly retired pay formula, a possible lump sum payment taken at time of departure and a Thrift Savings Plan.

Payouts: Federal and state taxes will be withheld from your retirement check. Also remember medical and dental premiums, and Survivor Benefit Plan premiums.

Annual adjustments: Just like your active-duty pay, your retirement pay adjusts annually based on the cost of living to protect your income against inflation.

Benefits you've earned as a retiring servicemember

As an active-duty servicemember, you receive a number of benefits. What happens to them when you retire?

TRICARE: Retiring servicemembers must enroll themselves and eligible family members or risk losing TRICARE benefits. This includes family members with Medicare Part A and B.

Dental and/or Vision: You may choose to enroll in to dental and/or vision insurance through the FEDVIP benefits program. You can enroll during the annual open season each fall, or whenever you have a qualifying life event. Dental and vision plans have a monthly premium based on the plan you choose. Find more details at the Benefeds website at <https://www.benefeds.com/>.

Final moving expense: You have one calendar year from your retirement date to use your last government-paid move anywhere within the

U.S. or to your home of record outside the country. Check with your installation's Personnel Support Office for information.

Life insurance: Your Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance plan continues uninterrupted for 120 days after separation. During that time, you can convert your life insurance to Veterans' Group Life Insurance. You can still convert after 120 days, but you have to prove that you're in good health. Check out ExploreVA.gov for more.

Commissary and exchange privileges: You and your family have the same access to both facilities after retirement. The only exception – overseas privileges may be subject to a Status of Forces Agreement.

GI Bill/Education and Training: Depending on which GI Bill you have, and when you leave the service, your GI Bill may be good for 10 years, 15 years or indefinitely. Get the details at your installation's education office or at ExploreVA.gov.

Home loans: Find out about a Department of Veterans Affairs loan to purchase or build your dream retirement home. To qualify, you must have served at least 24 months and have an honorable or general discharge. Call 800-827-1000 or visit the VA Home Loans page at www.va.gov/housing-assistance/.

The Survivor Benefit Plan: The plan provides a portion of your retirement pay to your spouse or other eligible person after your death. As long as you have an eligible spouse or child, you'll automatically be enrolled, and at the maximum level unless you elect otherwise. Contact your Transition Assistance Program office or the Defense Finance and Accounting Service with any questions.

Finally, prepare for civilian life

You've got military life down cold. What's it like being a civilian? Don't stress, just

know what to expect, and have some strategies for success.

Saying goodbye: You've been through enough moves to know what it's like to leave friends who feel more like family. But these days, social media makes it easy to keep in touch.

Job searching: Ace that interview. Get a head start. You can attend a Transition Assistance Program employment workshop on your installation as early as two years before retirement.

Miss the lifestyle? It's not as far fetched as it sounds. You've been in a tight, exclusive community with its own unique lifestyle. Look into joining a military organization that can keep you connected and in the loop on retirement issues.

Retirement is the first step to your next successful life and career. Know what's ahead, be ready and go ahead. Enjoy!



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*Mario F., GDIT Employee and U.S. Veteran

Credentialing Your Military Experience



Courtesy of Military OneSource

You're looking to join the civilian world and that means job-hunting. Here's the good news: As a servicemember, you're part of one of the best-trained workforces in the world.

You have skills that employers value: discipline, work ethic and teamwork. Your military experience also has given you training that you can put to work in the civilian world. But sometimes, it can be a challenge to explain military training in terms civilian employers can understand.

That's where "Credentialing Opportunities On-Line," or COOL, comes in.

The COOL program helps you translate your training into civilian credentials and speak better to what employers are looking for. Every service branch offers its own program. Use your

branch's program to:

- Get information on credentials related to your service specialty.
- Identify gaps in your training and credential requirements.
- Find resources to help you close the gap between training and credentials.

COOL programs primarily serve active-duty servicemembers — to help you plan for employment. You can use it to figure out what training or skills you might need before you transition.

How to decide if you need a credential

Here are five employment scenarios — does one of them apply to you and your chosen career path?

Employment Scenario	What Should You Do?
The civilian equivalent of your specialty doesn't require a license or certification.	You don't need to pursue a credential, but having one may give you an advantage. It's worth checking into.
Your military training and experience already provides the necessary credentials to practice the civilian job. (For example, let's say you earned your Emergency Medical Technician certification to become a health care specialist.)	You should be good to go. But there may be additional credentials that give you more of an advantage.
Your training and experience provide certification in the field, but not a license.	Your move to the civilian workforce may be relatively seamless. The requirements for a certificate and a license are often similar. However, you may need to obtain a license from the appropriate government agency.
You have the education, training, or experience necessary to become licensed or certified. But you don't have the formal license or certification from the credentialing board.	You may have to follow an administrative process that typically requires completing an application, documenting military training and experience, and possibly taking an exam.
You may need more education, training, or experience to be certified or licensed.	It may be more difficult to be employed or fully employed without the right credentials. In this case, you can find out more about available resources, costs and funding to meet the requirements.

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-Phil Smeby, Veteran and MyComputerCareer Graduate

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Are there costs for credentialing?

Sometimes there are costs involved if you need extra training or have to take an exam. Many credentials and licenses have fees involved, such as licensing fees or exam fees, but there are resources available to help cover some of the costs, such as the GI Bill. Check your service branch's program for costs and to learn about available resources.

Credentialing Opportunities On-Line by service branch

- Army: <https://www.cool.osd.mil/army/index.htm>
- Marines: <https://www.cool.navy.mil/usmc/overview/index.htm>
- Navy: <https://www.cool.navy.mil/usn/index.htm>
- Air Force: <https://afvec.us.af.mil/afvec/Public/COOL/>

If you're ready to start looking for a job, it's time to translate your work experience into a civilian career. Identify what credentials you need as soon as possible. Getting a credential may take some time, and ideally, you want it in hand by the time you leave the service.

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.



Courtesy of Military.com | By Jacey Eckhart

In a job market saturated with good candidates, you are going to hear “no” a lot of the time. Shoot, even if you were in a job market with a few second-rate, no good, half-witted pixies from another planet, you would still hear “no” a lot of the time. That’s because “no” is the language of the job hunt.

The pain of “no” only gets worse when it comes from a job for which you were overqualified, that paid half your current salary and that you did not even want. When you get a rejection from that kind of job, it is tempting to set up camp in the middle of your nearest Five Guys and eat all of the cajun fries they can make.

Except you can’t. Five Guys closes at 10 p.m. and they call the cops if you don’t go home. Trust me on this.

You also cannot give into job hunt despair when you hear a “no” because you are not that kind of person. From coaching and teaching transitioning military, I know you are the kind of person who has a strong record of success and wants to know what to do so you are never rejected again.

So I put together this list of things you need to read (and reread) the very next time you get a rejection so you can get right back on track:

1 “No” isn’t personal.

That seems like a stupid thing to say because, by God, it feels personal. When you submit your resume for an online job posting and it is rejected, it feels like you personally have been stripped naked and found wanting by a jury of your peers. It feels like someone read your list of accomplishments and flagged the Imposter Police. You could take a “no” that way, sure.

But if your resume did not make it to the interview stage, the “no” usually isn’t a judgment on your value as a worker. It is a judgment on how you are playing the job hunt game. Did you actually qualify for the job? Workopolis reports that up to 75% of candidates who apply are not qualified. Or are you totally overqualified for the job so it looks like you won’t stay more than a week and you want to waste everyone’s time? In this situation, take the “no” as an excellent data point. Ask yourself what else the ‘no’ could mean about your tactics.

2 “NO” is not rude.

Sometimes the “no” comes dressed up in kind words. You will hear, “We are sorry. You were not selected for the interview.” Or, “we decided to go in another direction.” Or you will hear the classic sound of rejection: crickets.

This “no” is not the sound of civilian employers being rude to you, or being lazy or acting like unpatriotic backsliders. Instead, this “no” is the sound of corporate efficiency. Even prior to COVID, Glassdoor reported that an average of 250 candidates complete the application for each corporate job. No one has time to send a kind reply to each candidate. Silence usually means no, but you can always call and politely inquire.

3 “NO” is COVID running off at the mouth.

We aren’t in Kansas anymore, Military Transitioner. The post-COVID world is Oz, where everything is a little distorted. In May 2020, veteran unemployment was up to a high of 12%. In August was at about 8%, which is slightly lower than the civilian unemployment rate of 10%. The thing is, in 2019, veteran unemployment was at a sweet, sweet low of 3.6%. What was true for your friends/peers who got out of the military prior to COVID is not necessarily true for you. If you expect the competition to be tougher, it is easier to set your resolve and do what the competition is not doing -- like actually seeking a real person who can give you a job.

4 “NO” is evidence you need that internal referral.

If you are sick of hearing “no” in all its many forms, hear this: you need an internal referral. If you are senior military with 20-plus years of experience, the kind of job you are looking for is the kind that is the result of an internal referral from someone who worked with you in the past, who thinks you could be the solution to a problem the company has in the present. You will now need to talk to people you know, and then people they know. If you have less experience, or you are leaving the defense industry, you will need to talk to some strangers. Job getting (as opposed to job hunting) is so much more than submitting applications online.

If you are just figuring out the language of “no,” consider yourself normal. As a transition coach, I see the whole job hunt is a process for military. Most active duty members start their hunt applying online, where “no” is an all-day everyday occurrence. Then it is almost as if there is a tipping point to the word. Hear enough of it and you figure out it is time to do something else.

There are so many excellent veteran service organizations and military transition coaches who can help you. Reach out to one of them and figure out your own path to the sweetest word in the world: yes.

Why Translate Your Military Skills for Civilian Jobs

Courtesy of Military.com

It’s one of the proud legacies of service in the US armed forces: Your military occupational specialty (MOS). But what does a soldier designated a tank turret mechanic or nuclear munitions specialist do when he sheds his uniform for civilian duds?

Making the transition from military to civilian life is partly about successfully translating the lingo of the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines into the keyword-heavy vocabulary of private-sector employment. This transformation is often difficult for the veteran who is seeking private-sector employment.

Luckily, there are experts and tools that can help.

What Does and Doesn’t Translate

“Some occupations like doctor and lawyer are exactly the same in and out of the service,” says John Bohichik, transition services manager at the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. But others require “degreening,” or translation from armed forces’ lingo to private-sector employment jargon.

“‘Platoon leader’ should probably be translated as something like ‘general manager,’” says Anne McKinney, author of *Resumes and Cover Letters that Have Worked for Military Professionals*. In addition to translating job titles, the resume must describe -- in civilian terms -- the candidate’s skills, responsibilities and accomplishments in the military.

But this doesn’t mean ridding the job application of every trace of military experience. Many firms recognize the value of a military background in the corporate world. “An employer may say, ‘Gosh, we don’t have guns here, but we certainly do have combat,’” says McKinney.

The bottom line is common sense. “Just make your work understandable to whoever is going to read your resume,” says Buzz Buse, a retired Marine Corps colonel and spokesman for the Military Officers Association of America. “When you compete for a job, you work in the keywords the employer is looking for.”

From Military to Public Service

Servicemen and women who are considering civil service rather than the private sector should not assume the military and government will speak the same language. Job seekers who have left the military often fail to meet civil service application requirements when they apply for federal jobs, according to Kathryn Troutman, author of *Ten Steps to a Federal Job*.

But it’s well worth the effort to learn what’s required, says Troutman. “There’s a huge, huge push to help military people move into government.” For example, under the veterans’ preference policy, vets are awarded extra points for their military service when they take the civil service exam.

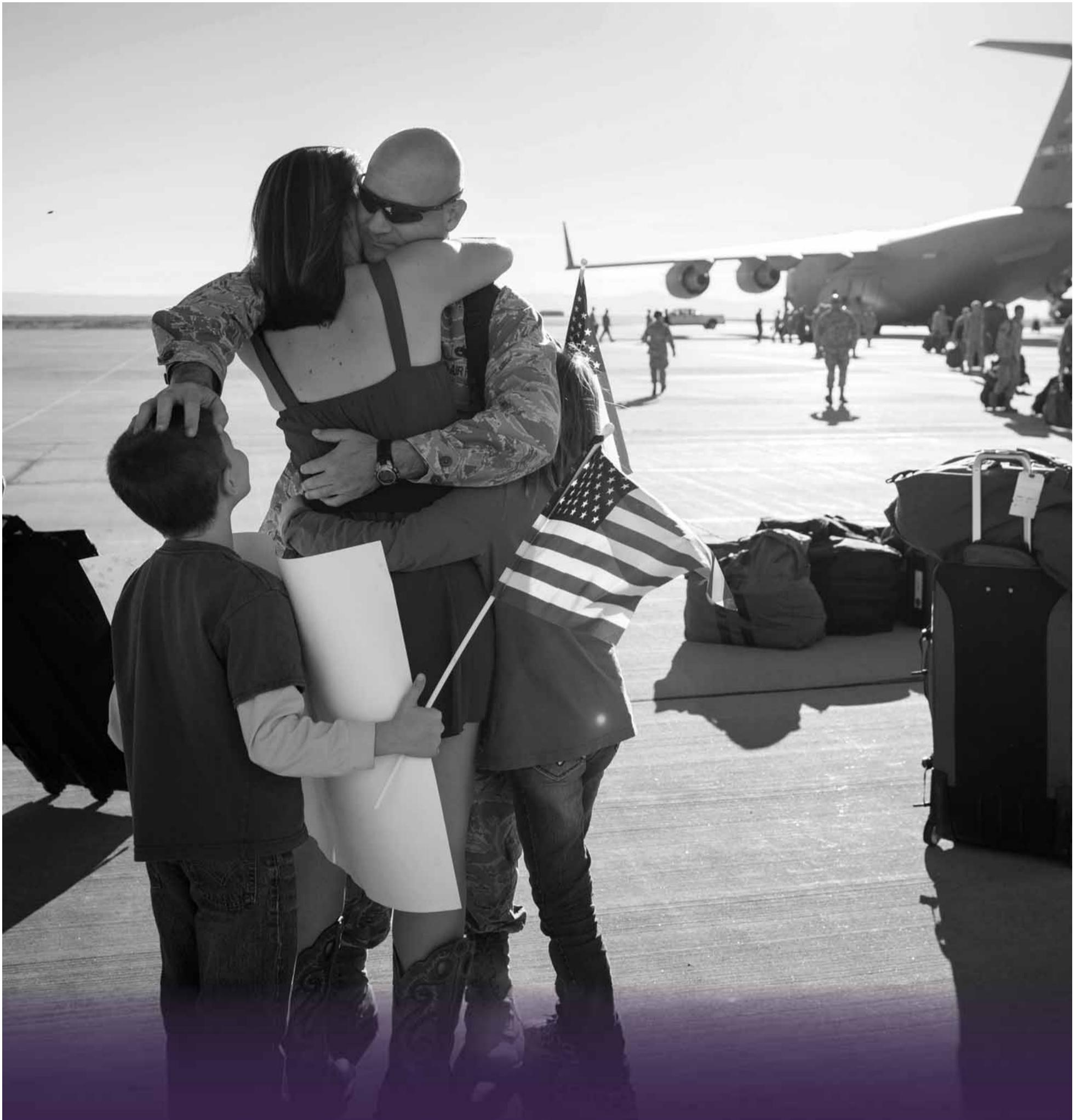
Many Seek a New Direction

Many servicemen leaving the military are uncertain about their career direction. “Most people at that juncture don’t know what they’re going to do next,” says McKinney.

“When you’ve been a cook in the service, you can be a cook somewhere else,” says Buse. “But you can also do a hell of a lot of other things too.”

And since servicemen don’t control the path of their own military careers, many new veterans are looking for a change. “Even a person with heavy management experience may say, ‘You know, I really hate managing people,’” says McKinney.

Now what if you’re that tank turret mechanic and you do want to continue to use the skill set? Consider civilian work as a mobile heavy equipment mechanic.



A **FREE** program that offers coaches who provide psychological health care support to **#servicemembers** and their health care providers during times of transition — to and from active-duty status, relocation, deployment or separating from the military.

Service members can call 800-424-7877 to self-enroll or visit the website pdhealth.mil/intransition.

inTransition
CONNECTING • COACHING • EMPOWERING

6

BASIC THINGS VETERANS NEED TO CHANGE WHEN STARTING THEIR JOB SEARCH

Courtesy of Military.com | By Blake Stilwell



Separating veterans get a lot of advice about how to handle the problems that arise when looking for a civilian job. Between transition assistance programs and the thousands of veteran-oriented nonprofits out there, even the solutions can seem overwhelming.

Luckily, there are some very basic things servicemembers have going for them. Employers know vets bring a lot of soft skills to a starting position or entry-level job that other candidates don't. Moreover, many employers do want to hire veterans as a means of thanking them for serving.

So all veterans entering the job market for the first time have to do is ensure they put their best foot forward, get noticed and get that job. Here are the fundamental things to do to get started.

1. Ditch the Jargon

One of the main reasons veterans are overlooked for civilian jobs is not that the military tends to be the primary experience on their resume, it's that vets don't use language to describe that experience that a recruiter or hiring manager can understand.

Take a printed copy of your resume and LinkedIn profile and circle in red every instance of military slang, jargon or acronym. If there is a lot of color on the paper, your resume is in trouble. There's a good chance the average civilian has no idea what they mean -- and that only hurts your chances of getting an interview.

Learn what your job functions and skills translate to in the civilian world. Learning the language hiring managers speak will only help develop good writing skills to produce better

resumes, cover letters and LinkedIn information.

2. Know Your "Soft" Skills

Military service provides so many opportunities for job training, education, certifications and more. These are the so-called "hard" skills that qualify people to do basic job functions. Of course, this is central to getting that first big job. But with hundreds of applicants applying for every open position, hiring managers have their pick of the litter. They will want someone with a little something extra: "soft" skills.

"Soft" skills are abilities learned by experience and example. They aren't traditionally learned in books or classes. These include skills such as leadership, customer service, effective communication, the ability to be a contributing member of a team and more.

Veterans learn these skills from their first day in basic training, so be sure to mention them.

3. Fill Out Your Professional Profiles

Whether uploading resumes to a job search site like Monster or filling out a LinkedIn profile, be sure to fill it out completely, with complete education and experience along with any other relevant information employers should know. It's also important to learn the language of hiring managers for these sites because, like the resume, that is the language used here.

Also like a resume, it's important to ensure these professional sites are keyword optimized using the previously mentioned hard and soft skills. This makes it easier for recruiters and headhunters to find you.

4. Tone Down the Military

There's nothing wrong with being proud of military service, of course, but this is civilian life. Employers want to hire people who are going to be with the company for a long time and will grow with it. Giving the impression that you prefer military life might make you appear as if you aren't adaptive to change or are too rigid for the civilian world.

It's positive for potential employers to know about a candidate's military service, but that shouldn't be everything the candidate is. It's important to appear approachable and professional.

Throughout your life, you will go through many professional changes in which you will want to adapt your look and profile for higher management or a more skilled trade. Don't think of this as forgetting your service, but rather a necessary adaptation.

5. Ask Experts for Help

Veterans leaving the military for the first time have probably never been in the professional civilian job market, so it would be absurd to think that they would know everything they need to know. When it comes

to unknown unknowns -- the things we don't know we don't know -- this time in their lives is practically a minefield.

People genuinely want to assist separating veterans, and this is especially true for helping them find a job. But humans can't read minds (yet) so it's important to go and ask people in the know how you look on paper.

Some will take it even further and introduce you to people, open doors or drop your resume off. But you need to let them know you want the help.

6. Pay It Forward

Okay, this doesn't really help anyone right now. But it will be helpful in the future if every veteran could receive help from another vet, be it through mentorship, networking or even just looking over a resume for jargon, translation and copy editing. Every separating veteran would be much better off for it.

As you go through what will arguably be one of the most unsure times of your life, remember the feelings of dread and despair as your separation day comes and goes, and remember the elation you felt when you got your first civilian job.

Think about how you can one day help give that feeling to the next generation of veterans.



Programs That Hire Veterans

Courtesy of Military OneSource

Many organizations in the civilian world value your experience, skills, work ethic and training as a servicemember. You'll find that a number of military-friendly employers are committed to hiring veterans.

Explore several online programs to help connect you with employers who are looking to hire veterans. Here are some top sites:

Veterans.gov

This site offers resources from the U.S. Department of Labor for job-seekers and employers who want to hire vets. You'll find:

- Job opportunities by category: agriculture, energy, transportation, homeland security, federal

government hiring, and more.

- A tool for finding jobs by location
- Your nearest American Job Center
- Help from the Small Business Administration for starting your own business
- Plus one-on-one assistance, career exploration, finding training, skills translator, veteran employment center, resume builder, interest profiler, transition

resources and more.

CareerOneStop Veteran and Military Transition Center

The Veteran and Military Transition Center website is a one-stop online shop for employment, training and financial help after military service. If you're transitioning out, it offers some serious tools:

- Military-to-Civilian Job Search by military job title and/or location

- How to request important papers that you need
- Matching your skills to civilian careers
- Information about going back to school or getting training
- Also financial and unemployment assistance

The U.S. Department of Labor sponsors CareerOneStop. While the website is designed for the general public, there are plenty of tools and resources that can be useful for veterans. It partners with the American Job Center network. American Job Centers have a mandate to connect veterans to job openings.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring our Heroes

Hiring Our Heroes is a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. It's a nationwide initiative to help transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities.

The program networks with businesses through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and it partners with public, private and nonprofit organizations

across the country.

- Check out the Hiring Our Heroes calendar. You'll find upcoming hiring events, job fairs, expos, transition summits and more near you.
- Hiring Our Heroes also has a number of digital resources:
- VirtualJobScout connects you with recruiters and attend virtual job fairs.
- Hiring Our Heroes dashboard allows you to access, customize and manage all your Hiring Our Hero resources.
- Resume Engine helps you build and post your resume for thousands of employers.
- Fast Track lists jobs by industry, with a map of locations and positions by date.

You've got skills, training and discipline. Employers are looking for you. For more ways you can connect with a great job, check the Employment Resources and Services page on <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>.



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Reasons Your Resume Misses the Mark

Courtesy of Military.com | By Lida Citroën

Whether you spent hours creating and refining your career resume, hired someone to create it, or threw it together in a hurry, the resume is an important part of your military-to-civilian career transition. So why isn't yours getting noticed? Let's look at the top reasons employers aren't WOW'd by your resume:

1. **Typos.** Misspellings and mistakes in a resume are quick turn-offs for a reader. "If they can be sloppy with something as important as a resume, how will they treat my project?" is a common concern of recruiters. Proofread and double check every aspect of your resume before you send it or post it anywhere.
2. **Not enough metrics.** List out results and quantify the benefits. Whenever possible, reflect results in numbers and percentages. If you fail to quantify the benefits, it could appear that your results are not measurable or impactful to the business or organization.
3. **Too long.** Is there an ideal length for a resume? "A good rule of thumb is one page of resume for every 10 years of work experience," notes one expert. A three or four-page resume is too hard to read, let alone comprehend.
4. **Too much military-speak.** If your resume reads like a list of MOS, it likely won't pass the screening stage. Remember to speak in the language of your target employer.
5. **Poor grammar.** In addition to misspellings, check your grammar. Use correct punctuation, tense and sentence structure. Assume your reader is a grammar expert.
6. **Inaccuracies.** If the dates in your work history don't line up, or you claim to have participated in a program that didn't exist at the time, or you list a hobby that you can't talk about, you'll put up red flags to the reader.
7. **Inconsistencies.** Your resume should be written in the first person and should stay that way throughout. If you bullet list results, do so across each job. If you format each job with the city and state, make sure they all read the same way. Small details really matter.
8. **Poor formatting.** To the recruiter or hiring manager charged with reading hundreds of resumes, it can be challenging to read long blocks of text with poor formatting. Avoid making the margins tiny (strive for 1 inch), use bulleted lists to break up text, and "chunk" content into readable sections.
9. **No focus.** Be clear on what you want the reader to know, feel, do with the resume you are sending them.
10. **Uninspiring.** Who wants to read a resume that reads like a list of tasks, not a story of someone's career? Make your past indicative of what you can do in the future.
11. **Irrelevant information.** Avoid including details that aren't relevant to the job, don't help tell your story, or make you approachable. Be sure to leave some information for the interview!
12. **Too many filler words.** Avoid words which take up space, but don't add anything substantive. Words like "in other words", "to be honest," and "basically" can be left out and the material should still stand up.
13. **Lies. Never, ever lie on a resume.** Even "creative exaggerations" discredit job candidates and waste the reader's time.
14. **Trying too hard.** If you aren't funny, don't use humor. If you aren't clever, don't try. Your story can be interesting and inspiring while not being fake or forced.
15. **Talking negative.** Your resume should not include anything negative or unflattering about your past employer, team, clients, customers, colleagues. Ever. It's not polite or professional.
16. **Boasting.** While it's critical to promote yourself and your value, be careful about crossing over the line. Claiming to be "the world's greatest logistician" is arrogant.
17. **Too many buzzwords.** Overuse of common words such as "analytic, proven, leader, driven, innovative, problem solver, team player," and such can turn off the reader.
18. **Words that are "givens".** If your resume emphasizes that you are hard-working, dedicated, and loyal remember that these qualities are expected, not extraordinary. Focus your resume on what makes you stand out.
19. **Personal information.** Don't mention PTSD struggles, your marital status, current living situation (are you living with mom and dad?), and anything else the employer cannot legally inquire about.
20. **Missing information.** Be sure to include your contact information, education, full name (or nickname) on your resume. It's amazing how many candidates leave off critical information.
21. **Employment gaps.** Gaps in your work history that aren't addressed or explained can send a red flag. Address gaps in your cover letter.
22. **Not following submission directions.** This is an easy one! Submit your resume exactly as you were asked to. This is not the time to be creative or defiant.
23. **Forgetting keywords.** Each resume you submit should be customized to the job and employer. Use the keywords, terminology and lingo of the industry and the job.
24. **Neglecting to focus on value.** Your resume shouldn't just reflect the tasks you completed, but the value you drove to your previous team, business and mission.
25. **You don't care.** If you really aren't interested in the job, it shows in the resume you submit. Instead, apply for positions that align with your personal and professional goals. You'll put more work, care and attention into the submission.

6 things veterans can do to successfully transition from a military career

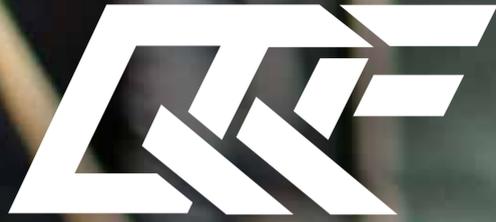
Courtesy of the Department of Veterans Affairs

Change can be challenging — or even downright difficult. But if you're transitioning from the military, choosing a career at VA can make the experience a lot easier and less stressful.

At VA, we understand the unique circumstances transitioning servicemembers face and have created plenty of resources and tools to support you in your move to a new career. You will work alongside other veterans as you continue your mission to serve.

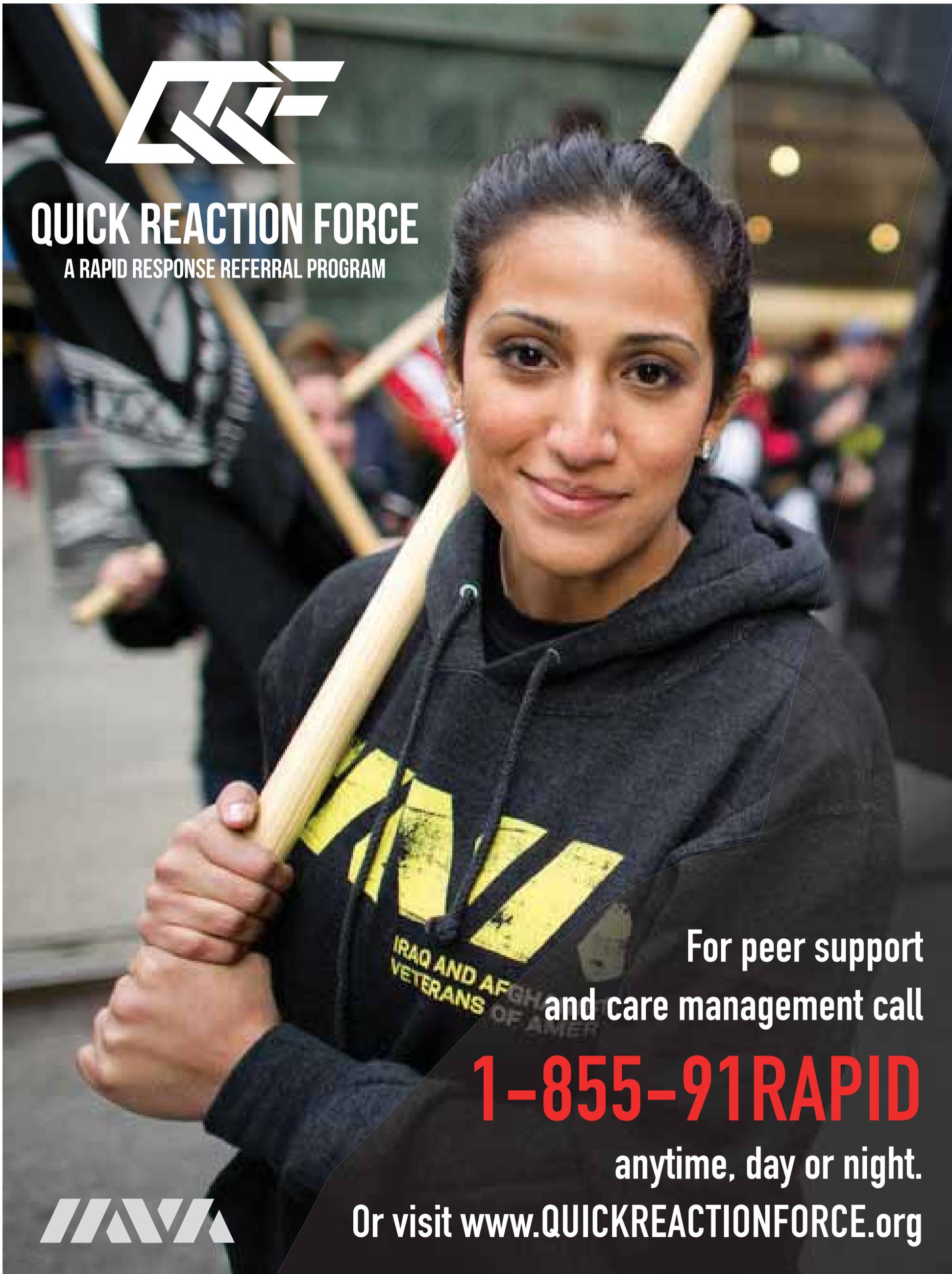
Here are six things you can do to successfully transition from a military career to one at VA:

1. **Prepare for your transition well in advance.** Planning and preparing for your next move can help relieve stress and boost your confidence. Take advantage of what's available to you while you're still a servicemember, such as the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program. Take stock of your skills and think about how you could parlay them into a job at VA. For instance, VA created the Intermediate Care Technician (ICT) Program to hire former medics and military corpsmen into positions at VA medical centers. Ask supervisors for letters of referral or to serve as job references. Brush off your resume and make it shine. Talk with former servicemembers who have already transitioned to civilian careers for tips and moral support. If you think you want to switch careers or need more education or training to make you competitive in your current career, explore educational opportunities and see how VA benefits may support you.
2. **Make LinkedIn a best friend.** LinkedIn is an invaluable career tool that can help you network, search for jobs and take advantage of career-building resources. VA offers transitioning servicemembers a free year of LinkedIn Prime, which includes more than 14,000 LinkedIn learning courses. LinkedIn Prime also has two learning paths for veterans: Transition from Military to Civilian Employment and Transition from Military to Student Life. Need some help navigating LinkedIn? Check out VA Careers videos for tips on using LinkedIn for your job search at <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/73978/video-learn-veterans-military-spouses-can-tap-linkedin-benefits/>.
3. **Activate your support network.** Job hunting can take a toll on even the most persistent job seeker. That's why having a support network is a good idea. In addition to current and former military colleagues, family members, neighbors, friends and acquaintances may all potentially be great contacts. You might be surprised to learn where they worked, who they know and who they might be able to connect you with. Keep an open mind and network, network, network!
4. **Spend time on the VA Careers website.** The VA Careers website has all kinds of resources to help you explore and apply for positions at VA. A page dedicated to veterans has useful information about benefits and veterans' hiring preference — and lets you view available opportunities or search for specific VA careers. On our Navigating the Hiring Process page, you'll find an instructional guide that can help you search and apply for positions through USAJOBS.gov, as well as tips for preparing and submitting a job application. The VA Careers blog is chock full of information about topics like how to ace a cover letter, how VA helps transitioning servicemembers and spouses pursue civilian careers and what you can expect in a post-military career at VA. VA Careers also participates in virtual career fairs, allowing you to speak with VA recruiters and learn about available positions.
5. **Contact a VA recruiter.** Be proactive and email a VA recruiter. Connecting with a VA recruiter will speed the job application process and help you secure an interview. A recruiter can answer questions and guide you on finding the opportunity that best matches your skillset, preparing your resume and planning for interviews.
6. **Don't give up.** Finally, don't give up! Finding a job takes time and patience, especially in a tight job market. Create a transition plan, rely on your network, use LinkedIn often, take advantage of all the resources VA Careers has to offer, connect with a recruiter and stick with it!



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- Virtual advising and support from knowledgeable military and veterans advisors
- No-cost digital resources in place of textbooks in nearly every course
- A Veterans Assistance Fund and scholarships for military-affiliated students
- Lifetime career services, resources and tools

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UMGC was named the top public university in the *Military Times* “Best for Vets” 2020 ranking of online and nontraditional universities.



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