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May 23, 2019

# Transition Guide

Spring 2019

**TRANSITION  
YOUR FINANCES**  
START TODAY!

**CYBERSECURITY**  
COULD IT BE YOUR  
NEXT CAREER?

**NEED A  
DEGREE?**  
CORPORATE AMERICA  
SAYS 'YES'

**17** VETERANS YOU  
SHOULD FOLLOW  
ON LINKEDIN

**THE CASE FOR  
MILITARY SPOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

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# DO YOU NEED A DEGREE?

## CORPORATE AMERICA THINKS SO



Courtesy of Military.com

**The way employers value education is changing. Twenty years ago it was possible for job seekers with a high school diploma and job experience to get a good job. Ten years ago, job seekers needed a bachelor's to get a great job with opportunities for advancement. Today, most employers want their upper-level executives and managers to have a master's degree.**

What's more, the earning potential for degree-holders is much more than those without a college degree. For example, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau reports that adults (18- to 25-year-old) with bachelors' degrees earn an average of \$45,327. Adults, in the same age range, with only a high school diploma, earned an average of \$30,000. Additionally, adults with advanced degrees earn an average of \$53,000 a year compared to those without a high-school diploma that only

make \$20,241 a year.

Obtaining a degree is vital in order to stay competitive in today's workforce.

### Back to School

Most Americans would like to go back to school to get a degree. But, for people with families, young children or full-time jobs, going back to school is a time commitment they just can't afford. Fortunately, there are

many opportunities to obtain an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree away from campus.

Online courses and degree programs provide flexible schedules that will accommodate a full-time job or family needs.

### Choosing the Right Program for You

Before you begin any online program, you need to research which one is best for you, your education and career goals. Additionally, the program has to fit your schedule. Here are five questions you should ask before entering a degree program:

- **How is the course delivered?** There are many ways that an instructor can lecture: online using text, with accompanying slides, with or without student interaction, video, teleconferencing, etc. Course content is more easily understood if it's presented in a dynamic engaging manner that involves an interaction between the students, the instructor, and the material. When you choose a program you should make sure that your online school utilizes many different methods to convey information.
- **How do I interact with the instructor and other students?** Some standard options for online student interaction include chat rooms, instant messaging, teleconferencing, and video conferencing. Finding a program that facilitates, and even requires, student interaction is an important aspect of

choosing an online program. How the online community functions should be very important to both the instructor and the institution.

- **How will I be evaluated?** Will you actually be required to work in order to earn your degree. If students aren't evaluated appropriately and degrees are handed out with little or no verification that the students have actually learned anything, the program is not likely worthwhile and even less likely to be accepted by employers.
- **What kind of library and research materials are available?** Ensure that the school you are interested in has a good system for providing reference materials and texts—they should be accessible from anywhere. The school's online references should be up-to-date and available at any time.
- **Is the school regionally or nationally accredited?** Ask about the school's credentials and the degrees the instructors hold. Many unaccredited online schools will eagerly grant you a degree, however, degrees from unaccredited schools are worthless. A diploma mill or unaccredited school should be avoided.

### Get Disciplined

Once you find the online program that fits your goals and schedule, it's important for you to become disciplined and do the work. An online course gives you the flexibility and time to get a degree.

## SO, YOU WANT A FEDERAL JOB?

By Jamie Chapman,  
Courtesy of StripesEurope.com

The Federal Government is the largest U.S. employer with over 2.7 million employees.

For those who are new to the concept of working for the government, the application process via USAJOBS.gov can come 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 five 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 two 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 two 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, FAQ's and articles about applying.

### Tailor your resume.

Every. Single. Time.

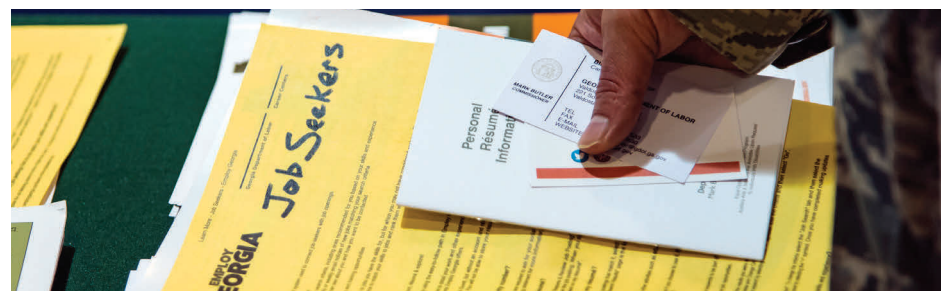
Be forewarned, effective federal-style resumes are often five or more pages in length. Job announcements require a lot of detail that must be included in the resume. A simple example is, "The ability to use a telephone, fax machine, printer and scanner to create correspondence, send and organize documents." 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.





A photograph of two women, one with curly hair and a purple sweater, and another with long dark hair and a denim jacket, smiling and looking at a laptop screen. They are outdoors in front of a house.

# KEEP SERVING ON YOUR TERMS

Your world is always changing so you need service that fits your family life. From your location and your career to your lifestyle and your legacy—all the choices are yours. Keep your military benefits with a part-time commitment and discover the flexibility only found in the Air National Guard.



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## THE **BEST KEPT SECRET** TO FEELING COMFORTABLE IN AN **INTERVIEW**

By Nina Semczuk, Courtesy of Military.com

The night before an important interview, I 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 about how to operate certain software systems the position required.

On the way to my interview, I pulled up my notes on my phone and attempted to cram my brain with everything I wanted to remember as if I were about to take a pop quiz. In the waiting room, I felt increasingly nervous because I couldn't recall the finer details of those software programs I had hoped to sound knowledgeable about.

The company's mission statement, leadership team and competitor's names swam around in a blur with all the other companies I had researched before past interviews. My expectations for getting the job tanked.

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 thought, my friends, is responsible for one of the best interviews I've ever had.

### How to Win the Interview Battle

I walked in determined to only talk about the skills I was 100% sure of, and to describe my past jobs with truth. 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 like so many interviews.

It seems so simple, it's almost stupid—but being honest gives you confidence. Simple advice so 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, even when you're trying to win a job.

### Final Word

While I'm all for next-level career advice, negotiation tactics, and arming yourself with the latest interview hack you need to have 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 just leave them out. And if you don't know something, use the trick my Army intel soldiers taught me. Say "I don't know the answer to that, but I can follow up with you after this."

*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. Nina works at a tech startup as a writer, editor and SEO strategist. Find her work on Fairygodboss, SmartAsset, The Muse, The War Horse, Fast Company, and at ninasemczuk.com.*



## MILITARY TO POLICE FORCE: A NATURAL TRANSITION?

By Gary Peterson, Courtesy of Military.com

Unlike many veterans who leave military service with no idea where their next job is coming from, Star Cazador had it all figured out – what she would do, where she would do it, and how much she would like it. Taking a cue from fellow Marines who sought careers in law enforcement after discharge, Cazador, who grew up in San Jose, applied to the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office. It seemed to her like a natural transition.

"There is a huge comfort level," said Cazador, who served in the Marines from 2005 to 2009 and is now a Santa Clara County sheriff's deputy. "In the academy my best friends were other prior military. We knew exactly how each other's brains worked. We could just look at each other. We didn't even have to communicate."

Although many veterans feel that law enforcement is a natural fit, some former servicemembers resent being typecast. Others say the profession is the least suitable career choice for veterans who are still working out emotional issues from deployments. And some veterans consider a career in law enforcement only because they consider it one of the few viable options in a challenging job market.

Veterans face challenges that civilians do not. Some are unsure how to express to potential employers how skills learned in the military translate to the civilian job market. Some return with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury and wonder if those conditions will be a deal-breaker if they reveal them when interviewing for a job.

So the notion of taking military skills to a civilian agency that has a similar structure can be appealing. And that's a two-way street. Several job fairs for veterans have been held in the Bay Area. They all seem to feature multiple law enforcement agencies looking to hire.

"The veterans we're trying to reach out to, they have the set of skills, the discipline and the training where they would easily transition from the military to civilian law enforcement," said San Francisco police Officer Gregory Pak, who manned an information table at a Hiring Our Heroes job fair. "It's a win-win."

For Jeffry Disla, who was preparing for civilian life after spending four years in the Marines and 15 years in the Army, it's more like a marriage of convenience.

"(Working as) a cop would be my fallback if I can't do something else," said Disla, who has served three deployments of 10 months or longer to Iraq and Afghanistan, "simply because I was an infantryman and those are my skills. Anything you want to see in a soldier, you want to see in a policeman."

Others aren't so sure the gun connection is a logical connection. Army veteran Mike Magpusao works for Project Hired, a San Jose-based nonprofit that helps find employment for people with disabilities – including combat veterans.

"I could see how somebody would think that would

be an easy transition," he said. "It's familiar. I work with guns, I know how to use them, why not get a job that uses the same equipment? But I've spoken with vets. And, myself, I think I've experienced enough of that, so I wouldn't want to relive that type of experience."

And Magpusao said some veterans resent being typecast.

"A lot of them get out, they're intelligent, they use the G.I. Bill to get a degree," he said. "It's like, 'I can do more than pull a trigger.'"

Jason Deitch, an Army Ranger who served multiple deployments to Africa and the Middle East, has a concern beyond familiarity or pride.

"I'm not saying there aren't lots of vets out there who wouldn't be extraordinarily good cops," said Deitch, a tactical consultant to police forces when he first got out of the military and who now works as a veteran's rights advocate in Contra Costa County. "(But) many people who have gone to combat for any amount of time have got some stuff that they need to work on."

Deitch said there is no logical link between the two professions, and he urges caution.

"As a matter of fact, there are good reasons to seriously evaluate whether or not that is a good idea," he said. "You're going to continue to expose yourself to violence, tension, stress, anxiety. You come back and become a police officer, the potential for retraumatizing is very high."


There's a screening process for that, said Jennifer Bice, a Santa Clara County sheriff's deputy.

"Part of the background process is the psychological testing," Bice said. "(Veterans) have heard that it's an automatic disqualifier, and it's not. It's a case-by-case basis. We've all experienced bad things in our lives and sometimes that happens to us personally without even going to war. So, it really depends on the individual."

The International Association of Chiefs of Police was concerned enough about "transitional obstacles" veterans might face if they pursued a career in law enforcement that it published guidebooks for veterans and any agencies that might consider hiring them.

"The benefits that I could see veterans bringing to a police force would be great," Deitch said. "You are not going to find better leaders. On the other hand, I care about individual people."





# WHAT'S 10 WEEKS OF CLASSES AFTER 208 WEEKS OF SERVICE?

For many serving our country, transitioning from military life to civilian life can be a difficult mission. Fortunately for students like Cameron Shields, Central Texas College has programs specifically designed for transitioning soldiers. So in just ten weeks, Cameron can earn his certificate for an in-demand field like manufacturing technology. And CTC won't just help him get his foot in the door – Cameron will be completely prepared to start his civilian career. Start your new mission at [CTCD.edu](http://CTCD.edu). **FOR STUDENTS OF THE REAL WORLD™**





# 17 VETERAN ADVOCATES YOU SHOULD BE FOLLOWING ON LINKEDIN

By Adam Braatz, Courtesy of The Post-Military Professional

All servicemembers and veterans should be on LinkedIn. Well, 98% of them. The only people who LinkedIn is not necessarily relevant to are those who are completely retired with no future professional ambitions or business obligations. If you are looking to land your first post-service gig, leave your current job for a better fit (or better compensation), start a business, grow a business, or develop your career in any way, you should get started on LinkedIn as soon as possible. And you should start with your veteran community.

Perhaps you are a veteran or servicemember who is already on LinkedIn but without a developed network or a clue of where to start. Or you are an experienced user looking for more ways to build your network in the veteran community. No matter which stage of your professional career you are in (or how solid your LinkedIn game is), there are a myriad of professional resources available to you. This article will focus on a group of elite veteran advocates and influencers who you should connect with (or follow) right away. Here are a couple of tips to consider first:

## Don't just click "connect."

Seasoned LinkedIn pros know that if you really want to connect with someone, proper etiquette dictates that you send a personalized request. Why? First, LinkedIn influencers get a ton of connection requests every day, and it is disadvantageous to allow yourself to get lost in the fog. Taking a minute to add a personalized message shows you are serious and gives you an opportunity to concisely explain why your connection makes sense. Additionally, don't let the ease-of-use inherent in LinkedIn distract you from the fact that you are using it to develop a network, which should be an interactive, personal, human endeavor.

## In requesting a connection ...

**Do:** use a personalized message. Name drop a mutual connection, but only if you know them well or have their permission.

**Don't:** throw out a website/blog link unless you think it would be specifically pertinent to your connection. Don't cut and paste — actually personalize. It doesn't take long. Under no circumstances should you offer your paid services or attempt a sale at this juncture.

The list, in no particular order:



**Donnie Boivin**  
Host at Success Champions Podcast | Success Coach | Podcast Coach | Content Developer | International Speaker

Why you should follow Donnie: Donnie is a Marine Corps veteran, CEO, and the host of the Success Champion podcast, a top-200 business podcast. He is also a coach and international speaker. His company, Success Champion, is a social media content company that helps individuals and companies produce relevant and engaging content.



**Dylan Raymond, PHR- The Transition Expert**  
Motivational Speaker | Military to Civilian Transition Talent Development | Military Recruitment Program Consultant

Why you should follow Dylan: Dylan is an Army veteran, currently well-known as "The Transition Expert." He is a published author and motivational/keynote speaker who focuses on military to civilian career transition. He also is also a Senior Military Talent Recruiter for Shell Oil.



**Ronaldo Linares**  
US Marine | Cookbook Author | Health & Wellness and Leadership Speaker | #elconductor of the Latino Community | OG Chef

Why you should follow Ronaldo: Ronaldo is a celebrity chef and cookbook author, Chief Creative Officer for the Setroc Group, Inc., and a national spokesperson at the American Heart Association. His book Chef Ronaldo's Sabores de Cuba features nearly 100 Cuban recipes that meet the strict nutrition guidelines of the American Diabetes Association.



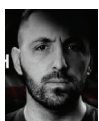
**Curtis Schmitt**  
Combat Veteran serving and empowering Veteran and Business Communities | Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year

Why you should follow Curtis: Curtis left his position as a VP for JPMorgan Chase to dedicate his career to the Wisconsin Veteran's Chamber of Commerce and has since made a huge impact in the Wisconsin veteran community. He has received an avalanche of awards and recognitions for his advocacy work.



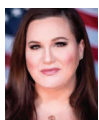
**Sam P. Lark, Jr.**  
Military Spouse | Keynote Speaker | Hired via Social Media 2X | Teaches: Use Social Media to Create Career Security

Why you should follow Sam: Sam is not only a versatile influencer, but he is also an active voice in the veteran advocate community, having experienced life as a veteran spouse. He often speaks about "career security," a phrase he coined in juxtaposition with "job security." He is an extremely insightful guy and is also very active on Facebook and Instagram.



**Andy Weins**  
Veteran Entrepreneur | JDog Junk Removal | Empowering our Veterans, Servicing our Community, Protecting our Environment

Why you should follow Andy: Andy is an Army veteran and CEO/Co-Founder of Green Up Solutions, an environmental consulting company. He also owns the largest and most successful JDog Junk Removal & Hauling franchise out of over 200 nationwide. He is an inspiring motivational speaker and indomitable entrepreneur.



**Natalie Oliverio**  
Founder + CEO | Mentor | Veteran

Why you should follow Natalie: Natalie is a Navy veteran and the founder and CEO of Military Talent Partners, an organization that empowers veterans and military spouses throughout their careers. Military Talent Partners provides mentorship, coaching, and career discovery to help military talent

realize their potential and define their professional goals.



**Jonathan Hagerman**  
USMC Veteran | Founder at The Dirt Therapy Project

Why you should follow Jonathan: Jonathan is the founder of The Dirt Therapy Project, which introduces veterans to mountain biking as a form of stress relief/management. He is also a Supply Chain Manager for USAA.



**Dan Evans**  
Chief Marketing Officer, N2Growth

Why you should follow Dan: Dan is a Marine Corps veteran, social marketing expert, and the Chief Marketing Officer at N2Growth. Prior to joining, he served as Director of Social Business at USAA, where he led a team of consultants who advise lines of business on social media and marketing technology. Dan also founded the USAA Personal Brand Academy™, an employee advocacy group designed to help employees grow their influence online.



**Quincy D. Harper Sr.**  
Military Transition Advisor | Operations Manager | Veteran

Why you should follow Quincy: Quincy is an Air Force veteran and Military Transition Adviser with the USO's Pathfinder program. He is a skilled relationship builder who helps military members and their spouses find a new normal post-service. Pathfinder also helps veterans navigate through the federal, state, and non-profit benefits and resources available to them. Pathfinder Scouts provide one-on-one support to servicemembers and their

families for up to one year before their transition to one year after separation.



**Jay Jackson**  
OIF Veteran | Serial Entrepreneur | Business Strategist | Transformation Architect | Helping Vets Achieve Greatness in Life 2.0!

Why you should follow Jay: Jay is an Air Force veteran, published author, personal branding and career development coach, and military transition architect. His story is motivational to say the least; he is passionately dedicated to serving servicemembers and their families, and his videos are spot on.



**Daniel Rau**  
CEO at Veterati

Why you should follow Daniel: Daniel is a Marine Corps veteran and CEO and Co-Founder of Veterati alongside his wife Diana. After leaving the military, he found civilian job searching to be confusing, chaotic, and messy, and he saw many of his friends facing the same challenge. This inspired Daniel and Diana to create Veterati.



**Isaac Castro**  
Veterans Advocate | People Potentializer | Matchmaker | Money Coach | Speaker | Trainer | Connector | Entrepreneur

Why you should follow Isaac: Isaac is a Marine Corps veteran, advocate, and coach. He helps veterans who are looking for job opportunities, need career direction, or have a desire to make a lasting impact.



**Andre Rush**  
2,222 Push-Ups a Day For Suicide Awareness

Why you should follow

Andre: Andre is an amazing person. US Army veteran, celebrity chef, and bodybuilding powerhouse, Chef Rush cooks gourmet meals at the White House. He has also been featured on the Rachael Ray Show.



**Diana (Tsai) Rau**  
Tech Exec | Impact Entrepreneur | Forbes 30 Under 30

Why you should follow Diana: A Forbes 30 under 30, Diana is the CEO and Co-Founder of Veterati, the nation's #1 mentoring platform for the military. A testament to the power of the platform, Diana met her husband (and Veterati Co-Founder), Daniel, when he reached out to her via LinkedIn. By that time, Diana had already launched three successful start-ups.



**Chris Hoffmann**  
Empower Leaders to Execute on What Matters Most to Them | Author/Podcaster/Ambitious VET Coach & Trainer

Why you should follow Chris: Chris is a Marine Corps veteran and CEO and founder of VET Training & Coaching and the Ambitious VET Podcast. He is extremely active in the veteran advocate community on both LinkedIn and Facebook.



**Adam Braatz**  
Empowering Veterans and Transitioning Servicemembers | Professional Network Development Coach | Public Speaker | US Air Force Veteran | Founder, postmilitarypro.com

Let's connect! Don't forget the personalized connection request of course.

For more content from The Post-Military Professional, visit [postmilitarypro.com](http://postmilitarypro.com)

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# TRANSITIONING FINANCIALLY: START TODAY!

By Brandon Burton, Courtesy of Securing Life Today

Transitioning from the military can be an exciting but also stressful time. For many Veterans, the source of stress is financially related. One way to alleviate financial stress is through research and planning.

Transitioning from the military is a career move. Millions of Americans transition careers every year and no such move is a sure thing. To mitigate risk, transitioning military members should do their homework to prepare themselves better. They should have an idea of what their professional interests are. Not just focus on salary, but consider other benefits as well such as organizational fit, culture, professional development opportunities, etc. The list goes on. Or maybe they are interested in going back to school. Whatever it is, the earlier they have a plan, the better. The plan should be flexible as conditions can change. Other areas to research are what area of the country are you interested in relocating to, cost of living to include gas, food prices, and housing costs. Are there Veteran support organizations in the area you are considering?

With thorough research and planning, transitioning Veterans can have a flexible, actionable plan that can help smooth the transition process. Here are some tips from Securing Life Today's experts.

**Live frugally before you transition.** Start by paying off debt first and building up three-six months of savings. Start living off of 20-50% less than what you are making on active duty to account for potentially lower pay for starting a new career, loss of tax benefits on military pay (i.e. BAH, BAS, etc), and increased costs for employee benefits that were little/no cost in the military (health, dental, vision, etc), and accounting for possibly moving to a higher cost of living area.

- Jonathan Silk, Veteran, Securing Life Today - Advisory Board

**Start planning at least a year ahead of transitioning.** Two years preferably. First thing is to identify an industry you would want to be a part of. Then identify how your specific skills translate into that specific industry. To identify how your specific skills translate, organizations such as your6usa.com is run by Veterans and can help you with building a resume and finding a job. In addition, setting up a plan and vision for personal finances is extremely important. You wouldn't

dare go to combat without training and the right tools, right? So, think of financial planning as the same, it's your survival, and your ability to grow.

- Brandon Burton, Veteran, CEO of Securing Life Today

**Know what's happening with your money.** Military personnel have benefits provided that are tax-favored like the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) which is like the 401k plan for the military. They also have the Blended Retirement Plan (BSR), so it's important to understand the rules and tax complications to roll them over, post service. Not taking this fully into consideration could cause what had been tax-free assets up until this point, to then be subject to taxation later, due to moving those accounts into the wrong type of investment vehicle.

Roth accounts are one way to avoid this taxation issue, but with the early withdrawal penalty being present, does not always serve as a solution to unexpected emergencies. Be sure that your financial advisor is fully versed on military benefits as well as civilian ones, so that they are able to fully take advantage of all of the features your earned benefits contain.

- James Snow, Veteran, Financial Advisor, Securing Life Today Advisor

**Make sure to have at least six months of savings.** Setting up a budget and setting specific financial goals is also very important. The easiest way to do this today is to sign up for a money tool that lets you connect all your accounts in one place, and monitor your financial progress, like a fitness tracker for your money. Make sure to be aware that if you sign up for a service like this, whether it's with your bank or not, if it's a free service, chances are they have access to your financial data, which they can sell to other institutions. The best bet would be signing up for a paid service that keeps your information private and secure and does not market your information. Companies like Securing Life Today and Dave Ramsey have paid models that you can see all your finances in one place, and your information is kept private.

- Brandon Niesman, First Command Financial Advisor, Securing Life Today Advisor

For more information visit [securinglifetoday.com](http://securinglifetoday.com)

## Discovering Your Spark

By Brittany Boccher, 2017 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year

Spring symbolizes new growth, renewal, and optimism. We see the signs of change around us as the days grow longer, the temperature gets warmer, and the flowers begin to bloom. Spring signifies change, and what bigger change do military families face, than transitioning out?

Transitioning out of the military is difficult on the entire family and may significantly impact the lives of military spouses. The constant transition of the military lifestyle causes military spouses to question their personal and professional identity. Your sense of identity is how you perceive yourself, define yourself, and how you recognize your self-worth.

Here are tips to stay true to you during transition!

- Maintain your interest by identifying your passion, purpose, desires and goals.
- Don't allow circumstances to dictate your passion and purpose.
- Establish meaningful communication and seek

mentors.

- Don't let a role (military spouse, mother, etc.) replace you.
- Know your resources and seek help because we all need it!
- Focus on you and allow yourself to grow.
- Get organized and plan ahead as best as you can.
- Value and respect yourself and show grace to yourself and others!

It's imperative to the health and well-being of our community for spouses to recognize their identity and live their lives with purpose! Take a moment to complete a life inventory, especially during a time of transition to help maintain your identity and find your color in a camouflage world. Learn more about Discovering Your Spark, a military spouse program, through the USO. Visit [www.uso.org/militaryspouse](http://www.uso.org/militaryspouse).

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# PROUD TO SERVE AGAIN

By Elmer Harris, Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Education



Each year our school hosts a Veterans Day assembly and breakfast. After this year's assembly, a number of students shared how they were surprised and excited to see my military photo during the slideshow tribute. Some were shocked and amused to see a serious looking and clean shaven Master Sergeant Harris instead of their bearded and smiling classroom teacher, Mr. Harris. I suppose the topic of my 22 years of military service and transition to teaching isn't something I routinely discuss with students.

Teaching is a family tradition for many educators. That's not my story.

**The idea is planted**

Teaching was never on my radar while growing up. The idea to teach was planted many years ago while working within a school but in a different capacity. I was a military recruiter in my early 20s and regularly visited local high schools in an effort to enlist young men and women into the Air Force. During visits to one school, one of the guidance counselors would always walk past my table and casually say, without stopping, "You should consider teaching." I'd always laugh and reply, "No thanks" to his back as he waved and kept moving to another task in his building.

Fast forward several years and it seems that guidance counselor's not-so-subliminal messages worked. After retiring from the Air Force I eventually began the process to become a teacher through the *Troops to Teachers* program.

**The joys and challenges**

While many assume that structure and discipline are key traits that make teaching a good fit for veterans, the ability to be compassionate and relatable have been vital to my success with military students and families. I'm able to engage military parents in the education process because I've been in their position of feeling slightly lost while continually navigating new homes, jobs and school environments. I also understand and adjust when children occasionally act out of character when their mothers and fathers deploy or return from war zones.

I've never had a student who lost a parent, but I've met many on their first day of school accompanied by a parent with a prosthetic limb or cane due to war-related injuries. While some may stare and silently wonder what happened, I'm eager to engage and have them share about their time in service. It's a simple way to quickly establish relationships with military parents.

The Veterans Day assembly was a success. Parents enjoyed breakfast, and my students walked around with their heads high and chests out after their presentations. I was proud as well.

Despite the upheavals and occa-

sional uncertainty faced by my military students and their families, they continue to show amazing resilience. I'm proud that I get the opportunity to support those who continue to serve, and I'm extremely proud and honored to play a role in shaping the lives of their most precious treasure. While it would feel odd to thank another vet or active duty person for their service, I never have a problem routinely asking a very simple question....Have you ever considered teaching?



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# THE CASE FOR MILITARY SPOUSE MENTORSHIP

By Joe Hawthorne,  
Courtesy of American Corporate Partners

**Last year, Catherine started a new job. It wasn't a full-time position, but after years of unemployment, it was a personal milestone. With five previous PCSes ranging from Germany to Philadelphia, Catherine was finally able to focus on her own career.**

Unlike many other job seekers, Catherine is an active-duty military spouse. And in the private sector, that's a big challenge.

"As a spouse, with all the moves, the expectations are really, really high that you will run a household, and meet new people, and fill both shoes," Catherine said. "I wanted to work one day, but there was just no way that I thought I could add another level of responsibility."

As time passed and her family grew, Catherine maintained the drive and skills to build a great career. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and had experience leading her local Family Readiness Group. Caroline merely needed the right guidance to propel her career forward. So this past year, she turned to an ACP Mentor.

American Corporate Partners (ACP) is an international nonprofit that provides free, one-on-one career mentorships to post-9/11 servicemembers. In the last 10 years, ACP has assisted more than 14,000 veterans with their transitions into the private sector, and last year, ACP expanded its mission.

With the support of PepsiCo and Johnson & Johnson, ACP launched its Active Duty Spouse Mentoring Program in November 2018, aiming to support the yearlong mentorship of 600 active-duty spouses in 2019. Now, spouses like Catherine can connect with industry professionals who can help them reach their career goals while still supporting the military career of their partner.

For Catherine, this opportunity has made all the difference in her career progression. "I recognized the need for structure, focus and accountability," she said. "I have four kids, so I don't get any time to myself! It's such a treat to get time concentrated on me. A mentor is dedicated to you and has your best interest in mind."

And for the nearly 600,000 spouses of active duty servicemembers like Catherine, these sacrifices



and time constraints are all too familiar. Securing meaningful work comes with barriers, including frequent PCSes, résumé gaps, and a persistent lack of professional development opportunities near bases. As a result, more than 35% of active-duty military spouses consider themselves to be chronically underemployed.

Meaningful employment, then, means balanced employment, where spouses can utilize their education and prior work experience, while spending time with their families. With ACP, active duty military spouses have somewhere to turn for individualized career guidance, whether they are on their first job or their fifth.

ACP Mentorships aim to bridge this gap by providing support on a range of professional development topics, from résumé building, to networking, to small business advice. ACP's Military Spouse Mentoring Program is committed to assisting 1,500 active duty spouses over the next two years. Whether you have recently moved locations, are considering a new career or thinking about starting a business, ACP has volunteer mentors ready to offer assistance. Sign up for a one-on-one mentorship today at [www.acp-usa.org](http://www.acp-usa.org).



Photos courtesy of Catherine Chalkley



## VA Benefits for After You're Out

Courtesy of Military.com

The Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for ensuring that you receive the care, support, and recognition that you have earned. You may be eligible for the following veterans' benefits:

### VA Healthcare

The VA provides healthcare for everything from Traumatic Brain Injury to Hearing and Vision Benefits.

### VA Disability Benefits

If you are veteran with a service-related disability you may qualify for a tax-free disability payment.

### VA Education & Training Programs

Everyone knows about the GI Bill, but did you know the VA has a Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program as well as Dependent's Education Benefits?

### VA Home Loan Guaranty Program

Home Loan Guaranty benefits enable eligible veterans and servicemembers to purchase a home without making a down payment.

### Veterans Insurance

The VA offers both health insurance and life insurance to eligible veterans and their families.

### Burial and Memorial Benefits

You may not want to think of it, but the VA does provide veterans burial benefits including Headstones & Markers, Burial Flags, and VA Cemeteries.

### Veteran Service Officers (VSO)

Your State, County, or local Veteran Service Organizations have specially trained individuals who can offer assistance. A VSO can give you counseling and help with everything from filling out VA claims and enrollment forms to assisting with claims appeals.

### Veteran Centers

Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all veterans who served in any combat zone. Services are also available for their family members for military related issues. Veterans have earned these benefits through their service and all are provided at no cost to the veteran or family.

### State Veteran Benefits


Many states offer veterans benefits above and beyond those that are available from the VA, these include free fishing licenses, property tax discounts, hiring preference, and many more.

### Other Benefits

There are many more benefits available to you and your family. Visit [military.com/benefits](http://military.com/benefits) for details.



# EXPLORE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES



The Air Force Reserve offers great part-time opportunities for service members transitioning from active duty, as well as those who have previously separated. It gives you the time and financial support to further your education, or begin a civilian career, while continuing your military service toward retirement. As a Reservist, you can continue to do the extraordinary and maintain the camaraderie experienced while serving in the military.

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# FINDING **TRANSITION SUCCESS** THROUGH A **COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY**

By Tyler Freeman,  
Courtesy of VETLANTA

Have you ever considered what it is about your next community that provides value to you and your family as you transition from service? Have you found organizations that bring together the best support network possible to help ease your transition burden? At VETLANTA, we believe that we know Atlanta better than anyone when it comes to the needs of veterans and their families. That's why we use our community collaboration model to bridge the gaps to transition and empower veterans to find success through our network of Atlanta-veterans focused for-profit, non-profit, and governmental organizations like the Georgia VECTR Center, Team RWB, and the Headstrong Project.

VETLANTA, through the years, has worked towards one goal: Making Atlanta the premier destination for veterans and their families. One of the ways we do that is by facilitating a successful transition. We're held up by our five Pillars: Business, Employment, Education, Healthcare, and Housing, all of which are led by volunteers who have strong ties to their communities and work to further causes such as veterans hiring initiatives, veterans housing issues, and advocating for veterans in higher education. Our pillars focus on the areas that veterans most commonly have questions about. Using our pillars as guides, we then bring together the best organizations we can find to help address the needs of veterans and their families.

By using a community-based, collaborative, and inclusive approach, VETLANTA has become the largest club for veterans in Atlanta, and we've done it without ever charging a single membership due or entry fee, and we never will. We rely on support from corporate partners like Coca-Cola, UPS, and the AMB Group, who recognize the value that veterans bring to their corporations and to the Atlanta area. Our summits, hosted quarterly, bring together the best organizations that have a physical and impactful presence in Atlanta to share with the veterans and their families the services and activities that are available to them through our partners. We even feature some Veteran Owned Small Businesses too. If it provides value to the veterans of Atlanta, we want to know about it.

VETLANTA focuses on Atlanta. We've been asked to expand to other areas in and around the Southeast and we've chosen to remain committed to driving significant impact to the veterans and military families that call Atlanta home. Fortunately, we're not the only ones that have recognized the value of the community-based model in delivering real results for our neighbors. Organizations like Combined Arms in Houston, the Four State CVEB, and the America's Warrior Partnership (AWP) affiliate program all recognize the value that community-based, community-led resource aggregators provide to veterans in all stages of their transition.

We're always looking for new ways to improve our service to veterans and their families, and most recently, we recognized that while we had a

great view of the ecosystem in Atlanta, we were missing a critical piece of helping veterans in need: case management. So, we partnered with a new organization: The Warrior Alliance (an affiliate of AWP). Using their Warrior Navigators, VETLANTA and other Atlanta-based service organizations and corporations can now refer veterans who request services to The Warrior Alliance and leverage their full-time case workers and highly selective partners to offer services to veterans at no cost. Together, we're able to not only find

the right organizations doing the right things at the 30,000 foot level, but now we have the capability to deliver a high-touch, high-impact experience to almost every veteran that needs our help. This can only be accomplished through open dialogue and open collaboration at the community level.

Before you transition, do some digging, find the resources and the community-based, collaborative organizations like VETLANTA to help you and your family transition to your next mission.



Photo Credit: Mike Flagg



**They've given a lot for our country.  
Let's give them a path to financial wellness.**

**As service members transition to civilians,** they'll face many new financial decisions, and take on more costs and financial risks than ever before.

**We believe that helping veterans and their families** achieve financial wellness has a far-reaching impact. That's why we're partnering with the USO to launch Prudential Pathways<sup>SM</sup> workshops on key financial planning topics, and making financial wellness resources easy to access.

**We can help you meet the challenge.** Because when veterans can build a solid financial foundation, it makes us all stronger.



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# CYBERSECURITY INDUSTRY NEEDS CYBER INTELLIGENCE SPECIALISTS WHO UNDERSTAND IPOE

By Dr. Edna Reid, (FBI Analyst, Retired), Director, Online Graduate Certificate in Cyber Intelligence, James Madison Univ., Harrisonburg, VA

With the critical shortage of cybersecurity professionals, there is a desperate need for cyber intelligence specialists (aka cyber threat intelligence analysts) who understand the terrain (e.g., operational environment) and the enemy (e.g., cyber adversary's TTPs). Having served in the military, understanding the operational terrain and enemy are part of your skill sets! They are components of the Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (IPOE) which has similarities to cyber intelligence (CyInt).

Both IPOE and CyInt are analytical processes focusing on defining the operational environment, describing its impact, profiling adversaries, and anticipating future actions. CyInt is an emerging discipline involving analytical and behavioral analysis of the cyber threat environment and cyber adversary. Since all cyberattacks are associated with people, CyInt goes beyond just focusing on known threats and technical network defense (e.g., patching operating systems, using anti-virus software). It includes analyzing and tracking the motivations, capabilities, geopolitical situations, and activities of potential cyber adversaries and competitors, as they evolve.

CyInt supports an enhanced understanding of who is doing the attack, the why of an attack, the geopolitical ramifications, what might be the next targets, and the implications for the organization's security posture. It involves an analysis of the cyber threat environments (e.g., organization's assets) and adversaries (e.g., cybercriminals, national state adversaries) to support decision making. A major goal of CyInt is to help organizations enhance

cybersecurity planning and be more proactive in responding and preparing for cyber threats to physical and digital assets.

So what does the path to becoming a CyInt specialist look like? It involves:

- Enhancing your soft skills such as critical thinking, writing, and briefing.
- Learning how to apply cyber analytical methodologies and tools.
- Learning about cybersecurity landscape, ethical and legal issues, as well as policy implications.
- Strengthening your information technology and networking skills.

If you have your undergraduate degree and CyInt sounds exciting, then a CyInt specialist position may be in your future!



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## ADVERTORIAL

# GO BACK TO SCHOOL WITH THE GI BILL

When transitioning from military to civilian life, you may wonder what's out there for you. Where do you fit in?

But the real question is how do you stand out? Maybe it's time you showcase your talents. An education can give you unlimited opportunities to pursue a new career.

At Excelsior College, we want you to realize your dreams, and we help you every step of the way. Once you're ready, we get to work gathering your information and apply credits you've earned just by being in the service toward your degree. To find out how many credits you have earned, call for a free credit evaluation at 844-843-9299. You can also visit Excelsior's website at [cme.excelsior.edu](http://cme.excelsior.edu).

Many servicemembers don't realize how beneficial the GI Bill is and leave the military without understanding their real value in the civilian workforce. Your skill sets are valuable, and employers actively seek veterans because they can learn new skills and concepts and apply them under real-world pressure.

## PREPARATION FOR YOUR EDUCATION

Your ability and skills, coupled with education, will give you an advantage over most applicants. You already practice what employers look for in an employee. For example, veterans have a demonstrated ability to lead by example, work within a team, perform under pressure, and respect policy and procedure.

Knowing what you have to offer can help you determine what type of career you want outside of the military, and college can help you secure your place in that industry. You earned money toward an education, so you should put it to good use and get your degree.

"I did use my GI Bill to return to school," says Eric Potvin, a veteran who chose Excelsior College. "As I recall, the process was fairly simple. I filled out a form on the VA website and designated Excelsior College as my school for GI Bill purposes. After that, I don't remember having to do much else. The school was paid automatically, and I received my monthly stipend for housing and my annual stipend for books. Too easy!"

Potvin's veteran admissions counselor recommended the Bachelor of Science in National Security because it aligned with his military experience and career goals. Eric successfully completed the program in 2018 and is now working as a principal instructor for Raytheon, a U.S. defense contractor and industrial corporation.

The GI Bill is a Department of Veterans Affairs education benefit earned by people like you who have served active duty, reserve, and National Guard duties. The goal of this benefit is to help servicemembers and veterans cover the costs associated with getting an education.

Excelsior College, a not-for-profit, regionally accredited online institution, offers more than 40 programs at the associate, bachelor's, and master's levels, helping almost 200,000 students—including 72,000 servicemembers and veterans—earn their degrees since 1971. Excelsior's dedicated veteran admissions counselors work with veterans every day and are available to answer any questions you may have about benefits and resources. They help you apply your GI Bill and other educational benefits toward your degree.

In addition to receiving credits for your military training and experience, you can apply credit from CLEP and DSST exams and courses from other accredited colleges and universities toward your degree program, which allows you to complete your degree sooner.

## USE OF THE GI BILL

Under the GI Bill, qualifying veterans—along with their family members—can get money to cover some or all the costs for school.

If you were awarded Post-9/11 Bill education benefits, you can review how much of your benefits you've used by reviewing the GI Bill of Benefits. If you have unused Post-9/11 benefits, you may also transfer them to your spouse or dependent children.



"I did use my GI Bill to return to school. As I recall, the process was fairly simple. I filled out a form on the VA website and designated Excelsior College as my school for GI Bill purposes...The school was paid automatically, and I received my monthly stipend for housing and my annual stipend for books. Too easy!"

**Eric Potvin, Veteran,**  
Bachelor of Science in  
National Security, 2018

The GI Bill has additional benefit options like:

- **The Tuition Assistance Top-Up—** A program that may cover the cost if your college tuition costs more than what's covered by the GI Bill.
- **The \$600 Buy-Up—** A program that allows you to get more money each month through your GI monthly payments.
- **Tutorial Assistance—** If you are struggling with your coursework and are using VA benefits, you may qualify for help paying for a tutor.

You're never too old, and it's never too late, to get an education. Excelsior College makes it easy for you to jump right in. It specializes in optimizing your benefits, so you can pursue your dream—whatever it may be.



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