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Transition Guide

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“Boots to Business”

programs helps transitioning airmen into civilians careers as business owners

By Nicholas Quallich – Courtesy of KFDX

Part of the Air Force motto states “Integrity first, service before self.” And specialized service to the community is what some airmen, transitioning to civilian life, are learning about.

Major Celina Hatleberg has been in the United States Air Force for nearly 20 years. Now, she’s looking at plans beyond her career serving her country. While she said she wants to fly for a major airline, she also wants to put a business plan into place.

“I do want to start my own business as a practitioner, someone who helps others,” Major Hatleberg explained. “It’s called Faster EFT. It’s neuro-linguistic programming; it’s working with your subconscious, how to change those programs, how you do things daily.”

And to get there, she’s taking advantage of the Boots to Business program: a service of the U.S. Small Business Administration and part of the Department of Defense’s Transition Assistance Program or TAPS.

“It’s a workshop that helps inspire and encourage them to become entrepreneurs and teaches them the basic skills of how to think about it and to get started,”

said Myron Pullum, the leader of the seminar, from the Veterans Business Outreach Center.

Pullum says when he left the Army more than 20 years ago, programs like Boots to Business just didn’t exist. All he got was some basic information about moving into the civilian life.

“It was geared toward helping you find a job and making sure that your family was taken care of if you passed away,” Pullum stated.

The two day seminar covers topics such as legally setting up a business, business planning and more.

And quite a few airmen, like Major Hatleberg, are taking advantage of the opportunity.

It’s an opportunity that provides many resources, helping those in the military transition from serving their country, to serving their community as an entrepreneur.

The program is free to veterans and their families. ■

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YOU CAN TAKE THE UNIFORM OFF THE SOLDIER...



By: Kelly Crigger

A GRADUATE of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Davidson enlisted on a whim in the Army's Signal Corps in 1999 and eventually ended up at OCS where he was branched as an Artillery Officer in 2001. After three combat tours of Iraq and Afghanistan, Davidson was medically retired from the Army in 2007 and went into business as a GSA Schedule Program Manager for a large defense contractor...until the day his troops weren't taken care of properly.

"These guys really screwed my team over," Davidson says. "We worked our butts off and won a contract worth nearly \$120M but when I asked for a small bonus for my team and they said no, I vented and walked out on the spot." A golden rule of business is to never make a professional decision out of emotion, but for Davidson, it worked. "I probably shouldn't have done it, but you just can't compromise your principals. No matter how much you need a job, you don't need it enough to change who you are. Never cave on what you believe to be right."

That philosophy paid off big when Davidson launched his own company dedicated to opening the doors of the Government's GSA catalog for veteran-owned businesses. After building a sterling reputation and long client list over 8 years, VetsGSA was acquired and renamed as GCO Consulting.

But this story isn't about one man's attitude and success as much as it's about a former soldier remembering what made him who he is, not just professionally, but personally. His pros-

Some people are born to fight for a cause. They become passionate, maybe even obsessed, with something and dedicate every available minute they have toward advancing that thing. Lucky for us, **Scott Davidson's** cause is veterans and military spouses. An 8-year veteran with 3 combat tours including the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Davidson embodies the guy-who-makes-it-big-and-gives-back mentality and his post-Army career has translated into real events for the betterment of veterans.

perity in business has allowed Davidson to launch several veteran-focused endeavors like The Veteran Market, the Veterans Services Resource Group (a non-profit), a Veterans and Military Spouses Empowerment Conference and most recently, BourBiz, a revolutionary series of events designed to bring veterans and military spouses together to give them a full suite of resources they need to succeed in business and in life.

"The goal of BourBiz is to bridge the military civilian gap and give veterans and military spouses opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have. We bring in professionals to work with veterans and offer networking connections. We don't charge anything and all the booze and raffle items are donated."

BourBiz is well on its way to being in every major city in the coming years to give veterans a one-stop-shop for a suite of resources, but attendees don't need to be in business to be part of it. They can come and learn about new opportunities that may not have been available to them in the past, like Transcendental Meditation, Health & Wellness Resources, Post 9-11 GI Bill information and even claims and disabilities assistance for benefits. And major players have taken note. BourBiz has attracted plenty of big name corporate supporters like Amazon and Sam Adams as well as notable personalities in the veteran community like Jas Boothe, Medal of Honor Recipient Clint Romesha, Jack Mandaville, and Justin Constantine.

But probably the biggest partnership for BourBiz are the Washington DC professional sports teams. Davidson's passion

for the empowerment of Veterans and military spouses attracted the attention of the Washington Redskins, whose charitable foundation made GCO their official military families sponsor.

"I love working with the Redskins Charitable Foundation because their hearts are in the right place," Davidson says. "They sincerely want to help veterans and the children of military families. During the Salute to Service week, the Redskins players go all over the city to read to kids and single out the children of deployed service members to give them a little extra attention. We believe in their mission and they believe in ours so it's a win-win."

In recognition of Davidson's combined efforts to further veteran causes, he was inducted into the 2017 Hill Vets 100 list. This prestigious list is a who's who of the most impactful and influential veterans of the year with too many names to mention here, but take our word for it...it's impressive. Scott was also nominated by Hill Vets for the Reboot Business Award which highlights veterans who have demonstrated entrepreneurial success and a commitment to make an impact beyond the boardroom based upon his work with BourBiz and the Charitable Foundation.

So, the obvious question is why is that kid from New Jersey so passionate about Veteran causes long after leaving the Army?

"I've just seen horrible things happen to good people," he says. "I've seen hard working troops get taken advantage of, overlooked, and discarded and I hate it. I want to make a difference in the lives of those who have made a difference in shaping this country. I want to do something that enriches their lives both professionally and personally. They deserve it."

"I've seen hard working troops get taken advantage of, overlooked, and discarded and I hate it. I want to make a difference in the lives of those who have made a difference in shaping this country."

When it comes to charitable causes, some people talk the talk but don't walk the walk. We've all heard of those who say they want to further the cause of (insert charitable cause here), but when it comes down to it, they take no action. That can't be said for Scott Davidson. Besides spending his own time and money on so many veteran-focused efforts, he regularly meets with multi-million-dollar companies and high-powered clients with that same old green Army book emblazoned with Soldier slang inside the covers. There's still a trooper in there.

Lucky for us. ■

IS YOUR NEXT STEP JOINING THE RESERVES? GET THE BASICS



More than one in four active duty service members tell us they intend to join the reserves. It can be a great option for lots of service members.

Reserve duty can do more than fulfill your obligation. It's also a good way to keep one foot in the military community and one foot in the civilian world. As a reservist, you can be connected to the benefits of military life and civilian life at the same time.

Reserve duty is also a viable path to the many benefits of retiring from the military. To retire, you'll need to complete at least 20 years of active-duty years and reserve years.

Reserve Component benefits

Here's a quick look at the benefits you'll have by transitioning to the reserves:

- **Part-time pay:** Pay is based on rank and service time. Bonuses are sometimes available for high-demand skills.
- **Skills training:** Your active-duty skills will be put to good use in the National Guard or Reserve. Or maybe you'll choose to retrain in a completely different field. The Reserve Component has different manpower needs, so you may have new career choices available.
- **Health Plan:** TRICARE Reserve Select is available worldwide for qualified Selected Reserve members and their families when the military member is not on active duty orders. Reserve members on active duty for more than 30 days receive comprehensive medical and dental care at no cost.
- **Education:** If you're in the Selected Reserve and have signed up for at least six years, you can access up to three years of educational assistance through the Montgomery GI Bill® for Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR), with a possibility of a "kicker" for certain high-demand fields.
- **Commissary and exchange privileges:** Reserve members have access.
- **Retirement:** Keep the retirement benefits earned on active duty, and continue to earn points toward a reserve retirement.

Other benefits of the Reserve Component? Flexibility. The reserves offer types of duty you wouldn't have available in traditional active duty. And if you move, you may be able to change your unit affiliation.

Plus, yes, there's that camaraderie that's hard to find. If there are parts of military life you'd miss by separating completely, the reserves offer an excellent alternative.



The transferability option of the Post-9/11 GI Bill allows Servicemembers to transfer all or some unused benefits to their spouse or dependent children. The Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Public Health Service, or Department of Commerce determines whether or not you can transfer benefits to your family. Once your department approves benefits for transfer, the new beneficiaries apply for them at VA.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO TRANSFER THEIR GI BILL BENEFITS?

- Any member of the Uniformed Services (active duty or Selected Reserve, officer or enlisted) on or after August 1, 2009, who is eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and has at least 6 years of service in the Armed Forces on the date of election and agrees to serve 4 additional years in the Armed Forces from the date of election.
- Has at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or selected reserve) on the date of election, is precluded by either standard policy (service or DoD) or statute from committing to 4 additional years, and agrees to serve for the maximum amount of time allowed by such policy or statute
- Is or becomes retirement eligible and agrees to serve an additional 4 years on or after August 1, 2012. A service member is considered to be retirement eligible if he or she has completed 20 years of active duty or 20 qualifying years of reserve service.
- Transfer requests MUST be submitted and approved while the member is in the armed forces.

WHO CAN RECEIVE TRANSFERRED GI BILL BENEFITS?

- If you are eligible to transfer benefits you can transfer your entitlement to:
- Your spouse.
 - One or more of your children.
 - Any combination of spouse and child.

A family member must be enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) and be eligible for benefits, at the time of transfer to receive transferred educational benefits.

If your child gets married it doesn't affect their eligibility to receive the transferred benefits; however, you can take away or change the transferred benefits at any time.

If you get divorced, your ex-spouse can still use the transferred benefits; however, you can take away or change the transferred benefits at any time, depending on the divorce settlement.

HOW TO TRANSFER YOUR POST-9/11 GI BILL BENEFITS

You can only apply to transfer benefits while you are on active duty, once you leave active duty it is too late. You should either apply online at milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil or follow your service's instructions.

While in the armed forces, transferors use the Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB) website to designate, modify, and revoke a Transfer of Entitlement (TOE) request. After leaving the armed forces, transferors may provide a future effective date for use of TOE, modify the number of months transferred, or revoke entitlement transferred by submitting a written request to VA.

Tuition funds will be sent direct from the VA to the school. Children are eligible for the monthly living stipend and/or the books and supplies stipend while you are serving on active duty. Your spouse is eligible for the books and supplies stipend, but not the monthly living stipend, while you are on active duty, because both you and your spouse are already receiving the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). If you are not currently serving on active duty, then both your spouse and children

are eligible for the monthly living stipend and/or the books and supplies stipend.

DETAILS ON USING TRANSFERRED GI BILL BENEFITS

You may transfer up to the total months of unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, or the entire 36 months if you haven't used any.

Family member use of transferred educational benefits is subject to the following:

- A spouse may start to use the benefit immediately.
- May use the benefit while the member remains in the Armed Forces or after separation from active duty.
- Is not eligible for the monthly housing allowance while the member is serving on active duty.
- Can use the benefit for up to 15 years after the servicemember's last separation from active duty.
- A child may start to use the benefit only after the individual making the transfer has completed at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces.
- May use the benefit while the eligible individual is on active duty or after separation from active duty.
- May not use the benefit until he/she has attained a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate), or reached 18 years of age.
- Is entitled to the monthly housing allowance even though the eligible individual is on active duty.
- Is not subject to the 15 time limit, but can only use the transferred benefits until they are 26 years old.

Visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_transfer to learn more. ■

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8 Hard-earned Tips on Military Transition

Despite 33 years of service to our nation – including multiple combat and peacekeeping tours – my transition into the private sector was one of the most challenging periods in my life. As an honorable soldier, I conducted an after-action review to capture my lessons learned. A compilation of my notes and other tips are presented in Koch's Ultimate Guide for Transitioning Veterans. Through this article, other veterans might benefit and enjoy a less challenging transition into their new career.

By Col. John Buckley,
U.S. Army, Retired

Courtesy of Military.com

I began my transition woefully unprepared for the challenges that awaited me. I was wildly shooting over one hundred resumes “down range” in hopes of hitting an unseen target – a blind, Kentucky windage-style approach. I received no feedback in return. It wasn't until I put structure to my problem and began using military problem-solving tools that my performance and results improved. Sun Tzu, a military strategist and philosopher, became my guide.

I realized to achieve success in my transition “battle” I needed to properly prepare for combat. So, I studied the “enemy” (the recruiter), their methods of war (the application and selection process), and myself (by defining my own career interests). Soon, I overcame my challenge and stood victorious.

Principal Transition Advice:

Start early, study and analyze the new complex operating environment – the private sector – before launching resumes “down range.” Don't make the mistakes I made.

1. Focus on your objective of shaping a new career. It is more com-

plex than a job hunt. You don't want to resume job hunting one year later because you didn't do it right the first time.

2. Aggressively conduct informational interviews with professionals in your career field of interest. It's ok to listen to recently transitioned veterans, but you really need to interview someone who's been working in your desired career field their entire professional life.
3. Build a network that is focused on your career field of interest. Then leverage that network to learn about job opportunities, professional organizations to join, what certificates or education to pursue, and the cultural environment of potential employers.
4. Build a professional profile on LinkedIn and other job networks, supported by a professional picture. Remove your official military photo, and remove all military jargon and references. Treat others on these networks professionally. It's not Facebook. To connect with another professional, use a connection in your network to “introduce” you to the professional, or draft a detailed message

explaining why you want to join the professional's network.

5. Write a unique resume for a specific job description. You'll never be successful in Korea if you

use the OPLAN and operational graphics from Operation Desert Storm. Likewise, you'll never be invited to an interview if you use a resume that is not distinctively written for the job to which you applied. Finally, write for your audience. Think about what's important to them, which is simple because it's an open book test – the answers are in the job description.

6. Prepare for the interview like there is no tomorrow. Rehearse your actions on the objective. Practice how to answer situation-based interview questions. Learn how to speak a complete sentence without using one single military term, title or acronym. Also, be aware that there are preconceived ideas about veterans. Try not to play into them. During the interview, be candid, honest and humble. Try to be conversational and relaxed, and provide complete answers.
7. Companies expect you to negotiate their offer, so be ready. Don't wait for the offer to arrive, prepare early in your transition planning. Review the entire deal. Don't fixate on the salary. Compensation packages may provide programs that will strengthen the salary offered and may also be negotiated – perhaps even more easily. Be reasonable, knowledgeable, flexible, enthusiastic and avoid ultimatums.
8. Never leave a fallen comrade. When you have succeeded, turn around and help another military veteran. ■

8 Steps to Successfully Negotiating a Job Offer

At one point in my transition, I'd interviewed for a job and felt confident I would receive an offer. Naturally, I considered how I would react. I concluded that I had no earthly idea what I was doing – in the military, we never had to negotiate our salary or compensation package.

The truth is, companies will expect you to negotiate their offer. You can better assess any offer against your needs and your personal value. This will help you find a “win-win” – the ultimate objective of the negotiation process.

Before the Interview:

- Evaluate yourself, your needs and your current situation.
- Evaluate the company, its location and your willingness to travel.

During the Interview:

- Ask questions to help you better understand the role requirements and duties. This will help you to assess the value you will create for the company, the biggest determining factor in offer negotiations.
- Waiting for a job offer can be a stressful period. Put yourself at ease by asking the recruiter about the company's selection timeline.

Reviewing the Offer:

- Once you've secured an offer, ask for time to review and consider it – two to three days is not unreasonable.
- Salary is not the only thing to consider – review the entire deal, including benefits. Sometimes benefits are easier than salary to negotiate.

During the negotiation:

- Be reasonable, knowledgeable, flexible and enthusiastic.
- Avoid ultimatums unless you will refuse the offer if the company does not meet your particular demand(s).

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OPERATION WARFIGHTER PREPARES SERIOUSLY ILL AND INJURED SERVICE MEMBERS FOR CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT

Courtesy of DOD Warrior Care

Preparing for a post-military career can start well before separation from service, even if recovering from a serious injury or illness.

Operation Warfighter (OWF) is a DOD federal internship program that matches seriously ill or injured service members with internship opportunities, allowing them to develop new skills and prepare for the transition to civilian life during their recovery and rehabilitation.

The transition process for ill and injured service members is often lined with additional hurdles. Navigating medical appointments and participating in physical therapy are among the many steps that come during recovery and rehabilitation. However, for many, there are day-to-day struggles that can sometimes eclipse everything else that's happening as part of the transition process. OWF exists to provide the customized, flexible and personal support these service members need.

Since 2006, more than 9,000 service members have been placed in fed-

eral internships through OWF. For these service members, OWF has been an opportunity to improve skills, enhance personal marketability, build professional networks and increase career options. The OWF model demonstrates to service members that the skills obtained in the military are transferable to civilian employment while enabling federal employers to familiarize themselves better with the skill sets of servicemembers and benefit from their considerable talent and dedication.

The Benefits of Internships

Studies have found those who participate in internships before joining the civilian workforce are more likely to learn about their career options and their professional likes and dislikes. This process helps interns to more quickly and efficiently identify a career path, which can lead to a more stable career trajectory.

Timothy Baker, the director of acquisition for DOD's Joint Staff J7 Directorate, has led the charge to build their internship program

through OWF. "As anyone who has been in uniform knows, transition is a very scary proposition," said Baker. "You thought you were going to be a servicemember for many years and all of the sudden you have to do something different. We see interns emerge from OWF having developed new and marketable skills that significantly help in their search to find meaningful and steady careers in a difficult job market."

For OWF interns, the experience can be transformative. More than 90 percent of recent OWF participants who completed post-program evaluations indicated their internship was an important part of their recovery process. More than 95 percent reported they would recommend OWF to another service member in transition.

"OWF is a great program and working with my agency of choice helped me confirm my decision for my post military career in the agriculture field," according to a servicemember who recently completed an internship with the Department of Agriculture. "I'm thankful for the opportunity to focus on my transition thanks to OWF."

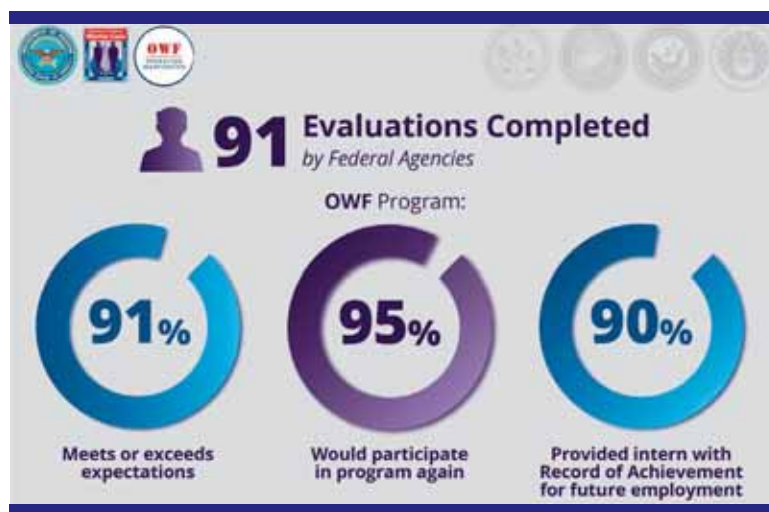
Participating in OWF

Servicemembers interested in participating in OWF should be aware of two primary considerations:

- **A medical evaluation deeming the servicemember** emotionally ready to participate in OWF while continuing medical treatment.
- **A command and control evaluation** that concludes that the servicemember demonstrates the initiative and self-discipline required to participate in OWF.

Currently, the top five agencies supporting OWF internships are Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Agriculture. However, OWF's 10 regional coordinators have relationships with many other agencies and offices throughout the United States. OWF Regional Coordinators work with servicemembers to match them with their desired internship. Nearly 80 percent of service members are placed in an internship with their desired agency.

For more information on OWF or to find an OWF regional coordinator visit www.warriorcare.mil. ■



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A man with a beard, wearing a black wetsuit, stands on a sandy beach holding a large green surfboard. In the background, there is a pier extending into the ocean under a cloudy sky.

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3 THINGS I WISH I KNEW ABOUT MILITARY TRANSITION

Courtesy of Military.com

Before my husband retired from the Air Force, a co-worker asked if I was ready for his retirement. She, an ex MilSpouse, insisted that the transition to the civilian world was going to be hard.

I disagreed.

I told myself I had never fully immersed myself into the military way of life. After every PCS, I found a job in the civilian world and made friends outside the military gates. I did not feel the change was going to be that drastic or difficult.

Two years after my husband's retirement I now know how right she was. These are the things I wish I knew then.

1. Consider where you plan to live after retirement. When planning for retirement, I recommend that your family consider living near a military installation. You really don't realize how important all the perks of living near a base are until you leave the military.

We all have heard of the safety net -- this invisible shield that protects all military families from stressors, financial hardships, and provides support during deployments and emergencies. I never fully took advantage of this safety net, but I came to appreciate it when my husband retired.

We retired an hour from the nearest base and suddenly I missed the camaraderie that comes with living near one. I missed running to the commissary and knowing it wouldn't break the bank. I missed the safety of living on a military base. I knew my family was surrounded by some of the bravest in the world.

Also, it is harder to participate in transition services and career counseling. I no longer live in a community that offers support and encouragement during transition, especially in the job hunt. I had thought I would not miss all of these safety net services, because I had sometimes opted out of them. I know now retiring close to a base would have made things so much easier.

2. Take time out for vacations and alone time. The stress involved in the transition from the military to civilian world actually surprised me. Not only is the camaraderie gone, but also the adventure that comes with being in the military community.

Whenever things were too stressful, there was always some new place to travel to and explore. There was always the anticipation of the next assignment.

Do not hesitate to ask for assistance or even a few minutes of alone time. A week after the moving truck dropped 200 boxes off at my house, my sister had heart surgery and came to live with us. I should have asked for help then, from family or just neighbors to open boxes or just

watch the kids when I took a few minutes for myself.

Throw your independence to the side. If you need help with anything, during the transition, ask for it. You will be able to better deal with the difficulties that always come with the move. Take a break, or take a vacation. I have discovered that you and your spouse need to find out who you are without the military. The kinks in your relationship

that were put aside due to deployments or a PCS, will now have to be dealt with.

Take time and breathe.

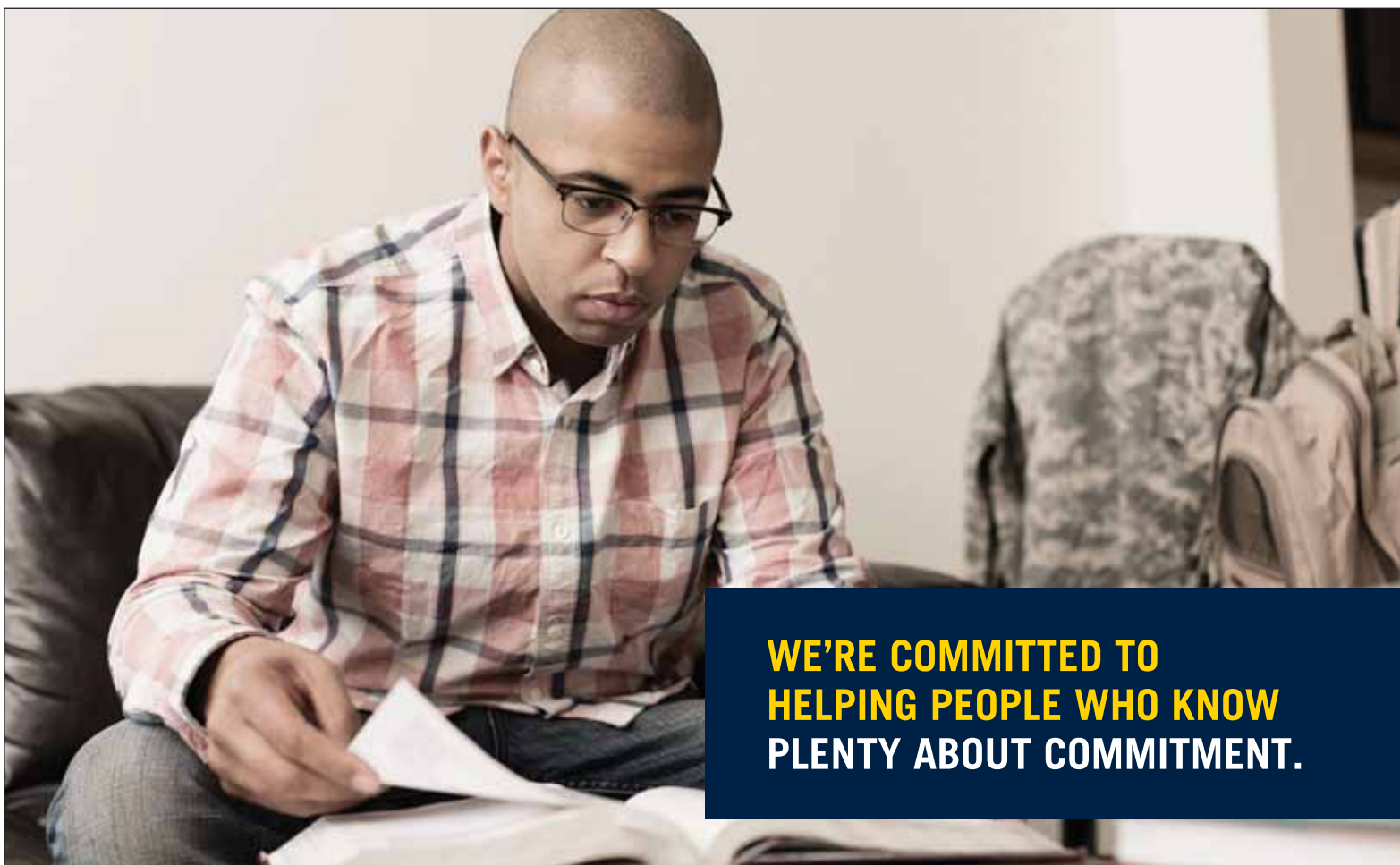
3. It is important to get involved in your community. The military community made it easy. During deployments, moving, and emergencies, someone was always there to assist. Sometimes it was just the person next door who was going through the same thing. Sometimes it was

the squadron commander or base chaplain. Information on support groups, activities and financial assistance was always readily available. It wasn't hard to stay informed about events and activities.

It is important that you form these same kinds of bonds in your civilian community. It will be harder. No one will have your name on a list and ask you to the next squadron picnic.

I suggest you become involved in military charities or organizations. Find a church that all members of your family are comfortable with. Volunteer. Use social media to connect to the local community.

While you may be tired and stressed, make even the smallest of efforts to engage in your new community. It will make things so much easier during the adjustment. Create your own safety net. ■



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TOP 10 MILITARY TRANSITION PODCASTS

By Justin Sloane
Courtesy of Military.com

Everyone recommends you find a mentor when you transition out of the military, and you certainly should. Podcasts can both help you find a mentor and life-hack the need for a mentor until you find the right one. With that in mind, we have compiled a list of 10 Military Veteran Transition podcasts. These podcasts are all geared toward helping veterans transition, and often include interviews with veterans who have had successful civilian careers.

Do you need more convincing? Some of the guests from these shows include veterans such as a former Executive Vice President of Operations for the Walt Disney World Resort, startup creators such as Vet-Tech, Entrepreneur on Fire, Broughton Hotels, and Two Men and a Truck, a game writer on the Game of Thrones (the author of this article), writer and artist of the military comic Terminal Lance, and many more.

THE PODCASTS:

SuccessVets (Byron Chen)

Previous episodes include:

- Jim Estes: Former PGA Tour Player Starts The Salute Military Golf Association
- Nicholas Bradfield: Simple Do-It-Yourself Investing That Beats The Pros

Veteran On the Move (Joe Crane)

Previous Episodes include:

- High School Drop Out to Dr. and Founder of Blue Dragon Enterprises with Air Force Veteran Rob Garcia.
- Center for Transitional Leadership with Founder and Army Veteran Bob Ulin

Command Your Business (Scott Fussell)

Previous Episodes include:

- Larry Broughton, Army Special Forces to Running a Hotel Empire
- Interview with Ken Robbins, 20 Yr Army Vet to Entrepreneur

Military Entrepreneur Show (Dan Evans)

Previous Episodes include:

- Sarah Plummer Taylor | Marine Turned Author, Speaker & Entrepreneur
- Nick Bradfield | Founder of Divvy Investments

Military Veterans in Creative Careers

(Justin Sloan, Jennifer Marshall, Trevor Scott)

Previous Episodes include:

- Cinematography and Film School with Christopher Murray
- Military Writing SCHOLARSHIP for the San Francisco Writers Conference and more!

Lead like a Marine (Frank Gustafson)

Previous Episodes include:

- Darryl Lyons, Author, Small Business Big Pressure, Veteran Advocate
- Chris Kennedy PHD, US Navy Pilot, Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur

In The Trenches (Tom Morkes)

Previous Episodes include:

- How to Create a Platform with Marshall Van Alstyne
- How to Build a Business as a Millennial with Mojca Mars

The Military Wallet Podcast (Ryan Guina)

Previous Episodes include:

- Buy Back Military Service for Civil Service Retirement Credits with a Military Service Credit Deposit
- Health Care Benefits After Separating from the Military

Veteran Transition Podcast (Craig Mayville)

Previous Episodes include:

- Chris Henry, Former Marine Sgt. and HMH-463 Air Framer
- Lou, Former Marine SSgt and CH-53 Mechanic

Mentors for Military Podcast

(Scott Kinder, Rudy Lindsey, Mike Pritts, Kat Kaelin)

Previous Episodes include:

- Matt Johnson - Former UK Veteran, Cop, and Current Author
- Tackling boredom and lack of structure post military

HOW TO USE THESE PODCASTS

Each of the above podcasts covers military transition, but in their own way. For example, Frank Gustafson's Lead Like a Marine podcast focuses on leadership and discovering your passion in the workplace, The Military Wallet is more focused on leveraging your benefits to succeed, and the Military Veterans in Creative Careers podcast focuses on veterans who want to transform their creative interests into careers.

The advice from these podcasts is immensely valuable both as you start your transition and as you continue on your career. Look to these speakers and guests as your virtual mentors, and if nothing else, some great inspiration. If you like a guest and want to connect, find their email (sometimes their contact information is included in the "show notes" – the information provided in the link to their episodes on the websites or within iTunes). There are plenty of other helpful military transition podcasts out there too, so don't stop with these ones.

If you have a story to tell, contact the podcast hosts and ask to be on the show. They are always looking for more guests, and they look forward to hearing your story! ■



PREPARE FOR YOUR HEALTHCARE TRANSITION

Courtesy of Military.com

While you are in the service, you and your family have health care coverage. The range of health care services is vast, yet your out-of-pocket expense is minimal. Use this time wisely and make an appointment early.

Take the following steps to prepare for your upcoming separation:

Get a physical: If military treatment facilities, personnel resources, and local policy permit, you and your family members should arrange for your separation physicals as early as possible. Any problems can be treated while your medical expenses are still fully covered by the service. Take care of as much as you can prior to separation.

Get your records: Even if you are in good health, get a copy (certified, if possible) of your medical records from your medical treatment facility. These records will provide useful background information to the health care professionals who will assist you in your upcoming civilian life. Your military health records will be transferred (with your consent) to the VA regional office nearest your separation address.



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Tips for Military Families to Stay Physically and Emotionally Strong

Courtesy of
Sesame Street for
Military Families



Sesame Workshop – the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street – knows when a parent serves in the military, the whole family serves. That’s why we created Sesame Street for Military Families, an initiative to help families cope and connect through the unique challenges of military life, including transitioning out of the Military. Now in its twelfth year, and in partnership with our friends at the DOD, we recently launched several new resources to assist military families in their efforts to stay physically and emotionally strong.

These new resources can be found on the Sesame Street for Military Families website which offers digital resources for parents, and features articles suggesting ways for families to connect through **self-expression, sharing feelings, and healthy physical activities**. There are also games and

videos for kids that teach **simple mindfulness and resilience techniques** like belly breathing and positive self-talk. One of our favorites is Comfy Cozy Nest, a digital activity that lets children decorate Big Bird’s nest – and helps them imagine a calm, safe place of their very own.

Tips for Military Families to Stay Physically and Emotionally Strong

- **It takes a team.** Surround yourself with supportive people. Connect with your community, friends, and extended family. Seek available services on your base such as the family centers that schedule playdates for parents to drop in. It may feel like you’re all alone, but think again—usually there are people who want to help. Let them! Asking for help when you need it is an important problem-solving skill.
- **Model Self-Confidence for your kids.** When you need extra encouragement, remember your successes and pull on the strengths and resources that have helped in the past. Use them to develop coping strategies and make healthy choices. You are your child’s greatest role model.
- **Make a thank-you jar.** All week long, family members can put in little notes or pictures of things they’d like to thank other family members for—helping to

make a bed, reading a story, shooting baskets together, and so on. At week’s end, open up the jar and share the gratitude. It will lift everyone’s spirits, making them feel valued and encouraging future cooperation.

- **Your family has the moves!** Your kids want to be strong and active like you. Together, create a short family routine you can do early in the day. Ask your kids afterward, “Do you feel more energetic than before you exercised?”
- **Challenge your kids to eat a rainbow** of foods every day. Next time you’re at the market, let them choose different-colored fruits and vegetables to bring home. Have them count the colors on their plates!
- **Play with your food.** Have fun with food—for example, melt a little low-fat cheese over a just-introduced vegetable. Or invite your kids to make a picture: Broccoli makes great trees, and a slice of orange can be the sun.

To learn more about these new resources visit www.sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org. ■



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HOW TO AFFORD CHILD CARE AFTER LEAVING THE MILITARY

Courtesy of Military.com

When a parent or both parents transition out of the armed services a lot can change, especially when it comes to child care. If you previously lived on base and were able to take advantage of on-base child care, it will no longer be available, and you may be looking at increased costs.

Arranging child care can be an expensive and stressful venture, but it can be even more so when you're making a career change at the same time. Finding just the right daycare situation that fits your budget may feel impossible, but there are some strategies available to make it a bit easier.

BUDGET CAREFULLY AND START YOUR CARE SEARCH EARLY

According to NPR, child care costs can eat up a significant portion of many family's household incomes in almost every part of the country. Day care can cost around the same amount as one's mortgage or rent in many areas, especially for infants. Costs vary quite a bit depending on the type of care situation and families often face tough decisions when trying to find the right care setting.

One of the best tips for finding the perfect fit in childcare is to start early. Child Care Aware notes that in some areas, you need to be on a wait list before your baby is even born. Finding care for all ages can be tough, but infant care can be especially challenging to find. As soon as you know that you will need childcare for your family, start researching and interviewing.

CONSIDER ALL TYPES OF PROVIDERS SETTINGS AND EVALUATE WHAT BEST FITS YOUR NEEDS

There are several types of childcare settings available, from childcare centers to private home daycares to nanny or au pair arrangements. It can be helpful to explore every option to see how the services and costs align with your family's needs. If it's a childcare center you are considering, visit the provider location and ask about adult-to-child ratios, licensing and qualifications, and staff turnover, and be sure to ask for references.

As parents, when you visit a potential caregiver, you will want to observe the interactions between the staff and children to get a sense of the routine and policies. Are the staff members interacting with the children? What forms of discipline are used? What activities are arranged for the kids? Be sure to ask about food, nap procedures, and other topics to ensure that they align with your own preferences.

DON'T MISS OPPORTUNITIES TO UTILIZE CREDITS OR SPENDING ACCOUNTS TO SAVE MONEY

If you, or your spouse, are still in the Reserves, you may be able to get financial assistance from Child Care Aware, which offers childcare fee assistance for service members and their families when on-base child

care isn't an option.

Many families also benefit from the Child and Dependent Care Credit at tax time. The IRS allows you to claim a portion of your care expenses in most situations, and this can be a big help when it comes to figuring your tax liability and potential refund.

You might also check with the American Legion in your area. The organization supports a number of

efforts to aid Active Duty military and veterans. They also offer inexpensive youth programs like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts that may not be able to serve as full-time child care, but are great supplemental options.

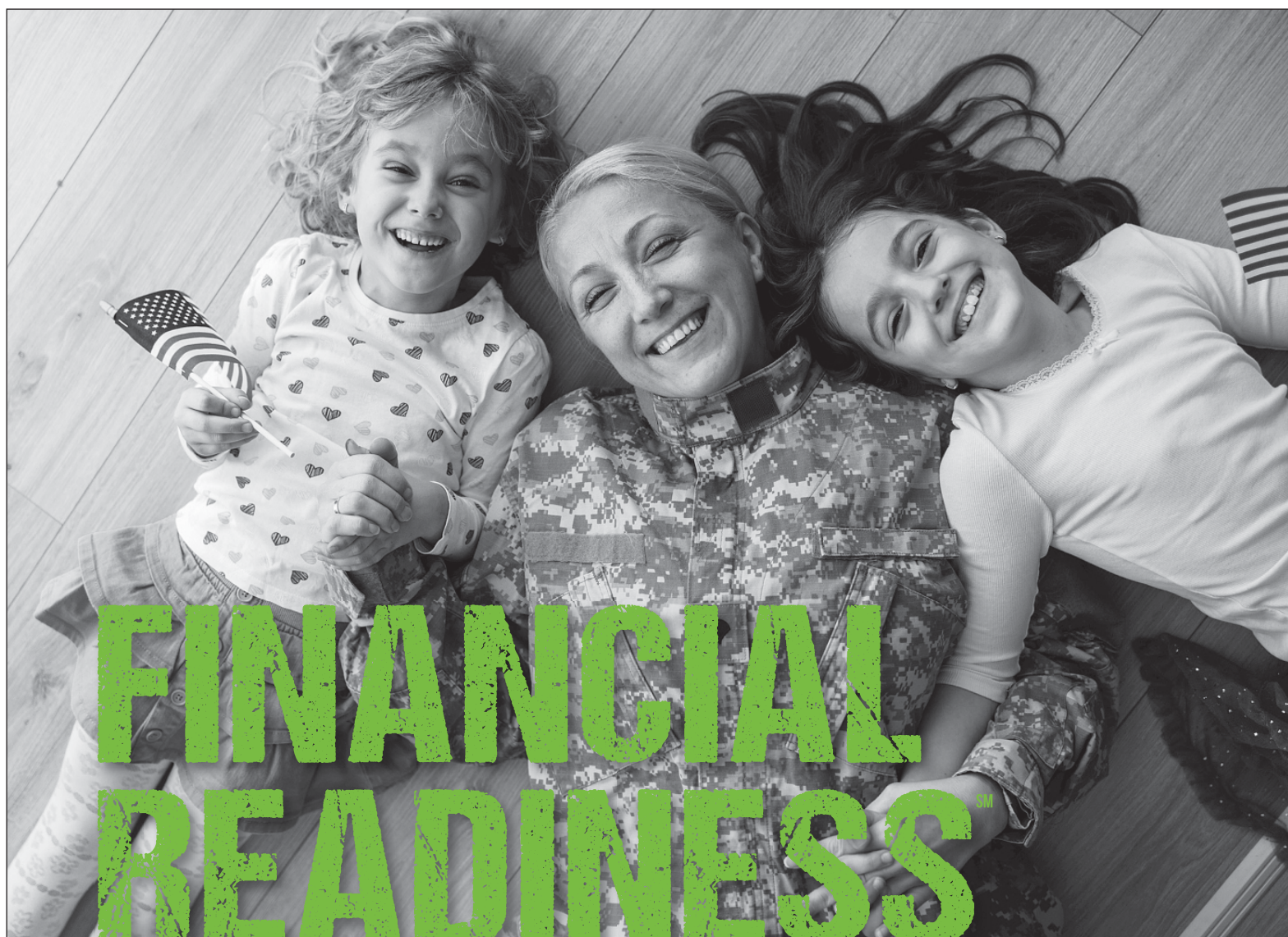
THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX ON CARE OPTIONS THAT MAY WORK FOR YOUR FAMILY

Some families circumvent the cost of child care by changing work

schedules so parents can alternate being at home to reduce the need for daycare. Some companies allow flex schedules or telecommuting these days, and these types of work accommodations can help stretch a child care budget quite a bit further.

If you need part-time or flexible care, a neighbor or friend might be willing to join in on a swap or shared arrangement where you trade off watching one another's kids for no out-of-pocket cost.

Choosing child care for your family is a huge decision. The costs can be high and there are many different types of settings available. Start your search early and ask detailed questions to ensure that the provider you choose is a fit for your family. Utilize credits and flexible spending accounts to keep the costs within your budget and don't be afraid to get creative in finding a care solution that fits both your needs and your budget. ■



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TRUMP SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO PUSH FEDERAL AGENCIES TO HIRE MORE MILITARY SPOUSES

By Nikki Wentling Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump signed an executive order May 9, 2018, encouraging federal agencies to hire more military spouses, a population whose employment lags behind the rest of the United States.

"You're going to be given better treatment than ever before," Trump promised military spouses. "We can never repay you for all that you do, but we can and we will give you the opportunities you deserve. When you are strong, your families are strong and America thrives."

The White House described the order as the first step in a larger effort by the Trump administration to increase military spouse employment. Based on a survey, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimated the unemployment rate for military spouses was 16 percent in 2017. The overall unemployment rate in the United States was 3.9 percent as of April.

"We are going to change that, and we are going to change it as quickly as we can," Trump said. "It will go fast."

The executive order pushes

agencies to apply more liberally a federal law that gives preference to military spouses for government jobs. The order also directs the Office of Personnel Management to increase awareness of the hiring preference for military spouses and train agencies about how to use it. It requires government agencies to report how many military spouses they hire each year.

Military families frequently move, often with little notice. It is viewed as the biggest challenge facing military spouse

employment. Spouses often must quit their jobs and face long periods of unemployment or underemployment after they move, according to a Chamber of Commerce report from 2017.

Spouses who hold professional licenses must also overcome the obstacle of getting licensed in a new state or country. Trump said that his administration is working with states in an attempt to have them remove licensing barriers for military spouses.

When a servicemember is

determining whether to stay or leave the military, their spouse's employment is often a deciding factor, the Chamber of Commerce reported.

"It is really important that the commander in chief not only have the backs of our servicemembers but also have the backs of our military spouses," said Jennifer Korn, a special assistant to the president. "Having a very healthy military family is important to our national security and also retention in the military." ■



PROUD TO SERVE AGAIN

By Elmer Harris

Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Education



Harris

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 occasional 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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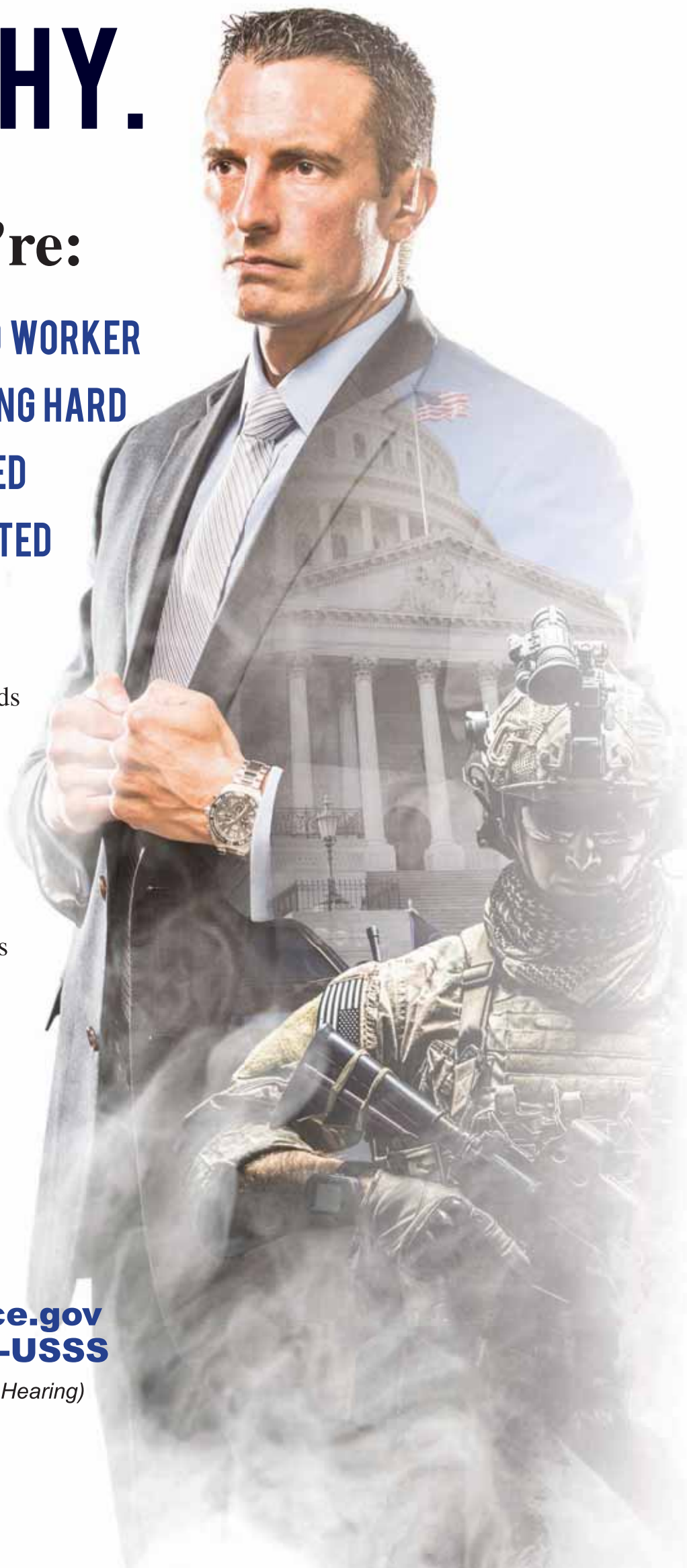
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