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Brandon Collins
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

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SEARCH & EMPLOY

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START HERE

YOUR CHECKLIST FOR FINDING A CIVILIAN JOB

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Editor's Note



ASHLEY CONNORS

I don't think I am alone in feeling that this year has been an absolute whirlwind. In many ways, I have a hard time believing this is *Search & Employ's* last issue of 2020. On the other hand, it feels like decades have passed since our January/February 2020 issue was released. (This is a strange phenomenon of working in a publishing role – you begin to measure time in “issues.”)

A lot has changed in the past year, but one thing that remains constant is our commitment to veterans, transitioning servicemembers, and military spouses. Thus, we would never miss the chance to celebrate Veterans Day at *RecruitMilitary*. Be sure to follow us on social media to join us in recognizing veterans all throughout the month of November.

On the *Search & Employ* front, we are celebrating by sharing the successes of veterans who have used their military experiences to make an impact in the civilian workforce. We're also sharing some tried-and-true advice from a few of our many veteran employees (page 36). I hope these stories inspire you to keep pushing toward your goals and end the year on a strong note.

Our CEO, Tim Best, is commemorating Veterans Day by offering his thoughts on leadership lessons he has learned as a veteran, *after* leaving the military (page 42). If you are ever in a position to receive advice from a leader like Tim, I recommend you take careful notes. Or, you can just bookmark his collection of *Best Practices* columns (<https://rmvets.com/3mhZzQh>).

As we prepare to close out this challenging year, I hope you get a chance to reflect on the good things that have come from it, no matter how small. Take some time to recognize your growth and decide where you want it to take you in 2021. Maybe the extraordinary circumstances of 2020 determined your situation for you. Now is a great time to plan your comeback. Ask yourself where you want to be this time next year. What will it take to get there? Do not let uncertainty hold you back. One thing we learned this year is that uncertainty will always be a factor, but you can still keep moving through it.

You have the power to determine the future of your career journey; We will be here to help every step of the way. And when you have your own success story to tell, share it with us!

Thank you for being part of our community and for serving our country.

SEARCH & EMPLOY®

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RECRUIT MILITARY®

RecruitMilitary, the publisher of *Search & Employ*, is a full-service military-to-civilian recruitment firm that connects job seekers who have military backgrounds with employers, franchisors, and educational institutions. *RecruitMilitary* is a division of Bradley-Morris, Inc. Our hiring services are free to men and women of all ranks/rates and all branches of the service who are transitioning from active duty to civilian life, veterans who already have civilian work experience, members of the National Guard and Reserves, and military spouses and other family members.

In 2018 and 2019, Bradley-Morris/*RecruitMilitary* was awarded the gold HIRE Vets Medal-Program Distinction Award from the U.S. Department of Labor for leadership in recruiting, employing, and retaining America's veterans.

In 2020, Bradley-Morris/*RecruitMilitary* was appointed by the U.S. Army Human Resources Command to provide employment services and resources through the Army Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to support America's transitioning soldiers, members of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, Army alumni (veterans), and all Army spouses.

RecruitMilitary is a member of the International Association of Employment Web Sites and is accredited by the Better Business Bureau.

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Valuing Our Veterans
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From Service to Solutions

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN ALLISON HICKEY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF SHATTERING LIMITS. After graduating from the United States Air Force Academy's first class to include women, Hickey served as a pilot, aircraft commander, and in various high-profile leadership roles before eventually retiring as a brigadier general.

Throughout her 27-year military career, Hickey was involved in several major initiatives, including leading one of the largest transformation efforts the Air Force has undertaken since its inception.

Since transitioning out of the military, Hickey continues to conquer new, formidable challenges as an entrepreneur, CEO, and advocate for veterans. In November 2015, Hickey founded All In Solutions (AIS), a consulting and contract delivery company specializing in IT solutions, managed services delivery (MSD), and problem exploration and solutioning in an integrated approach across the areas of people, process, and technology.

Currently, Hickey leads 81 employees – nearly half of whom are veterans, military or veteran spouses, or families of veterans and first responders. In the past three years, AIS has experienced a financial growth rate of more than 1000 percent, prompting the need to recruit and hire more than 70 new team members in the coming months.

Hickey shared her journey to CEO, how her military experience helps her run a business, and why veterans, transitioning servicemembers, and military spouses should find their next civilian career at AIS.

Tell me about your role at AIS.

As the CEO, I build relationships with our clients, other companies, and our community, with my focus on growing the company. I also lead, mentor, and learn alongside my amazing and dedicated colleagues.

What skills from the military help you as an entrepreneur and leader in the civilian workforce?

I learned the importance of communicating often so everyone knows your intent and can execute the mission without micromanagement.

I also learned that we should make de-



cisions with the best data available to us at any given time rather than being frozen with indecision.

Another very important lesson I learned in the military is that a diverse workforce provides better solutions because everyone thinks differently.

What was the most challenging part of your military-to-civilian transition?

I struggled in the same way many servicemembers do; I went to a TAP class, but I did not really know what I wanted to do next. I had to ask a lot of questions, make the leap, and learn along the way.

How does AIS support veterans?

In addition to actively recruiting transitioning servicemembers, veterans, military spouses, and first responders and their families, we have a bold "Second Mission" that focuses on transforming our team members' resumes.

This Second Mission means we advocate for our veteran employees and work with them to earn certifications. We have even invested in certifications for a veteran to allow us to include them in a contract proposal, knowing in advance that we may not win the contract.

At AIS, we win when a veteran's resume is transformed to provide a brighter future.

For more information visit
<https://success.recruitmilitary.com/organizations/all-in-solutions-llc>



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALLISON HICKEY

What is your favorite part of your job?

While I was serving as the Under Secretary for Benefits at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), we helped transform the claims process to eliminate 90 percent of the historic backlog and make benefits more accessible for veterans, their families, and survivors. Now as the CEO of AIS, I lead my team in continuing to serve this population through the contract support we deliver to the VA.

Why should veterans consider AIS for their next career?

Information technology is not just sitting at a desk doing nothing but coding, especially in the era of agile development and DevSecOPS (development, security, and operations) delivery.

At AIS, our company ethos is in our name - we are "All In" and we bring our whole selves to our work. We ask you to bring your passion, dedication, commitment, and compassion to work with you. We also ask you to care for your colleagues by helping them grow. Everyone is a mentor in this company, and everyone gets a leadership opportunity when they master their technical skills.

We also celebrate when a member of the team moves on from our company, because we know we have provided them the abilities to grow their career, even if it means leaving AIS.

I have loved every minute of working with this company, but if you want to know what it is like to be part of our team on the front lines, you should ask my veteran colleagues. Reach out to me on LinkedIn - I would be happy to put you in touch with one of them.



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Finding Meaning: The Role of Purpose in Military Transition

HERE IS SOMETHING YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW: There are tons of resources available to aid in the military-to-civilian transition. From job fairs and resume assistance to entrepreneurial boot camps and educational opportunities, there is no shortage of support ready and willing to help you.

However, while often overlooked, there is one facet of transition that is arguably just as important: identifying your *purpose*.

Many veterans approach transition to the civilian workforce with little direction on what to do next. The obvious goal is a job that will allow you to support yourself and your family, but many get stuck when considering the “why” in the next steps of their journey. The questions should not be just “How do I get a job?” but also “*What* job should I get?” and “*Why that* job?”

THE MANY BENEFITS

These questions, while important to finding your purpose, often become secondary concerns as the job search shifts from “What would I do best?” or “What am I interested in?” to “Who will hire me?” However, according to several studies, finding your purpose can play a fundamental role in many aspects of your life.

From a health standpoint, evidence presented in the research journal *Psychological Science* suggests that those who feel fulfilled or have found a specific purpose or calling tend to live healthier and longer lives.

In education, according to a study produced by researchers at the Universities of Texas, Stanford, and Pennsylvania, students with purpose learn better, persist longer through difficult topics, and are more engaged.

In the career search, statistics show that 44 percent of veterans will leave their first post-transition job within one

year due to misplacement, “bad fit,” or low engagement. In recent years, the marketplace has seen a shift in values. Increasingly, veteran and non-veteran workers alike are indicating that job satisfaction is more important to them than a higher salary.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Although the concept of purpose is only starting to gain attention as a significant piece of the military-to-civilian transition puzzle, the corporate world has embraced it for much longer—focusing on the individual and their strengths, desires, and fit as a way to benefit their corporate team as a whole. While finding purpose may be a newer topic of discussion in the post-military community, it is not a new concept in the private sector. In this way, knowing your purpose, strengths, and aspirations can tangibly aid in your civilian career search.

Finding purpose and matching it to your career journey is completely attainable with some commitment, reflection, and discipline. You can even use the [Purpose Finder worksheet](#) that my team at The RECON Network created.

Start by reflecting on three situations where you felt happy and fulfilled. What were you doing? Why did it make you happy? Keep asking yourself “why” and push past the superficial – you want to get to the root of why you felt fulfilled. Be honest with yourself and jot down your thoughts freely.

Next, consider the questions, “What keeps you up at night?” and “What gets you up in the morning?”

Again, be honest with yourself and do not overthink it. Write down your first instincts and push yourself to elaborate on them.

Now, look for the common thread(s). These could be broad commonalities, like helping people or working with detailed plans or proposals. Or they could be more focused, like building something from scratch or breaking down complex technical concepts.

Lastly, apply the common threads to find your purpose. What pieces of the commonalities can you apply to your background, experiences, or interests? Draw some preliminary conclusions to match your purpose to a civilian career path. You might find you are on a promising track, but if not, do not get discouraged. Keep digging; There are thousands of career paths that could match your purpose.

While it may take some time and discovery (and maybe even some trial and error), considering your “why” is an important step in your career journey. Whether you are just beginning your military transition or working to advance in your civilian career, finding your purpose can set the stage for long-term fulfillment and success.

Jordana Megonigal is a writer, business owner, and founder of the The RECON Network, which is focused on the human element of veteran transition, as well as providing a variety of resources for veterans and military spouses. She is based out of Greenville, South Carolina.



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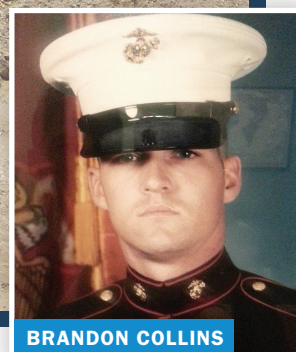
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COLLINS AT THE U.S. MARINE CORPS
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IN 2009.

Leading at Home



BRANDON COLLINS

American Standard
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Throughout his seven years of military service in the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, Brandon Collins expertly honed his leadership, team-building, and communication skills.

As a division manager for an American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning distributor, Collins continues to lead at home, bringing innovation, ambition, and a never-quit attitude to the civilian workforce.

Aces Supply is a family-owned distributor of American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning, operating nine branches throughout Texas.

Since joining Aces 17 years ago, Collins has relied on a strong foundation of leadership, communication, and hard work to build and lead a team that continues to grow year after year. Collins recently spoke about his military experience and how the skills he gained help him in his career in the HVAC/R (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration) field.

Talk about your military experiences and your current role.

As a machine gunner in the U.S. Marine Corps, I learned a lot about leading, communicating, and working as a team. When I transitioned out of the military, I started working at Aces in inside sales, then as a territory manager, and then as a sales

**“When you build
a team with
the right people
in place,
everyone works
hard for the
mission
and one another.”**

– Brandon Collins

manager for the Austin, TX area. In my current role as a division manager, I manage a total of five stores and a team of 10 salespeople.

In the military, I was successful when I communicated clearly and led my team without micromanaging, which is how I lead my team now as well. When you build a team with the right people in place, everyone works hard for the mission and one another.

What did you enjoy most about your military service?

The people that I served with and the camaraderie were the best part of my military experience.

I also enjoyed learning how to lead and coach people to success. I remember a training exercise we conducted in the middle of the night. I was an instructor, teaching how to fire a laser-mounted

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weapon with night vision goggles when a lower-ranking Marine recognized me out of the line of instructors. I asked how he knew it was me since he couldn't see me behind him. He said he could tell it was me because I was communicating and coaching, not yelling. That really stuck with me and I've carried that approach into the civilian world as well.

How do the skills you learned in the military help you in your role in HVAC/R?

I learned how to lead, work hard, and problem-solve. I also learned how to push myself to get better every day. I use these traits everyday leading my team, but these are also skills anyone entering the HVAC/R field will utilize, which is why it's a great field for veterans.

To learn this trade you need attention to detail, determination, and a willingness to learn. Veterans learned all of those skills in the military, so they come naturally when training in HVAC/R.

What has been your experience working for an American Standard distributor?

Before I joined the Aces team, I worked in a corporate environment where the team

culture was not prioritized. At Aces and in the HVAC/R field in general, the main focus is working as a team to take care of the customer. In this field, I've found that everyone works together, and teams are communicative, driven, and supportive. There is also plenty of room for professional growth and advancement.

Why should veterans consider a career in HVAC/R?

There will always be a need for HVAC/R, so there's a huge opportunity for veterans to come out of the military, learn a highly in-demand trade, and transition directly into a role where they can make a great living. The job security and earning potential alone make it a great field for veterans to pursue, but there are other benefits as well. You will always be surrounded by hard-working people, and you will not be tied to a desk all day.

Veterans understand hard work, how to learn quickly, and how to excel as a team. By training in HVAC/R, veterans can set themselves up for a successful, fulfilling career and a smooth transition out of the military and into a civilian role.

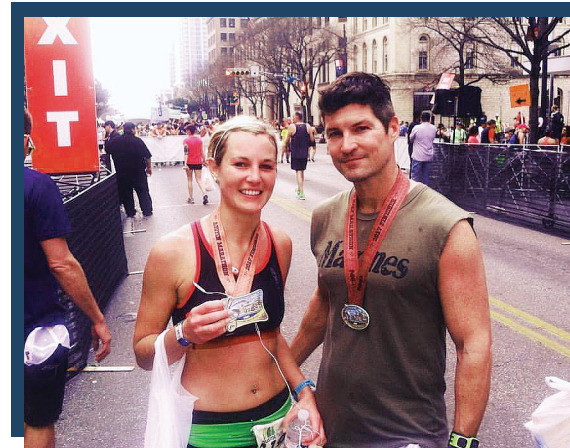


▲ COLLINS WITH HIS WIFE, LINDSAY, DAUGHTER, KENNEDY, AND SON, CAMDEN. ▼ COLLINS AND HIS WIFE AFTER COMPLETING THE AUSTIN MARATHON IN 2017. Photos courtesy of Brandon Collins



BRANDON COLLINS

"There will always be a need for HVAC/R, so there is a huge opportunity for veterans to come out of the military, learn a highly in-demand trade, and transition directly into a role where they can make a great living."



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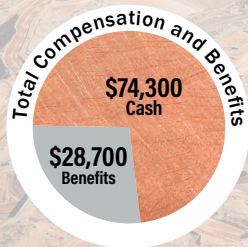
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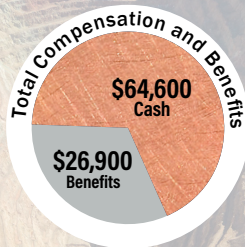
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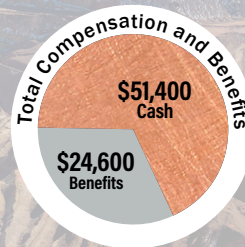
First-year potential



Diesel Repair Employee

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First-year potential



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MAXIMIZE YOUR VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

VIRTUAL CAREER FAIRS offer networking, education exploration, and job opportunities – regardless of your geographic location. RecruitMilitary offers local, regional, and national virtual events. Make the most of your experience with these tips:

■ Set the Tone

Just because you're not physically in the room with recruiters and interviewers, it doesn't mean you're not on display. Virtual career fairs offer audio and video presentation tools, so if your initial communication with an employer goes well, you could end up having a one-on-one video interview. Be ready by dressing professionally and setting up your workspace somewhere quiet and well-lit.

Test your video and audio capabilities for interference before the event begins, and make sure the video shows you from the shoulders up, without anything distracting in the background. Make sure your internet connection is strong and reliable.

■ Be Prepared

Just like attending a physical career fair, it's important to be prepared before you

begin. Register early and upload your resume. Many organizations screen resumes ahead of time, and you could get an early invitation to visit a specific chat session or a request to schedule a video interview.

Research the companies that will be attending (you can do this right in the virtual career fair platform by visiting their profiles). Decide which companies interest you and review their open positions.

Virtual career fairs offer both public and private chats. Public group chats will skew toward general topics about the company, its culture, and core values, as well as the answers to general questions.

An employer may invite you to a private chat during the event. This gives you a chance to use your elevator pitch, so have yours ready.

Keep in mind that some companies may have a lot of traffic, so be patient.

■ Follow-up

The list of employers at a DAV | RecruitMilitary Virtual Career Fair remains active after the event. Click any name on the list and review the "Website and Contact" section of the profile for details. Job listings will also remain active for 60 days after the employer entered them.

If an employer has asked you to apply online, do it – they aren't writing you off. Human Resources protocols often require an applicant to go through the online applicant tracking systems.

The last order of business: Send "thank you" notes to everyone who takes the time to talk to you.



RECRUITMILITARY®

Virtual Career Fair Checklist

- ✓ Strong Wi-Fi connection
- ✓ Camera & microphone functionality
- ✓ Quiet, well-lit workspace with nondescript background
- ✓ Professional attire
- ✓ Digital resume file
- ✓ Elevator pitch
- ✓ Questions about specific organizations or roles

Find RecruitMilitary resources here: <https://recruitmilitary.com/job-seekers/resources>



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Learning While Leading at DeVry University

MARISSA RIVERA HAS HELD MANY TITLES THROUGHOUT HER CAREER THUS FAR: certified medical assistant, surgical tech-in-training, sergeant in the Army National Guard, and now, student at DeVry University, president of the DeVry Military Resource Club, and member of the SALUTE National Honor Society.

Rivera is currently working to obtain a bachelor's degree in technical management with a concentration in healthcare administration. Next year, she will attend DeVry's Keller Graduate School of Management to earn an MBA in healthcare services.

Like many veteran students, Rivera applies the skills she has gained through her military service to her studies, helping her excel as a student, leader, and aspiring medical services and healthcare administration professional.

Rivera recently spoke about her experience at DeVry University and shared advice for fellow veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, and transitioning servicemembers.

What is your favorite part of being in the military?

The best part of my role in the Army National Guard is the feeling that I am making a difference. When I deployed to Afghanistan, I was able to help some local children and that memory has stuck

with me. I have learned great organizational skills in the military, which has helped me tremendously as a student. The military has taught me the importance of making sure tasks are prioritized and completed properly and in a timely manner, which is crucial as a student.

What do you like best about being a student at DeVry?

My student advisory team has been extremely helpful to me since I began the journey to earning my bachelor's degree. I am grateful for DeVry's dedication to helping veterans pursue their educational goals during or after military service.

What advice do you have for fellow veterans and transitioning servicemembers about pursuing education?

I would definitely recommend anyone to consider DeVry University, especially veterans. DeVry has a great military team that is knowledgeable and helpful. I would also tell veterans or transitioning servicemem-

"DeVry University's student advisory team has been extremely helpful to me since I began the journey to earning my bachelor's degree." – Marissa Rivera

bers to take advantage of every opportunity you can. DeVry will help you grow in many ways if you keep an open mind and stay committed to learning.

How do the skills you learned in the military help you as a student?

Lastly, I would advise them to use their leadership skills and experience to the fullest. Do not let uncertainty or the fear of failure keep you from pursuing your aspirations. You can accomplish almost anything if you commit to achieving your goals.

The leadership and management skills that I have learned as a sergeant in the Army National Guard have helped me lead teams as a medical services professional, but also as a student and the president of the DeVry Military Resource Club. In addition,

to learn more about becoming a student at DeVry University, visit <https://partner.devry.edu/recruitmilitary>.

Whether you're planning to make a career in the military or transition to civilian life, you'll have a dedicated team of student support advisors and caring professors to support you each step of the way.



MARISSA RIVERA

With a long history of supporting members of the U.S. military to help them reach their higher education goals, **DeVry University helps the military students and the veteran community** prepare for what's next with tech-infused education programs.

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YOUR EDUCATION SURVIVAL GUIDE

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ADAM O'TOOLE

SEPARATING FROM THE MILITARY is an exciting time full of new possibilities, paths, and choices. One of those choices

is pursuing a degree, advanced technical training, or certification.

When I separated from the U.S. Army, I had little interest in going to school, and I had no idea how to utilize my earned education benefits. Two years after I transitioned out of the military, I met with an educational exhibitor at a RecruitMilitary job fair who helped me understand the process of obtaining a degree and helped me realize the potential in doing so.

Knowing how to start my education journey was difficult, but it doesn't have to be. Use these steps to set yourself up for success.

Step 1 / Think about what you would like to specialize in, study, or pursue.

Ideally you will begin this process before you transition out of the military. However, education is a great path to consider even after you've already started a civilian job or career. Researching your desired career path or your ideal role should still be one of the first steps in the process.

If you're overwhelmed or feeling lost, you're not alone. Many students (veterans and civilians alike) choose a broad curriculum or major (think: general studies) to get started. While this is a good way to ease back into being a student, I don't suggest staying on that path for too long - your educational benefits are finite.

If you need some direction, use the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Career-Scope tool to help narrow down the best career path for you: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/careerscope.asp.

Step 2 / Research educational institutions.

Whether you know exactly which degree to pursue, or you are still weighing your options, determining which educa-

tional institution to attend is another task to start early.

First and foremost, ensure that your institution of choice is approved by the VA. RecruitMilitary's Education Resource Center can assist you in finding educational institutions that are approved and accredited: <https://recruitmilitary.com/job-seekers/resources/industries/education>.

Then, connect with the veteran's advisor or representative at the institution. Not only will they be able to answer your questions about the school, but they can also help you get your benefits in line.

Find out if the school has a veteran's center or other resource group. Many institutions have recognized the large number of military members and veterans pursuing higher education and have formed veteran support centers on campus or virtually.

Step 3 / Know the best program format for your learning style.

Do you want to take courses online or on campus? Maybe a mix of both? Each format has benefits, and one is not necessarily better than the others. After completing both in-person and online courses, I found that being on campus worked best for me. I performed better when I had in-person access to professors and teaching assistants, administrative offices, student study areas, and other on-campus resources.

What works for someone else may not work for you. Do your research and determine the best option for your lifestyle.

Step 4 / Apply for admission.

Once you have determined where you want to attend, connect with the veteran's advisor to see if the school has any special waivers for military or veteran students - many schools waive application fees for veteran students or offer transfer credits for military coursework and training.

Next, compile all of your transcripts (including for military training), as well as your high school diploma or G.E.D. records.

Step 5 / Consider applying for financial aid and/or grants.

Utilizing your military benefits does not prohibit you from applying for financial aid or grants. You are still permitted to use these resources like any other student, and I encourage you to see if you qualify.

You could be eligible for low- or no-interest student loans, or you may even qualify for state and federal grants which do not need to be paid back. Applying for aid or grants does not mean you are obligated to accept them - you can accept or decline any of the options that are determined to be available to you.

Ask plenty of questions as you go through this step. Understand exactly how the process works, how much aid you will be accepting, the type of loans, interest rates, and when you must start paying back loans.

You can complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) here: www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Step 6 / Utilize refresher courses or programs.

It's probably been a while since you've been in a civilian classroom environment. You may need a refresher on certain courses or concepts. Fortunately, there are organizations and programs that exist for this exact purpose.

Some of these programs are free, but others require you to use your benefits or pay out-of-pocket. Thoroughly research each program and find the best one for you. I recommend looking into the Warrior to Scholar program and Veterans Upward Bound.

Pursuing education after military service can seem overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. When you prepare well, ask the right questions, and do your research, a degree or certificate is well within your reach.

Adam O'Toole is director of partner relations at Bradley-Morris/RecruitMilitary and a veteran of the U.S. Army.



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How Managing Your Finances Can Help You Find the Right Career

Searching for the right career can be a long and arduous process. Researching companies, attending job fairs, applying to open roles, and perfecting interview skills can take a lot of time, which is already a limited resource.

While I do not have tips on how you can find more time, I can tell you a few reasons why reallocating some of your time can help you find the right career. The secret: Managing your finances.

1 / Build Your Confidence

Your financial situation is essential to your entire life. If your financial situation is not being managed, you may not be able to properly cover your basic needs.

Some people avoid spending time tracking and managing their finances. To many, financial management can seem dull, tedious, and overwhelming. The problem is that if you do not spend the time necessary to effectively manage your finances, you can find yourself struggling to make ends meet or caught off guard and unprepared in the event of a financial emergency.

Brad Klontz, financial psychologist and author of *Mind Over Money: Overcoming the Money Disorders that Threaten Our Financial Health* and other psychologists have found that failing to manage your finances can lower your self-confidence and make you anxious, stressed, or depressed. In turn, your job search will seem even more overwhelming and you will not be able to put your best foot forward.

Putting in the effort to manage your finances can help ease these concerns and allow you to fully commit to your job search with confidence.

2 / Take Control

If you are intimately familiar with your financial situation, you know how much money you need to earn to cover all your costs and live comfortably. This puts you in control when job searching.

When you know what you need to pay your bills, support your family, and meet other financial goals, you put yourself in the driver's seat. You can then approach each job opportunity (like the many open roles featured on RecruitMilitary's job board) with confidence, as you will know the salary range that you can comfortably consider.

Managing your finances will also enable you to determine how much time you reasonably have to search for the right organization, role, and salary offer. With this knowledge, you can have the confidence to search for the right job and employer, rather than accepting the first offer you receive if it is not ideal for you and your family. This can be extremely liberating in your career search, allowing you to seek a role that you want, rather than one that you desperately need.

3 / Consider All Options

Finding work with an employer is a practical approach and can provide plenty of fulfilling career paths. However, for many, there is a sense of freedom, pride, and adventure in becoming an entrepreneur and forging your own personal path to success.

Entrepreneurial ventures require a sound business plan, and a sound business plan requires orderly finances. Two of the main ways people maintain and track their finances is through a budget planning tool or a manual spreadsheet. If you use a digital tool, look for something

that allows you to get granular, so you can see where every dime is being spent.

Another option is to manually create a detailed spreadsheet. You will need to stay disciplined and spend time recording and tracking your finances to determine how much money you can comfortably invest (or borrow) for your entrepreneurial venture.

Once you have a grip on your personal finances, you can then apply these principles to your business and start to build out your business plan with a sound financial foundation.

As you consider your entrepreneurial options, remember that you must keep your business and personal finances separate. Failing to separate finances can create confusion and can even lead to problems with the IRS. To bring order to your accounts, use a business checking account and credit card. This will ensure that you can manage your business and personal finances properly and separately.

While finding the right career can be overwhelming and time consuming, there are ways to set yourself up for success. Manage your finances well, and you'll be in a position of knowledge and confidence when you make your next career move.

Rodney Laws is an entrepreneur and an ecommerce expert with over a decade of experience in building online businesses. He is also the founder of **EcommercePlatforms.io**, a website dedicated to helping people launch and run successful ecommerce businesses.

Robert is a member of
Turner's Veterans Network.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF RALPH KAUZLARICH

Success after Service

A veteran's journey from the U.S. Army
to **First Command Financial Services**



RALPH KAUZLARICH

Ralph Kauzlarich served in the U.S. Army for 26 years before retiring as a colonel in 2014 and transitioning into leadership roles in the civilian sector. Today, he works with the team at First Command Financial Services to mentor those who help military families pursue financial security.

Kauzlarich recently joined the Veteran Influencer Podcast to talk about his journey to success after service. Hear more from his conversation at <https://bmi-vip.libsyn.com>.

Tell us about your military experience and transition into the civilian workforce.

I served as an infantry officer in key command and staff positions for 26 years after graduating from West Point. I was fortunate to lead soldiers in each type of infantry – mechanized, air assault, light, and airborne ranger.

We all have goals that define a successful career; mine were command a battalion in combat, graduate from the U.S. Army War College, and attain the rank of colonel. I was blessed to achieve each.

After achieving my long-term goals and serving for more than two decades, I was eager to find new challenges in a different industry with the right people, in the right culture, selling a product I believed in.

I was fortunate because my last commanding general provided me 120 days to focus on my transition before starting terminal leave. However, with so many civilian career paths and options, I found it challenging to pare them down.

How did you end up in your current role at First Command?

After my military service, I served as an executive director for Georgia Military College for almost 4 years. I then worked for a small energy production company for



several months as their director for quality assurance. Due to the company's financial challenges, I was let go. This forced me to do some significant soul searching before pursuing my third and last civilian career: A First Command Financial Advisor.

What lessons did you learn from your military-to-civilian transition?

I was naive about the corporate world before my transition. My biggest misconception was that every company was looking for a leader that could make their organization better. The truth is that the goals and objectives of many corporate organizations do not always align with your personal convictions or style of leadership.

How did you plan your military-to-civilian transition from a financial perspective?

Having been clients of First Command for more than 30 years, my family was more financially prepared than many. Our experience with First Command gave us the resources required to maintain our financial plan, while also allowing flexibility as we transitioned to civilian life.

How would you describe your role as a First Command Financial Advisor?

My area of expertise is coaching military service members or veterans in their pursuit of financial security. I understand the opportunities and challenges associated with the military lifestyle because I have lived it. I operate with a sense of urgency

to provide clients the very best financial plan possible, executed with a relentless pursuit of their goals.

What is something about your job that most veterans do not know?

We take the success of each client personally. We coach, teach, and mentor clients so they can go into each financial decision informed and aware, in hopes that they always have a positive outcome.

What is the best part of being a First Command Financial Advisor?

As a First Command Financial Advisor, you truly control your own destiny. You have absolute freedom to succeed or fail. If you possess the energy, initiative, and organizational skills of a successful military service member, you possess the skills necessary to be a successful Financial Advisor.

First Command will provide you industry-leading training and help you every step of the way. The world is truly your oyster once you commit to the process.

What advice do you have for transitioning service members or veterans and military spouses who are considering a career change?

Start the process early. My only regret is not tackling the training and licensing requirements for this role immediately upon the 120 days I was provided before terminal leave.

I also highly recommend that you do some soul searching to identify the people you want to work with, the culture you want to work in, and the product you want to sell. When I was given this advice, I told my West Point classmate that I did not want to sell anything. He replied, "You have been selling your leadership for the past 30 years."

Between your passion for helping others and a license to do so, you will be a valuable resource to our customers and the military community.

To learn more about joining the First Command team as a Financial Advisor or discover other positions within their culture of service, visit <https://rmvets.com/34iLWTN>.



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Government

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT is virtually an economy of its own, with career paths that include defense and security, health services, administration, fiscal services, and medical, scientific, and technological research, just to name a few. Federal government job growth is expected to stay relatively stagnant in coming years, but a large population of employees nearing retirement age means demand for talent to fill open roles will remain. In addition, projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show an increase in the number of state and local government job openings between 2019 and 2029.

Because of the vast scope of available roles within the public sector, career opportunities are nearly limitless, especially for veterans who bring experience in leadership, communication, and working with diverse teams.

/ Veterans in Government

Many roles that are in high-demand in the private sector also have an equivalent in the government industry.

There are a few benefits of pursuing a career in the public sector over the private sector. One advantage is that many government organizations count military time-in-service toward retirement.

The federal government also provides fa-

miliarity in terms of structure, training, and advancement.

/ Tips for Success

1 | Research

Many government organizations use job series classifications, similar to military occupational series classifications. Do your research and implement verbiage similar to what appears in the job classification in your resume. This will also help you determine if you have the necessary certifications or training needed for the role.

2 | Start Early

Government roles may require more time and preparation between the application and job offer stages than private sector jobs. Start early to give yourself plenty of time to meet the necessary requirements.

3 | Network

Professional networking is a huge career development tool and can also help you narrow down your desired career path within the government industry. Forming relationships and networking early can allow you time to explore the many career paths within the government and evaluate your options accordingly.

HOT OPPORTUNITIES

These roles exist within both the private and public sectors and are projected by the BLS to experience much faster than average growth.

Management Analysts

Social and Human Service Assistants

Paralegals and Legal Assistants

Social and Community Service Managers

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers

Community Health Workers

Psychiatric Aides

Marriage and Family Therapists

Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators

Dietitians and Nutritionists

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018-2028 employment projections

Government Roles on the Rise	Main Responsibilities	Level of Preparation	Projected Growth
Forest Fire Inspectors & Prevention Specialists	Enforce fire regulations, inspect forest for fire hazards, and recommend forest fire prevention or control measures.	Medium	Much faster than average
Forensic Science Technicians	Collect, identify, classify, and analyze physical evidence related to criminal investigations.	Considerable	Much faster than average
Urban & Regional Planners	Develop comprehensive plans and programs for use of land and physical facilities of jurisdictions.	Extensive	Much faster than average
Hydrologists	Research the distribution, circulation, and physical properties of underground and surface waters.	Extensive	Faster than average
Court Reporters	Use verbatim methods and equipment to capture, store, retrieve, and transcribe pretrial and trial proceedings.	Medium	Faster than average

To learn more about any of these roles and the preparation needed, visit O*NetOnline.org and search in the "Occupation Quick Search" field.

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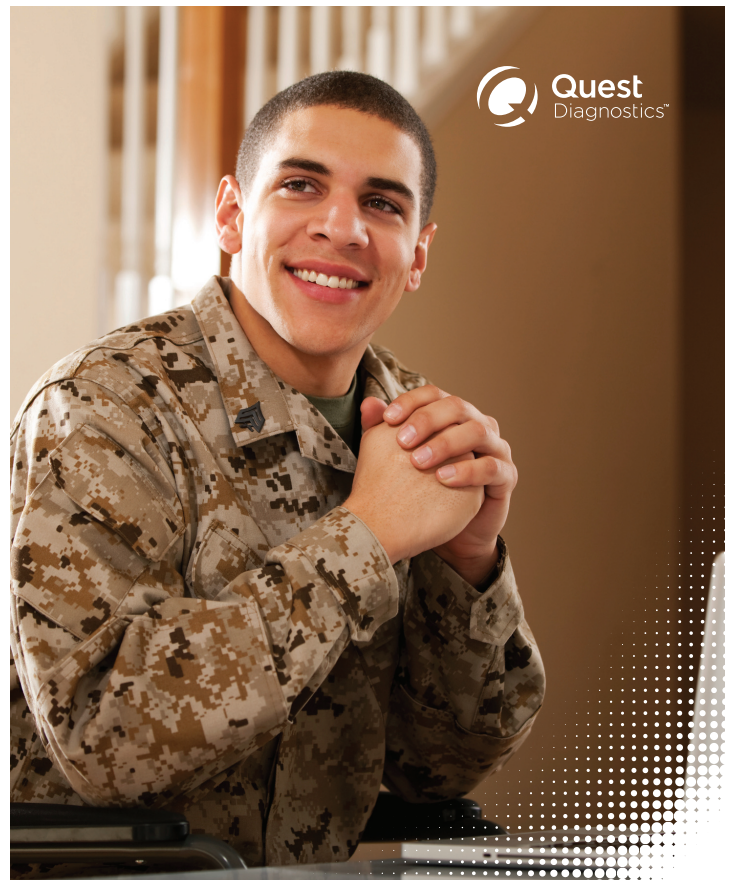
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From Aircraft to Auto Parts: **Veteran Finds** Success at **O'Reilly**

CHUCK ROGERS is a U.S. Air Force veteran and vice president of professional sales at O'Reilly Auto Parts, one of the largest auto part chains with more than 5,500 stores, 28 distribution centers, and more than 74,000 team members. The underlying spirit and philosophy of O'Reilly is one of growth and progress, both for the company and its team members.

As vice president of professional sales, Rogers' responsibilities include providing executive leadership and direction to support all aspects of professional sales for the company. He also ensures the team focuses on providing excellent customer service to all stores and field sales team members to ultimately support professional customers.

A Strong Foundation

Rogers served in the Air Force as an aircraft maintenance crew chief for four years. He was stationed at Royal Air Force Bentwaters in England for two years as a crew chief working on the A-10 Thunderbolt. Later he was stationed in Incirlik, Turkey, where he served on the Basic Readiness Alert Team, working on the F-16. Rogers' military experience taught him many lessons and skills, including responsibility, accountability, and consistent mission execution.

Rogers prepared for his transition out of the military by researching and understanding his earned education benefits with the plan to pursue a degree after service. Even though he prepared well, Rogers' military-to-civilian transition was not easy. He still had to readjust to the civilian world, find his footing, and learn how to be successful in a very different environment. Luckily, Rogers found his home at O'Reilly soon after transitioning out of the military, where he was able to learn, contribute, and grow as he began his civilian career journey.

Rogers quickly identified the similarities and many differences between the two.

The first difference he noticed: Tasks in the civilian world are not accomplished by simply giving and receiving orders like he often experienced in the military. However, Rogers also found that many of the skills required to be successful in the military, such as dedication, responsibility, overcoming obstacles, honesty, and mission-execution, are also necessary for success in any civilian organization as well.

A Culture of Support

Rogers also greatly appreciated the camaraderie and support he experienced in the military, regardless of rank. At O'Reilly, he's found that same sense of belonging. "When we were serving overseas, the higher-ranking leaders made sure that we were included in celebrations on the



▲ CHUCK ROGERS (RIGHT) AT AN AWARDS CEREMONY DURING HIS TIME SERVING IN THE U.S. AIR FORCE.
Photo courtesy of Chuck Rogers

holidays and supported our growth," said Rogers. "The same is true with successful organizations like O'Reilly."

Throughout his 30 years with O'Reilly, Rogers has always been impressed with the way veterans are supported and recognized throughout the company. From the company's veteran hiring initiative to recognition through company publications and events, Rogers loves the support, encouragement, and appreciation he and his fellow veterans and colleagues receive for their military service. Many veterans have chosen to further



CHUCK ROGERS

their career with the company, making it a great place to share a common bond with peers and leaders like Rogers, who bring their military experience to the workforce.

Opportunity For All

For Rogers, the decision to pursue a role with O'Reilly three decades ago has resulted in a long and prosperous career with purpose, opportunity, growth, and camaraderie. "I have had the honor to be a member of Team O'Reilly since just a few months after I left the military," said Rogers.

"Education, mentoring, and growth opportunities have all been an integral part of every role I've had here. 'Team O'Reilly' is not just a phrase we use; it is our reality. We work hard and play hard, provide excellent customer service, and keep our focus on honesty, dedication, and safety. These are just several of the pillars of the O'Reilly Culture, and they are very familiar to those of us who served in the military. O'Reilly has provided a lifetime of opportunities, and I am honored to be a team member. Here, everyone can succeed."

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A Mission of Service with TSA

"I was in San Antonio recently, and I happened to be pulled aside for additional passenger screening at the airport security checkpoint. It was a great opportunity to talk to another TSA employee," said Mark Escherich, a member of the D.C. Army National Guard and the military and veteran programs manager for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). "I discovered he was a U.S. Army veteran, briefly explained my role at TSA, and gave him my business card."

This chance encounter is just one example of the dedication that has characterized Escherich's military and civilian careers.

CALLED TO SERVE

Prior to joining the military in 1991, Escherich was a student pilot in flight training in the Civil Air Patrol in Manassas, Virginia. It was a U.S. Army recruitment poster with the slogan "Be All You Can Be" that prompted Escherich to take the first step to becoming a warrant officer pilot in the U.S. Army Reserve.

After finishing flight school in 1992, Escherich became an Army Reserve pilot stationed at Fort Meade, where he flew UH-1 Iroquois (nicknamed "Huey") and CH-47 Chinook helicopters. He transferred to the Maryland Army National Guard in 1996, completed officer candidate school and achieved the rank of lieutenant in 1998, and worked for several years as a UH-60 Black Hawk MEDEVAC pilot.

On the civilian side of his career, Escherich worked in roles at the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) at the Washington Navy Yard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security before joining TSA in 2004.

In 2008, Escherich took a leave of absence for uniform service from TSA to complete active duty assignments as a MEDEVAC pilot in Germany in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and as a bilateral affairs officer, representing the D.C. National Guard and U.S. Southern Command in the Caribbean. He returned to TSA in 2014 under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

A CAREER WITH PURPOSE

Escherich knows the importance of finding the right fit in a civilian career. "When speaking with veterans and servicemembers, I stress the importance of organizational culture and mission," he said. "You have to find organizations that align with your personal values. If you do that, you can believe in the value of your work and your role in achieving the organization's mission."

Escherich found this to be especially true when he was given the opportunity

to serve as TSA's military and veteran programs manager. In this role, Escherich's duties focus on promoting the recruitment and hiring of veterans, conducting outreach, building relationships with military and veteran organizations and, ultimately, increasing veteran representation in the TSA workforce.

"When I first began the role, the focus was external: How do we recruit veterans to work for TSA?" said Escherich. "Over the past five years, our focus has shifted internally as well: How do we not only recruit veterans, but also retain them? What can we do to encourage veterans to stay with us?"

Escherich's work further has one important goal: Position TSA as an employer of choice for the military and veteran communities. He spends his time building resources for not only veteran, National Guard, and Reserve employees of TSA, but for their managers and mentors as well, ensuring all parties are set up for success. This has included building a partnership with the American Legion, centralizing existing resources within TSA to improve access, creating resources for affinity groups and programs to honor employees' military service, and streamlining communication of veterans' preference and hiring across the agency.

New programs that Escherich hopes to launch in the future include a work experience program with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a veteran apprenticeship and on-the-job training program, and a partnership with the Department of Defense SkillBridge program.

"We work to create an environment that is helpful to veterans and shows them they are supported and appreciated," said Escherich.

A NEW MISSION AWAITS

The breadth of professional opportunities for veterans at TSA is wide, as Escherich's career journey illustrates. "Today I am a program and management analyst and a program manager," he said. "But I've also had roles at TSA in acquisitions, personnel and payroll operations, and more."

Escherich's roles at TSA have positively



▲ CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ESCHERICH WITH A DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD UH-72A "LAKOTA" MEDEVAC HELICOPTER. Photo courtesy of TSA

impacted his career with the D.C. National Guard as well. "Because of my experience working in acquisition, my unit has asked me to be a government flight representative, assisting with managing the contract for the company that maintains our airplanes. This experience is mutually beneficial to both my National Guard unit and TSA."

For Escherich, working with TSA is also personally fulfilling. "This job is rewarding every day," he said. "It is challenging, but I enjoy the projects that I work to push forward. I can see that my team and I really make a difference. Ideally, this will be the job I retire from – many, many years from now."

For more information about careers with TSA, visit www.tsa.gov/about/jobs-at-tsa/veterans or check out TSA on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/tsa](https://www.linkedin.com/company/tsa).



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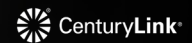
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-Ryan LaMar

Construction Project Administrator



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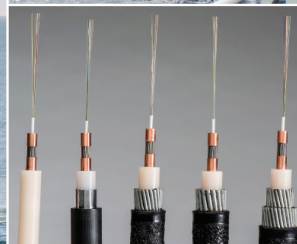
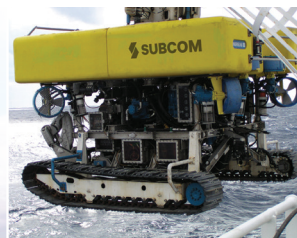


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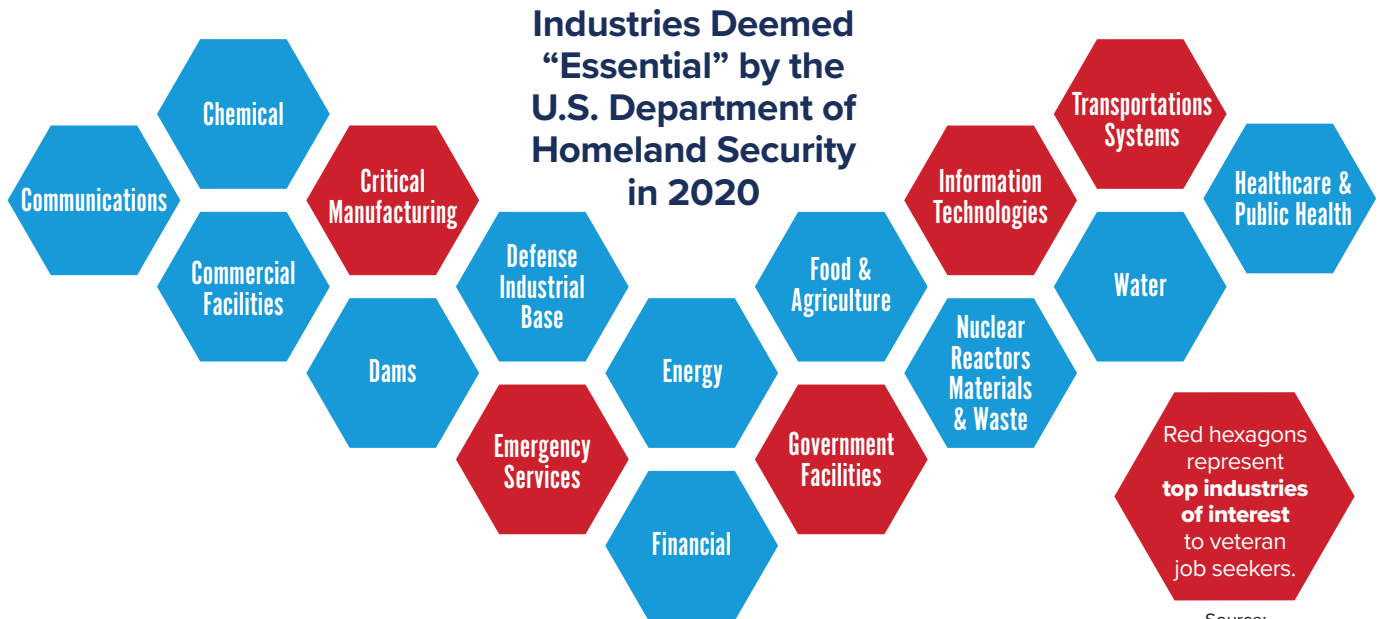
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Success in an Unprecedented Time

By Hannah Lundstrom

Despite this uniquely challenging year, our military and veteran job seekers have continued to persevere in their search to find a fulfilling civilian career. We are honored to be part of your success.



Source:
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

RecruitMilitary's Virtual Career Fairs

70+
Virtual Career Fairs
held so far in 2020

93.8%
FAVORABLE

Pre-Event
Communications

2,000+

Participating Exhibitors

91.3%
FAVORABLE

Ease of Using
Virtual Platform

168

Average Interviews
per Event

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Participating Candidates

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Job Offers Expected

Easy to connect with many companies without stepping out of home. Very productive time with employers.

– Job Seeker, Camp Pendleton VCF

I found this entire process extremely easy to navigate. I came out feeling extremely positive about my future in the workforce. After I finished, I signed up for two more virtual career fairs to participate in. Great job!

– Job Seeker, National VCF

This event and platform exceeded my expectations! The transition from the military to college to Corporate America is intimidating. I feel more confident after this event and landed interviews!

– Job Seeker, Eastern Region VCF

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Register for a DAV | RecruitMilitary virtual career fair at <https://rmvets.com/31tZAZk>.

Building A Career from the Ground Up

MATTHEW GORSKI was just a teenager when he took a summer job in his hometown of Bristow, California. Little did he know, that job, combined with experience gained in the U.S. Navy, would eventually guide him into a career with one of the largest and most successful heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration (HVAC/R) companies in the world: Trane Technologies, Inc.

Setting the Stage

Gorski learned HVAC/R in 1992, when he was 16 years old, while working for his neighbor's small business. "On weekends and through the summer, we completed commercial contracts. I did HVAC/R work in a lot of restaurants and banks all over California."

As he got older, Gorski felt called to broaden his horizons beyond his hometown. "By the end of high school, I felt that the opportunities in my town were narrowing, so I joined the Navy," he said.

Gorski served as a quartermaster aboard the USS Enterprise (CVN-65), a now-decommissioned nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. His role included assisting the ship's officers and navigator, while also navigating, watching the bridge, and controlling the ship; duties that emphasized the importance of teamwork.

"Serving in the Navy taught me that each individual's contribution is integral to team success," said Gorski. "The biggest lesson that has helped me succeed outside of the military is to never quit until the mission is accomplished."

Returning to HVAC/R

After separating from the Navy, Gorski's first civilian job was in retail. Though he enjoyed the job, he longed for something that felt purposeful. It was this ambition that kickstarted Gorski's return to the HVAC/R field – and his career.

During an interview with an HVAC/R company and Trane dealer, Gorski was hired on the spot. "I got a job sweeping floors, which was exactly what I needed to get my foot in the door," said Gorski. "They want-

"I've had a lot of professional success working for Trane, and I've loved all the challenges of this business."



MATTHEW GORSKI

ed me on the team because I was respectful and disciplined. They saw my potential during the interview process."

Gorski worked his way up the ladder from working in the company's warehouse to running HVAC/R services to being involved in the new construction side of the business. With a desire to keep advancing in the industry, Gorski took a job at a parts center, where he learned about the wholesale side of working in HVAC/R.

With a well-rounded view of the industry, he quickly moved into a role as a territory manager for Trane in Virginia Beach, VA, and Outer Banks, NC. In this role, Gorski serves as the liaison between Trane's manufacturing division and the company's installing contractors.

The journey to his current role proves that a prosperous, fulfilling career after military service is attainable with some hard work and a willingness to learn.

Skills for a Lifetime

Gorski firmly believes his time in the Navy helped lead him to the success he has experienced with Trane. In fact, the skills he learned aboard the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) two decades ago still benefit him today.

"The military has a process for everything," said Gorski. "You learn to be extremely focused, persevere through difficult problems, and how to make difficult decisions under pressure."

"Those same skills help me in my current role; I work with 35 different companies

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throughout my territories, so I have to follow a process and stay focused," he said.

For Gorski, the HVAC/R business is about helping people, much like military service. "I've had a lot of professional success working for Trane, and I've loved all the challenges of this business," he said.

"I love meeting potential new dealers and helping them see how partnering with Trane will bring their consumers the best HVAC/R products on the market."

Gorski hopes to continue moving upward in his career. "I see a long future with my career at Trane; I would love to continue to advance into another management role," he said. "I feel like I'm in the right place to make a difference."

To learn more about careers with Trane & American Standard, visit <https://success.recruitmilitary.com/organizations/trane>.



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INFANTRY TO INVESTMENTS

Todd Jones is the chief investment officer (CIO) for Atlanta-based Gratus Capital, where he directs the firm's investment management strategy and leads a team comprised of six investment professionals. This may seem like a unique role for a former U.S. Army infantry officer, but Jones' journey proves that military experience provides transferrable skills and a solid foundation for a civilian career in any industry.



TODD JONES

Jones recently shared his journey to success in the finance industry and his advice for fellow veterans and transitioning servicemembers.

What lessons did you learn during your military service?

There are two lessons that stand out:

1 | Persistence. It is easy to take no for an answer, but if you really want to achieve

certain goals, you must be persistent and push through obstacles.

2 | Systems, processes, and organization are key to balancing competing priorities. While most of your civilian priorities will not be as critical as in the military, organization sets you up for success in many aspects of civilian life.

What is something you wish you had known before your military-to-civilian transition?

I wish I had known how long it would take to find a job that fit my interests and situation. I would advise transitioning servicemembers to put some money aside to live on while job searching. This gives you the ability to be selective and turn down a job offer if it is not the right fit.

Why should a veteran or transitioning servicemember consider a career in the finance industry?

I am not sure that a career in finance is right for everyone, but I was attracted to

this industry for a few reasons:

■ **Competition.** The stock market is one of the most competitive places to earn a living. I am constantly surrounded by intelligent, ambitious people and the portfolios that I oversee change every day. We find out if our decisions are working or not in real-time.

■ **Growth.** Financial markets have almost unlimited new avenues to explore. This is great for people who seek continual growth in knowledge or insight.

■ **Personal Fulfillment.** On the advisory side of the industry, you can help people achieve their goals and objectives in measurable ways. It is fulfilling to see a client's situation evolve, and even improve, based on recommendations I made.

Do you have any tips for success to pass along to fellow veterans?

When you start a new role, find something complicated that no one else wants to do and volunteer to do it. Then figure out how to do it better. This will make you indispensable and put you on a leadership track.



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Meet Gary Sharp

U.S. Air Force Veteran and Program Manager
for **Home Base Iowa**

What is your role with Home Base Iowa?

I serve as one of the program managers for HBI, with a primary focus on connecting veterans and their families with meaningful employment opportunities within our network of 2,400 Iowa business partners. We work directly with our Iowa businesses and veterans (both in- and out-of-state) to help launch career opportunities for servicemembers and their spouses.

What was your role in the Air Force?

I started my career in communications and spent my last seven years as a command chief, culminating as the senior enlisted leader for the Air Force Sustainment Center in Oklahoma City, where we were responsible for logistics and sustainment of the entire Air Force fleet. With 43,000 people in our command and wings in Georgia, Illinois, Oklahoma, and Utah, we were the largest single site employer in three states where we had a presence.

Why Iowa?

I grew up in a northeastern Iowa river town and have always been proud to call Iowa home. No matter where I traveled throughout my 30-year military career, I always had a special connection with fellow Iowans with whom I crossed paths.

Over the past few years, Iowa has also created initiatives that make the state an ideal place for transitioning veterans to call home. Plus, I really missed the Iowa “traffic.”

As a transitioning veteran, how did you connect with Home Base Iowa?

I connected with HBI to help with my job search as I was transitioning out of the military. I was fortunate that my separation date aligned with an open program manager role at HBI, which was a great fit for my interests and experience.

As a command chief in the Air Force, I was responsible for the personal and professional success for thousands of airmen. Helping transitioning veterans succeed outside of the military allows me to continue serving in a different capacity.

I truly believe in HBI because I used the program during my own transition and saw firsthand the energy and dedication this team puts into setting our veterans up for success. Our ability to connect and advocate for veterans with our Iowa businesses is first class.

What advice would you give transitioning servicemembers?

In the military, we were taught to prepare for any contingency. Yet when it comes to preparing for our own transition to civilian life, we struggle in navigating this unknown terrain. Here is some advice I learned from my own transition:

- **Take ownership.** Begin preparing no less than one year before your transition and manage it as though it were a military operation. Dedicating the necessary time will decrease your stress and increase your chance for success. The Transition Assistance Program is a great tool, though it is only the tip of the iceberg in preparing for your transition.
- **Build your professional network and relationships before you need to leverage them.** You cannot surge relationships.

Established in November 2013, **Home Base Iowa (HBI) is a one-of-a-kind public-private partnership connecting veterans, military personnel, and their family members** with resources and opportunities in Iowa.

With 100 HBI communities, 2,400 businesses, and 27 institutions of higher education, Iowa has developed their own unique programs and initiatives to make the state a national leader in providing support for veterans to call Iowa “Home.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARY SHARP

THE BASICS

Position Home Base Iowa Program Manager

Military Experience U.S. Air Force veteran (Retired July 2020)

With HBI Since April 2020

Use LinkedIn to connect with people in careers you are interested in and in areas you plan on relocating. Take the time to write a short note to explain why you would like to connect.

- **Craft your resume like a fine piece of art.** Your resume is an employer's first impression of you. I quickly learned you cannot treat your resume like a last-minute military performance report. There are plenty of free resources available to assist veterans with resumes — use them!
- **Research.** Look for companies that align with your skill sets, interests, and values. If possible, narrow your job search to 3-5 companies. This will allow you to target your resume and hone your interview skills for companies and jobs that you are truly passionate about.
- **Prioritize.** It is essential to determine what is most important to you, whether that is your dream job, dream location, dream income, etc. You may not be able to capture everything at once, so prioritize what matters most to you and your family.

Anything else veterans should know about transitioning to civilian life?

There are a lot of resources available to help veterans, but nothing replaces taking care of each other. Find a wingman who you trust and share your experiences with them. No matter what challenges you are facing in your transition, you are not alone!

Learn more about why veterans are choosing to make Iowa their next Home Base at www.homebaseiowa.gov.



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We asked a few of our veteran team members to share their best advice for fellow veterans and transitioning servicemembers. From one veteran to another, here are their tips for success in your military-to-civilian transition and career search. We are honored to be part of your journey.

Be empowered to be involved in your future. Be willing to check your ego and prove yourself all over again in the civilian world.” – **Larry Slagel, Chief Operating Officer, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran**



SLAGEL

Be proactive and engage with your communities through networking. Work on your narrative and decide what you want out of your civilian career, then utilize the resources available to you. – **Mike Arsenault, Senior Vice President, Organizational Development, U.S. Army Veteran**



ARSENAULT

Your leadership and commitment to the mission are traits that are uncommon among your non-military colleagues. Leverage these skill sets to excel in your desired industry.

– **Shawn Simmons, Social Media Manager, U.S. Navy Veteran**



SIMMONS

You need a foundational plan for your transition, but if you get too lost in the details you could be setting yourself up for frustration and disappointment. Create an outline, but also remain flexible and open-minded.

– **Jen Hadac, Director, Military & Spouse Career Resources, U.S. Navy Veteran**



HADAC

Do your research. There are a lot of valuable resources available to you. When going to job fairs, talk to every organization; you will be surprised at the many different opportunities.

– **Susana Mendez, Director, Client Support, U.S. Navy & U.S. Air Force Veteran**



MENDEZ

Do not procrastinate. I waited until the last minute to really sort through my options after transitioning and it made everything more complicated. There are so many big decisions to be made and aligning those early will ease your stress. – **Shantel Greer, Client Support Partner, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran**



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4 | GO FROM G.I. TO I.T.[®] FAST

MyComputerCareer is a proud Department of Defense SkillBridge partner, which means military members can start training with us during their last few months of service. Our MyComputerCareer Certified Cyber Warrior SkillBridge Program is just 12 weeks long - ideal for a short transition window. Students earn four highly sought-after certifications that prepare them for any number of positions within the IT industry. Veterans can attend on campus or online and use the GI Bill[®] (where qualified) to earn up to eight certifications in 7 to 10 months.*

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our staff and curriculum to ensure rigorous standards and high academic performance. This also enables us to accept federal financial aid for eligible students.

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BEST PRACTICES

Three Leadership Lessons I Learned After Leaving the Military



TIM BEST

Chief Executive Officer,
RecruitMilitary
U.S. Army Veteran

Like many veterans, my military career has greatly informed how I approach my civilian role as the CEO for a mid-sized company. Over the past two years, I've written about ways to take concepts from the military and apply them to a business setting or leadership style.

While I strongly believe the private sector can greatly benefit from these concepts, I've also learned a few lessons since I left the military that have provided incredible value to my leadership ethos.

1 | Professional Growth Should be Ongoing and Intentional.

In the military, there is a structured approach to professional development. Every commander has a reading list, and mentorship is emphasized throughout the ranks. When an individual is promoted to a leadership position, there is standard training that they are required to fulfill.

When I joined the private sector, I realized that there was no built-in structure for becoming a better leader. I had to be intentional about my own professional growth.

Now, as a civilian, I continue to maintain my reading list (see above). If you are like me, you may find great value in podcasts or audiobooks since not everyone has the time or ability to sit down and read. Use whatever method works best for you. The important thing is to learn methods and approaches from leaders you admire and begin to apply them yourself.

Becoming a better leader also means knowing your own blind spots. There are many professional tools available for this, like taking an online leadership assessment to illuminate the areas where you have room to grow.

But don't stop there. Once you've taken the assessment and understand your leadership profile, work with an expert to help you move towards your goals and maintain momentum. Encourage others on your leadership team to do the same.

I also recommend taking the time to learn more about your own level of emotional intelligence, or EQ. In a nutshell, EQ is how you manage yourself and your relationships with those around you, but it can af-

fect more than you might think. This area is critical when it comes to conversations about diversity and inclusion. Look inside to find ways to better lead with humility, and genuinely and actively listen to others.

2 | Diversity is Imperative to Innovation.

The military is a melting pot for people of all walks of life, backgrounds, interests, and values. You don't choose your coworkers; military orders dictate your position and assignment at each duty station. From day one, you are learning how to work on a team of people who do not think the same way you do.

In the private sector, however, surrounding yourself with people different than you is more of an intentional process. To build a team that innovates and helps your company grow, you need individuals with different experiences, talents, and outlooks – and you need to listen to them.

Ray Dalio discusses the idea of meritocracy or “may the best idea win” in his book, *Principles*. The core of this belief is that, in order to allow for healthy conflict and to get to the best solution, it's important to hear the opinions of others.

As a leader, it is your job to weigh the differing opinions and make a decision based on the information available. It is not your job to be the smartest person in the room. There is a famous quote that says, “If you are the smartest person in the room, there is no reason for you to be in that room.” Lean on your team and their varying experience and expertise.

When building your teams, look for the three C's: Character, Culture, and Competence. Ask yourself: “Do they have the

TIM BEST'S READING LIST

- *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't* by James C. Collins
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey
- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni
- *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown
- *Radical Candor* by Kim Scott
- *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead* by Bing West and James N. Mattis
- *Principles* by Ray Dalio

right character for our organization? Can they improve our culture? And do they have the competence?” Those are the areas that truly matter.

3 | The Employee/Employer Relationship is a Partnership.

In the military, roles and limits of authority are clearly defined. There are important reasons for this, of course, mostly to do with safety and protocol. However, that rigidity is not conducive to the corporate environment.

Instead, employer/employee relationships should be about how each party can help the other succeed. From the start, your employees should know what is expected of them. Equally important: You, as the employer, should make it your goal to support their professional aspirations.

Invest in your employees' cross-skilling, training, and other opportunities, whenever possible. The key is that if this individual has improved your organization in some way, the company gets a return on investment.

Train yourself and your leadership team to be open-minded to the fact that someone's career trajectory may eventually take them out of your ecosystem. That doesn't necessarily mean they deserve any less support.

Remember, most of the time employees don't quit because of their job, they quit a job because of their boss. Create an environment of mutual appreciation and support from the top down, and you will see loyalty and morale grow within the ranks.

Learning each of these lessons has required a level of humility and a desire to disrupt the status quo. Leadership is not just a skill, it's a practice. Like everything else, it is something that you must continue to hone to bring out the best.

Tim Best is CEO of RecruitMilitary and a former U.S. Army Special Forces aviation pilot.



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