



MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION GUIDE

THE ULTIMATE PLAYBOOK FOR THE MILITARY COMMUNITY



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 difficult periods in my life. As an honorable soldier though, I conducted an after-action review to capture my lessons learned. A summary of my notes is presented in this transition guide so you might benefit and enjoy an easier transition into your new civilian career.

I began my transition woefully unprepared for the challenges that awaited me. I was wildly shooting resumes downrange 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:

*“If you know the enemy and know yourself,
you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”
– Sun Tzu*

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

*“I will never leave a fallen comrade!”
– Warrior Ethos*

The Warrior Ethos, the principles that define my values, was the driving force behind the development of this guide. I won my transition battle, and I knew I had to turn around to help the next transitioning military member. Whether you are transitioning into the private sector from active duty or a Department of War (DoW) civilian career, looking for civilian employment while continuing to serve in the reserve component, or completing your advanced degree, exploring a change in civilian careers, or are a military spouse, I am confident these tips will help you endure the rigors of your transition and lead you to an overwhelmingly successful career in the private sector.

“Charlie Mike,”



John C. Buckley, II

Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)

Textron Aviation Senior Manager – Military Programs



This guide uses military terminology such as “war,” “enemy” and “combat,” as a strategic lens to help translate your operational planning experience into career transition success. These terms are not literal. Recruiters and hiring teams are not adversaries. On the contrary, they are key players and important potential allies in your success. This framework simply enables you to approach the hiring process with the same discipline, preparation and strategic mindset that defined your military service.

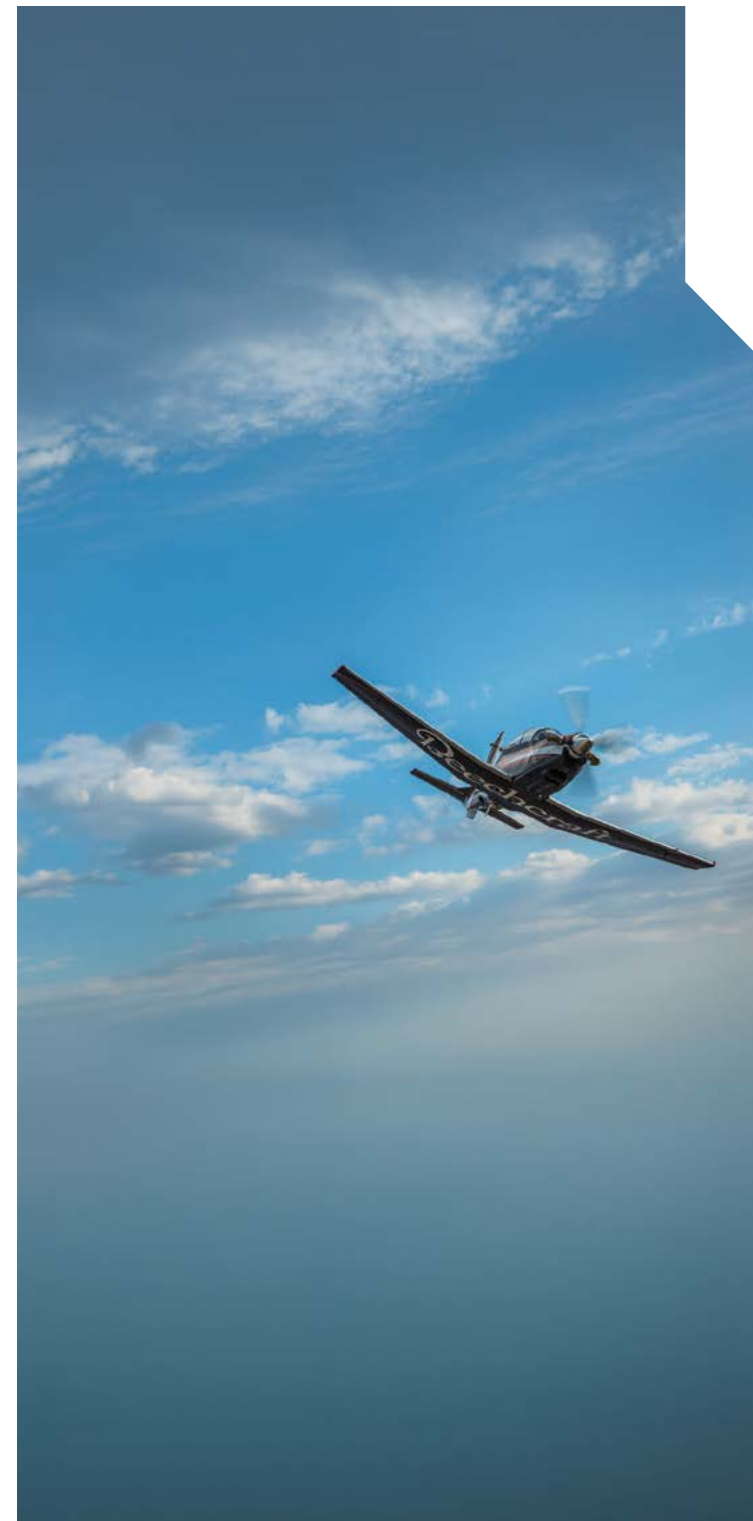


TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

WHY HIRE FROM THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

- 2 Mutually Beneficial Relationships
 - 3 There is Need, Requirement and a Benefit
 - 4 10 Reasons Why Our Military Community Makes Great Employees
-

02

WHY IS MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION SO HARD?

- 8 The Cultural and Communication Gap is at the Heart of the Challenge
-

03

PREPARE FOR COMBAT

- 16 Identify Your Top 10 Needs
 - 18 Define Your End State
 - 20 Develop A Proper “Sight Picture” on Your Career
 - 22 Self-Evaluation & Career Research
-

04

SHAPE YOUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

- 26 Build, Then Leverage Your Network
- 28 Aggressively Conduct Informational Interviews
- 32 Study Company Culture and Opportunities
- 33 Attend Career Fairs and Networking Events
- 39 Narrow Your Job Search
- 40 Search for Roles at Textron Aviation
- 44 Use Textron Aviation’s Military Skills Translator

05 AIM FOR THE RIGHT TARGET

- 48 The Enemy's "Weapon of Choice" – Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
 - 50 Understanding Job Descriptions
 - 51 Use the Job Description to your Advantage
 - 53 The Application
-

06 WRITE AN "UNCLASSIFIED" RESUME

- 56 How to Write a Unique, Customized Resume for a Specific Job Description
 - 58 How Your Resume is Typically Used
 - 60 The Enemy's Weapon of Choice Strikes Again (ATS)
 - 61 30 Seconds to Make an Impression
 - 64 15 Resume Tips
 - 65 Speak Their Language
 - 67 Make it Relevant
 - 68 Translate Your Military Skills
 - 70 Failed Resume Writing Strategies
-

07 GATHER INTEL FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

- 74 Interview Process
 - 75 Interview Types, Venues and Tools
 - 76 Interview Pointers – Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse
 - 77 Come Prepared
 - 78 Questions You Should Ask Your Interviewer
 - 79 Leave Happy
 - 80 Beware of Preconceptions
-

08 NEGOTIATE A WIN-WIN RESULT

- 84 Initiating Trust
 - 85 Prepare Before You Negotiate
 - 87 You Got the Offer – Now What?
 - 88 Negotiating the Offer
 - 89 How to Decline an Offer
-

09 BRANCHES AND SEQUELS

- 92 Learn By Doing: SkillBridge
 - 95 Expand Your Knowledge: Student Veteran
 - 98 Continue To Serve: Reserves or National Guard
-

10 WOMEN VETERANS

- 102 Distinct Transition Realities
 - 103 Tactics to Overcome These Challenges
-

11 MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

- 106 Why it Matters
 - 106 Complex Military Life
 - 107 Why These Difficulties Exist
 - 107 Strategies to Overcome These Challenges
-

12 LEVERAGE THE WARRIOR ETHOS

- 110 Putting the Ethos into Perspective



LEE

U.S. Navy, 22 years, Current Reservist

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Transition Training Aid (TTA)

1

MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION

PREPARE FOR “COMBAT”

2

DEFINING YOUR
ENVIRONMENT

5

WRITING AN “UNCLASSIFIED”
RESUME

3

CREATING PROPER
“SIGHT PICTURE” ON CAREER

6

INTERVIEWING
WITHOUT AN INTERPRETER

4

SENDING
APPLICATIONS
“DOWN RANGE”

7

NEGOTIATING
AN OFFER

8

ONBOARDING & DEVELOPMENT (ACCLIMATE & ASSIMILATE)

9

GROWTH AND ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

10

SELF FULFILLMENT

WHY HIRE FROM THE MILITARY COMMUNITY?

Hiring veterans, transitioning service members, Guard and Reserve members, military spouses and DoW civilians delivers companies proven business value: skilled talent, leadership and a resilient workforce.

- 2 **Mutually Beneficial Relationships**
- 3 **There is Need, Requirement and a Benefit**
- 4 **10 Reasons Why Our Military Community Makes Great Employees**







WHY HIRE FROM THE MILITARY COMMUNITY?

Hiring veterans, transitioning service members, Guard and Reserve members, military spouses and DoW civilians delivers companies proven business value: skilled talent, leadership and a resilient workforce.

VIRTUOUS CYCLES OF MUTUAL BENEFIT

- Our nation's sons and daughters heroically (and voluntarily) serve to protect and defend our way of life, enabling our businesses to thrive and prosper.
- Military experiences lead to quality employment where the military community can continue to serve others – our customers and society in general.
- Lives are improved and enhanced, which encourages continued mutual transaction.
- Customers (and society in general) see the linkages across military service to post-service employment to value creation.
- As a result, customers and society encourage their sons and daughters to serve our country in the U.S. Armed Forces – which is vital to sustaining the all-volunteer force.
- The next generation of sons and daughters enlists to sustain our way of life.

THERE IS A NEED

- **Talent shortages:** Companies struggle to find skilled, disciplined workers.
 - **Leadership gaps:** Companies need people who can lead under pressure, manage teams and make decisions with integrity.
 - **Broader talent pool:** Employers need employees with global perspectives and varied experiences to drive innovation.
 - **Retention challenges:** High turnover costs time and money. Veterans tend to be loyal and committed.
-

THERE IS A REQUIREMENT

- **Federal compliance:** Companies doing business with the federal government must actively recruit and retain protected veterans (VEVRAA).
- **ESGR commitments:** Employers commit to recognizing and honoring Guard and Reserve service.
- **Corporate social responsibility:** Companies often align veteran hiring with values of service, patriotism and community support.
- **Public and brand expectation:** Many customers and stakeholders expect veteran support as part of corporate values.

THERE IS A BENEFIT

- **High performing talent:** The military community brings discipline, resilience and a mission-first mindset boosting performance and outcomes.
- **Leadership at every level:** At every level in the military, service members are trained to lead, follow and adapt.
- **Technical expertise:** Many service members possess advanced training and will most likely have performed at high operating tempos with real-world applications.
- **Strong work ethic:** Military community members show up early, stay late and take pride in what they are doing – and in doing it right the first time.
- **Team-oriented mindset:** Military members know how to collaborate, communicate and support others – essential traits in the workforce.

THE LONG-TERM VALUE OF MILITARY TALENT



- Veterans are 39% more likely to stay with an employer for 3+ years compared to non-veterans.
- On average, veterans are promoted approximately 2.5 years sooner than their civilian peers.
- Median weekly earnings for veterans are about 6-8% higher than non-veterans.

10 REASONS WHY OUR MILITARY COMMUNITY MAKES GREAT EMPLOYEES

1. AGILITY & ADAPTABILITY

Veterans have the proven ability to learn new skills and concepts as well as adapt to changing and unpredictable situations. In addition, they can enter your workforce with identifiable and transferable skills, proven in real-world situations.

COMPANY IMPACT: Enhanced Organizational Productivity

2. LEADERSHIP

The military trains people to lead by example as well as through a shared vision, delegation, motivation and inspiration. Veterans understand leadership dynamics and practical ways to manage behaviors for results, even in the most trying circumstances.

COMPANY IMPACT: Enhanced Performance,
Satisfied Customers & Fulfilled Employees

3. TEAMWORK

Military personnel understand how genuine teamwork grows out of an obligation and respect to one's colleagues. Their responsibilities involve a blend of individual and group productivity. No matter the group size, their focus remains on achieving the overarching objective.

COMPANY IMPACT: Improved Collaboration for Better Results

4. PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT IN ACTION:

Veterans are trained to operate effectively alongside others and possess the ability to perform in complex environments. Military service develops respect, adaptability and sound judgment in all environments where mission success depends on everyone contributing at their highest level.

COMPANY IMPACT: Strong workplace trust and consistent performance expectations.

5. PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE

Many veterans understand the rigors of tight schedules and limited resources. Exhaustive training and preparation increases their ability to use their best judgment, anticipate issues and identify solutions on time despite intense and changing surroundings.

COMPANY IMPACT: Consistent Results

6. PROCEDURAL RESPECT

Veterans have gained perspective on the value of accountability. Their understanding of procedures enables the organization to function efficiently. But more importantly, their grasp on operations helps them strive to continuously improve the system in which they're working.

COMPANY IMPACT: Added Grease for a Well-Oiled Machine

7. TECHNOLOGY AND GLOBALIZATION

Because of their military experiences, veterans are usually aware of international and technical trends pertinent to business and industry. They can bring a global outlook and technological-savvy mindset all businesses need to succeed.

COMPANY IMPACT: Stay Ahead of the Curve

8. INTEGRITY

Veterans understand trust is critical to the team's success, and that this trust in them evolves from how they conduct their affairs. Employers can benefit from a veteran's courage to always do what is right.

COMPANY IMPACT: Sincere and Trusted Employees

9. HEALTH & SAFETY CONSCIOUS

Thanks to extensive training, veterans are aware of health and safety protocols both for themselves and the welfare of others. Their awareness and conscientiousness translate into protection of employees, property and materials.

COMPANY IMPACT: An Able and Protected Workforce

10. TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

In addition to dealing positively with the typical issues of personal maturity, veterans have frequently triumphed over great adversity. They likely have proven their mettle in mission critical situations demanding endurance, stamina and flexibility.

COMPANY IMPACT: Contagious Resilience and Resolve

WHY IS MILITARY-TO- CIVILIAN TRANSITION SO HARD?

The culture and communication gap is at the Heart of the challenge.
94% of the current American population never served in the U.S. military.

8 The Cultural and Communication Gap is at the Heart of the Challenge





WHY IS MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION SO HARD?

1. IT IS A FRAGMENTED APPROACH.

Three government agencies have a critical role in your military-to-civilian transition – Department of War (own the responsibility and manage the time for delivery), Veterans Administration (responsible for post-service healthcare and most benefits), and the Department of Labor (support in retaining post-service employment). The inter-departmental seams add complexity to an already challenging evolution for service members.

2. ONE WEEK IS INSUFFICIENT TIME TO LEARN EVERYTHING ABOUT TRANSITION.

The military spends months on preparing someone to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces – initial orientation and military indoctrination. But the military allocates only one week to teach service members to become civilians again.

3. MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION DEFINED:

- a psychological and cultural evolution – a move away from perpetual responsibility and readiness
- a move from a collectivist to individualist community
- a culture shock for military community members and their families that have negative impact on experiences
- a path to reorientation and self-definition

A man in a blue t-shirt and safety glasses is working in a factory. He is holding a power tool and appears to be focused on his task. The background shows a large industrial facility with various equipment and structures.

CLAYTON

Kansas Army National Guard, 32 years

4. CIVILIAN POPULATION DOES NOT UNDERSTAND NOR APPRECIATE MILITARY SERVICE.

- The general population does not understand the military community, their language, or their culture.
- They cannot connect the dots between military skills and experiences and their relevance to business needs.
- It leads to misunderstanding, miscommunication and tremendous barriers to the members of the military community to acclimate to their new operating environment once hired.

5. STRUCTURE BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN WORK ENVIRONMENTS ARE DIFFERENT.

Military = strong, hierarchical, vertical command and control structure with a consistent method and structure for continuous operation.

- Hierarchical/vertical organization
- More structure to activities and methods for doing daily “business”
- More exact rules of conduct
- Defined roles, rank & status (defined/assigned military occupational career fields)
- Consistency across units/organizations
- Clearly defined career progression
- Additionally, the military community shares a bond in beliefs, traditions, values and the importance of rank and structure

Civilian = usually flexible, distributed and intent or vision-based structure with less uniformity.

- Matrixed structure
- Less structure to almost every facet of work
- More implied or “understood” rules of conduct
- Flexible/ambiguous roles and status
- Variations across teams/divisions
- Less defined career progression/opportunity for lateral assignments
- Corporate culture imposes corporate values on the organization

6. CAREER PROGRESSION AND ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN EACH ENVIRONMENT ARE NOT SIMILAR.

Military = formal line of progression or pathway within the same career field to the top; a career ladder that advances members based on their performance and potential centered on a narrow set of skills.

Civilian = much more flexible path where members can transfer laterally to different career fields to broaden their set of skills based on value they’ve created for the corporation, and networking – who you know.

7. ON THE JOB EXPERIENCES ARE VERY DIFFERENT.

Military = Task-driven environment where standards are usually well defined.

- Supervision or evaluation of every task is almost mandatory.
- Job security is rather assured, and routine personal counseling makes it clear when it is at risk.
- Leaders motivate subordinates to succeed on behalf of the overarching vision and mission.

Civilian = Ambiguous work environment

- Work is approached with a level of indifference.
- Job security is not assured, nor are opportunities toward growth and advancement.
- Leaders motivating direct reports is not desired to produce results.

8. VALUES IN EACH RESPECTIVE ENVIRONMENT APPEAR DIFFERENT.

Military = Live by an Ethos where the organization, its success and survival, is more important than individual ambitions, goals and survival.

- Relies on “perimeters” to stay safe, secure and survive.
- Trusts others to do their part and to communicate when they need help – even when out of sight.
- Strong personal connection is essential for the concept to work.
- Focus is on achieving the intent.

Civilian = Appear to be more focused on the individual and their independence, more competitive instead of collaborative, and political correctness is expected over candor.

- Non-veteran coworkers may perceive members of the military community of being too rigid, overly confident and excessively dedicated to the organization’s mission.
- Do not create perimeters and no reason for strong personal connections to support the team or company achieving its goals and objectives.

9. FINANCIAL PRESSURE. THIS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS’ WELL-BEING, DECISION-MAKING, AND RESULT IN MISALIGNED EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.

- Service members may go from a steady paycheck, housing allowance and benefits to no or reduced income immediately after transition.
- Relocation expenses can be substantial and unexpected.
- While serving, many costs are covered (housing, healthcare, uniforms, meals, etc.). Now you must pay for your own rent/ mortgage, insurance, healthcare and other essentials.
- Financial stress may result in accepting the first job offer, even if it is not a good fit or aligned with long-term goals.
- A delay in finding employment can result in the loss of a financial safety net at a crucial adjustment period.
- Even when using the GI Bill, there may be out-of-pocket expenses associated with education along with simultaneously caring for the family.
- Financial stress may cloud judgment, making it harder to focus on long-term career planning or personal growth.

10. LOSS OF IDENTITY, PURPOSE, CAMARADERIE AND STRUCTURE.

Military service provides a strong sense of identity, mission and belonging. Leaving these things behind can feel like losing a core part of oneself, leading to confusion and emotional distress.

Identity:

- Military identity is deeply tied to rank and role, mission and purpose, unit and community, values and structure.
- It is reinforced by the military uniform, rituals, language and shared experiences.
- The transition includes a sudden shift from being highly respected and mission-critical to feeling anonymous or undervalued in the civilian workforce.
- Identity in the military is continually supported through clear expectations, instant feedback and structured advancement; civilian systems lack this clarity.
- Veterans lose immediate credibility — in uniform, competence is assumed; in civilian environments, they must “prove themselves” from scratch.
- Moving from collective identity (“we/us/mission”) to individual identity (“I/me/career goals”) can feel disorienting.
- Transition may uncover parts of identity suppressed during service, creating a new period of internal adjustment.
- The sudden loss of routine removes a major anchor of daily life.
- Many veterans underestimate how much their identity was tied to belonging, making the absence of automatic belonging disorienting.
- The experience may result in career uncertainty and complicate the ability to choose a career path.
- The transition may result in temporary grief, depression, or anxiety.

Purpose:

- Purpose is clear and constant when in uniform: serve the nation, protect others, accomplish the mission, support your team. Every task contributes to a larger goal.
- After transition, the overarching mission is gone.
- Civilian employment often prioritizes profit, efficiency, or individual success – values that are disconnected from the military purpose.
- Service members struggle to see how their civilian roles make a difference or how they contribute to something meaningful.
- In the military, purpose is external and assigned; in civilian life, purpose must be self-generated, which can feel unfamiliar.
- Veterans may feel disconnected from work that does not directly impact people, communities, or national interests.
- The lack of urgency in civilian organizations can feel like a lack of purpose or seriousness.
- Veterans may struggle to prioritize personal goals after years of prioritizing mission and team.
- Without mission alignment, veterans may bounce between roles trying to “find” purpose rather than building it.
- Without a sense of purpose, veterans may feel unmotivated and uninspired to make a difference.
- The transition may make it difficult to plan for a future career without a clear mission or direction.

Camaraderie:

- Military-forged camaraderie is more than just friendship. It is a bond forged through shared hardship, trust and mutual reliance.
- Separation removes daily interactions, shared missions and the emotional safety net service members are accustomed to.
- The absence of camaraderie can deepen the sense of lost identity.
- Civilian roles bring ambiguous status, unclear interpersonal expectations and differences across teams/divisions.
- Civilian organizations offer less defined career progression and fewer lateral opportunities.
- Corporate culture develops its own values and norms that may not align with military expectations.
- Civilian workplaces rarely emphasize shared hardship or collective struggle, making camaraderie develop more slowly.
- Veterans may misinterpret civilian informality or individualism as a lack of loyalty or professionalism.
- Maintaining military friendships becomes difficult due to relocation, schedules and lifestyle shifts.
- Veterans often feel socially isolated because civilians may not understand or relate to their experiences.
- Civilian teams lack clearly defined hierarchy and roles, creating uncertainty about trust and responsibility.
- The loss of “instant trust” — universally present in uniform — requires veterans to rebuild relationships in unfamiliar ways.

Structure and Predictability:

- The military provides clear roles, responsibilities, timelines and hierarchy.
- Civilian workplaces rely heavily on ambiguity, informal communication and loosely enforced standards.
- Veterans may struggle with inconsistent expectations, shifting priorities and unclear lines of authority.
- SOPs may be absent or inconsistently applied, creating frustration for veterans accustomed to tight processes.
- Meetings, deadlines and decisions often shift without warning in civilian environments.
- Veterans used to operational predictability can feel disoriented by civilian “fluidity.”



ANTHONY
U.S. Marine Corps, 5 years

PREPARE FOR COMBAT

Before you initiate military action against an enemy combatant, you must first confirm your own readiness and ability to execute critical assigned tasks. Doing this properly could mean the difference between victory or defeat. As you get ready for your military-to-civilian transition, use the following tips to prepare for combat. It's way more than a job hunt.

- 16 Identify Your Top 10 Needs
- 18 Define Your End State
- 20 Develop A Proper "Sight Picture" on Your Career
- 22 Self-Evaluation & Career Research





IDENTIFY YOUR “TOP 10” NEEDS

Determine what you need or want from your next career for professional and personal fulfillment. Also, consider the differences between your current and future operating environments, and how they might impact your needs. Finally, routinely review and update your “Top 10” needs, prioritize them, and most importantly, remain focused on them throughout your military-to-civilian transition.

Consider the following questions to help you develop your “Top 10” needs – this is NOT a complete list:

- Where do I want to live/work? (Confirm this with Household 6?)
- Do I need to live close to in-laws and grandparents?
- What is the cost of living in this area?
- Are the taxes (on my retirement or other special pay) in this region/state acceptable?
- When do I want to – or can I – begin to work?
- How much money do I need to “survive” – at least initially?
- How much am I worth – what kind of value can I create?
- What type of salary do I need once I begin to work?
- Do I need insurance – medical, dental, eyesight and how much will it cost?
- Do I need to be close to a VA Medical facility?
- Is there appropriate medical care for my families’ special medical needs?
- Are there appropriate services for any special needs me and my family have?
- What family obligations do I have?
- What financial obligations do I have?
- What legal obligations do I have?
- Are there special considerations affecting my work-life balance needs?
- Do I want to be involved in my kids’ school and recreational activities?
- Do I have specific recreational desires that impact my choice of location?
- Do I need to earn more certifications, licenses, or education before I begin my new career?
- Do I need additional certifications, licenses, or education to advance in my career?
- Which professional associations do I want to join that will help me in my career?
- What is (are) my targeted career field(s)?
- What types of jobs within my targeted career field(s) are suitable?
- What companies in this preferred location have opportunities in these career fields?
- For what companies am I interested in working?
- What is their culture like?

- What are their expected employee values, and do they align with mine?
- Do I want to work with a company where I can advance and grow?
- Do I want to work with a company that will move me to other locations – including overseas?
- Do I want to work with a company that will pay for advanced certification, license, or education?
- Will I use my final move to relocate?

Focusing on your “Top 10” needs will enable you to produce a winning plan of action for each step of your transition battle.

- Target a career field to narrow your search.
- Concentrate on companies whose culture aligns with your values.
- Look for an acceptable company that has job opportunities in your targeted career field(s).
- Define an acceptable salary range based on your value. (Be sure to factor in disability and compensation pay, as well as retirement if those benefits are relevant to your situation.)
- **Most importantly** – ensure you satisfactorily care for family needs and issues (especially to Household 6’s delight).

Preparing for combat will make the difference between military-to-civilian transition victory or defeat.



DANI

U.S. Air Force, 6 years



DEFINE YOUR END STATE

When preparing for your military-to-civilian transition “war,” you must first consider your end state – a set of required conditions that defines achievement.

More than likely, succeeding in a new career is your end state. So, at this point of your transition, spend more time identifying what career you are qualified and experienced to pursue instead of searching for a job. Your first job is merely your first tactical objective leading to your end state.



Your personal career end state should have a “long-term” view.

In the military, an end state is a broad description of how things should look after a military operation. It is guided by your vision and defines the conditions for success. Defining a desired end state provides the essential focus even when things don’t go as planned.

When you use that thinking in your military-to-civilian transition preparation, your end state will orient you even if your application or interviews don’t go as planned. So, if you don’t get selected for a specific job or hired by a desired company, you can keep moving in the right direction.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR CAREER END STATE

- Use your “Top-10” Needs to shape your career end state.
- Look beyond just successfully transitioning; that’s only the first step toward your new career end state.
- Don’t just orient on your first job after transition; that is too shallow of a focus.

Despite terrific veteran unemployment statistics at the end of 2025, those military community members who did not prepare for combat and who had a short-term view, confronted greater challenges.

Recent surveys completed by Hiring Our Heroes, LinkedIn, Recruit Military and the Pew Research Center reveal this:

- **Veteran underemployment was rampant** – almost 1/3 of newly hired veterans were underemployed (nearly 16% higher than their non-veteran peers).
- **Veteran turnover was high** – nearly 50% of newly hired veterans left their first job within the first year; nearly 75% in their second year.
- **Veteran retention was poor** – around 15% of newly hired veterans remained in their first job.

Defining your career end state will help you reduce uncertainty in your military-to-civilian transition. It will also increase your flexibility during this difficult and challenging time. And it will help you keep focused on what’s important – achieving your fullest potential, being sufficiently challenged and becoming professionally satisfied and personally fulfilled.

DEVELOP A PROPER SIGHT PICTURE ON YOUR CAREER

With a proper sight picture on a company and career target, appropriate jobs will come clearly into view. A proper sight picture will ensure applications and resumes are properly aimed, and career targets will start to fall.

To succeed in basic rifle marksmanship, you must develop a proper sight picture. Without it, your rounds will go everywhere except where you are aiming. By aligning your sight posts and the target with your dominant eye, you will knock down what you are aiming at practically every time.

Similarly, by aligning your passions, skills and experiences with your values you will ensure a proper sight picture on the new career after military service for which you are aiming.

To develop a proper sight picture on a career, identify the things you are qualified to do, are good at, have experience doing and are passionate about, then find careers that match your skills.

These steps may help you gain a proper sight picture on your targeted career field(s) – see Self-Evaluation and Career Research

1. **Get to know yourself.** Identify your interests, passions, and goals and always orient on them.
2. **Identify comparable skills.** List your aptitudes and military skills, then match them to those in civilian career fields.
3. **Recall relevant experiences.** Catalog events and occurrences where you had success or created value when demonstrating these skills.
4. **Research potential careers.** Narrow down these career fields by ensuring they will help satisfy your interests, passions and previously identified goals.
5. **Ask the pros.** Network or conduct informational interviews with professionals in those career fields.
6. **Establish your target.** Identify only those jobs within the broader career field that will get you started in your newly identified career and initiate your movement toward your end state.

It is paramount to have a proper sight picture on a “targeted” career field before you start shooting applications down range. Aligning your effort this way will ensure your application efforts are more precise, accurate and effective.



SELF-EVALUATION & CAREER RESEARCH

Before you apply for jobs, examine your passions, qualifications, skills and goals to determine your targeted career field(s).

1. GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

This important step seems so obvious that you'll be tempted to skip it, but consider this: if you don't know who you are and what you want, how are you going to convince anyone to hire you? Get in touch with your passions, interests and goals too so you can sell yourself to potential employers in your resume and interviews. Here are just a couple of the resources out there to aid in your self-evaluation:

- Take the Clifton Strengths assessment to determine your natural skills and abilities.
- Check out the HIGH5 Test to learn your top five personal strengths and their definitions.
- Use the tools on the U.S. Department of Labor's website, CareerOneStop.org.
- Do an online search for "career assessment" and use some of the tools you find or visit your local library for more resources.

2. IDENTIFY COMPARABLE SKILLS

It's important to determine where your passions and interests intersect with the skills, knowledge, abilities and attributes you gained in the military. It's crucial you can match them to those in civilian career fields. Non-veteran recruiters and HR leaders will not be able to connect the dots between the relevance of your military skills and experiences to their business needs. Here are just a few online tools to help guide you:

- Review the Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Check out the Crosswalk Search or Skills Search on OnetOnline.org
- Find out what your interests are and how they relate to your career on MyNextMoveforVets.org
- Use the military skills translator on Military.com
- Use the Military Skills Translator on Textron's Military career page: careers.textron.com/military-veterans
- Find a career training opportunity on DoW SkillBridge to explore potential career fields to target

(NOTE – Textron Aviation is a DoW SkillBridge partner and creates tailorable internship opportunities.)

3. RESEARCH POTENTIAL CAREERS

Results from a study at Syracuse University (Institute of Veterans and Military Families) revealed that just under half of transitioning military veterans left their first job within one year, and over 75 percent within 18 months. Rather than jumping into the first job that comes your way and suffering the same negative results, make it your objective to succeed in a private sector career that will allow you to grow, advance and experience enjoyment long term. Instead of asking yourself, “what job could I do?” ask “what career will I pursue?”

REMEMBER: Target career fields that will satisfy your passions and interests, and that will allow you to showcase the skills, knowledge, abilities and attributes you previously identified.

4. ASK THE PROS

Next, focus your networking effort and conduct Informational Interviews with professionals in those career fields. It is best if you gain insight into specific career requirements, work environments, challenges, lifestyle changes, advancement opportunities, required certifications, professional associations and more.

- Connect with employers at job fairs and ask them honest questions about what their roles require.
- Create a profile on LinkedIn and make connections with people who work in your targeted career field(s).
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals in your targeted career field(s) to learn about specific requirements, work environments, challenges, lifestyle, advancement opportunities, required certifications and possible pitfalls.
- Read advice articles in your targeted career field(s) and research industry trends.
- Join the local chapter of a professional association or organization related to your targeted career field(s).

5. ESTABLISH YOUR TARGET

Think of this new potential career path not as a straight line, but as stepping stones on the path to success. Set a career objective, envision how you’re going to achieve it, anticipate some of the challenges you may face and how these can help you grow.



DANCE WITH THE ONE WHO BRUNG YA!

See this plan in action in our program manager’s article, “Dance With the One Who Brung Ya”

SHAPE YOUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

To shape an unfamiliar environment, you engage those who are already comfortable and successful there. Before you transition, you must network with those who are already in the civilian workforce to achieve your military-to-civilian transition goals.

-
- 26 Build, Then Leverage Your Network
 - 28 Aggressively Conduct Informational Interviews
 - 32 Study Company Culture and Opportunities
 - 33 Attend Career Fairs and Networking Events
 - 39 Narrow Your Job Search
 - 40 Search for Roles at Textron Aviation
 - 44 Use Textron Aviation's Military Skills Translator





BUILD, THEN LEVERAGE YOUR NETWORK

Networking is vital to defining your soon-to-be new operating environment – creating intelligence about companies and targeted career field(s). Also, it is a way to build long-term relationships and establish a good reputation. It involves meeting and getting to know people whom you can assist, and who can potentially help you in return.

Networking is asking someone you trust to help you; and networking works best when you proactively help someone first. (Never leave a fallen comrade.)

Networking helps create opportunities. It may not be what gets you the job, but it will certainly move you closer.

Here are 10 tips to build a network concentrated on your targeted career field(s):

1. **Ask former military colleagues** or those whom you are “debriefing” for an introduction. Be precise. Be selective. Ask someone you trust to connect you with people in your targeted career field(s) and companies.
2. **Join professional or trade organizations** associated with your targeted career field(s). Attend events and meet professionals with a similar career focus to learn more about companies and their culture and to open more doors.
3. **Actively participate on social media.** Remember, your posts can be seen by the world forever. So, be informative and highlight your intelligence and initiative, but be neutral and non-controversial. Ask to connect with and/or follow relevant individuals to expand your network and join relevant companies / groups to learn about their initiatives, culture and opportunities.
4. **Volunteer for a veteran-or military family-focused organization.** While doing work for a good cause, you will find people with similar interests.
5. **Be transparent and authentic.** Remember you are building trust. Be open and clear about goals and aspirations, but don’t dwell on frustrations and challenges. You are initiating new relationships; there is some risk here.
6. **Willingly share your resume.** Leave a copy of your resume with a new connection which may lead to an introduction to someone else. Always have one on hand.
7. **Always follow up.** Immediately provide anything promised (your resume, contacts, event dates, etc.) and always send personal thank-you notes.
8. **Don’t just collect business cards;** share yours with everyone. Don’t take a card from everyone you meet; just from those whom you trust will help you. Do be sure to offer your business card, though – it may make its way to your future boss.
9. **Stay in contact.** Don’t connect with anyone without having a purpose. Keep a running dialogue with those you meet, especially people whose business cards you collected; keep them informed of your progress.
10. **Be a resource for others.** Reciprocate with something of value. Find ways to help your new contacts. Also, remember your warrior ethos and share what you’ve learned with others battling through their military-to-civilian transition.

Networking will help you learn more about your targeted career field(s). It may open doors and introduce you to job opportunities you would not have otherwise discovered. It may also open your eyes to the significance of company culture, inform you about trends and expectations in your career field, while creating connections that will lead to mentorship and career guidance. More importantly, when you first help others, the assistance you receive in return will be more effective.

Networking will introduce you to people whom you can trust and with whom you can have candid discussions. All this will lead you to meaningful, lifetime relationships.



LEE

U.S. Navy, 22 years, Current Reservist

AGGRESSIVELY CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational Interviews are an excellent way to strengthen your network, learn more about your targeted career-field(s) and career-specific language. Informational Interviews can also improve your resume writing and performance in job interviews. Additionally, they may lead you directly to the job of your dreams.

SCOUTS OUT!

Prior to conducting any combat operation, especially those that require you to advance into unfamiliar territory, you begin to study all the intelligence that is available. Then you proactively gather even more information using your own resources.

To better define unfamiliar territory of your future operating environment, you may conduct reconnaissance, combat patrols, leverage surveillance technology, or reach out to adjacent units who previously operated in this territory. This will ensure you develop a successful plan of action in that area.

Sometimes the best way to learn about a new environment is to put “Scouts Out!” This form of human intelligence will report back the sights, sounds, smells, and activities that will help you develop a comprehensive picture! During your military-to-civilian war planning you may not find any Scouts to do this essential work. So, you must leverage the next best thing – people who are already intimately familiar with this environment. They can either be career experts in your targeted career field(s), or current employees of one of your preferred companies, or both – preferably.

Use these replacement “Scouts” to fill the information gaps that you have.

PATROL DEBRIEFINGS CAN DEFINE YOUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

In combat, patrol debriefings help develop a comprehensive “picture” of the operating environment which will enhance future operations and enable victory.

You will lack complete knowledge of your future career operating environment. Like combat patrol debriefings, informational interviews can help you fill in the knowledge gaps. After learning as much as you can about your targeted career field(s) or the culture of potential employers, you will be able to refine your military-to-civilian transition battle plan.

PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- Learn about your future operating environment from professionals who have relevant experience.
- Learn about required credentials in your targeted career field(s).
- Discover information about an industry or specific company and its culture and values.
- Better understand how your military skills and experiences are suited to your targeted career field(s).
- Appreciate the language, terms and references that are essential to your targeted career field(s).
- Build new relationships and strengthen your network.
- Identify the correct “entry-point” into your targeted career field(s).

CONSIDER YOUR APPROACH

Be selective about who you interview. If they are to contribute to your understanding of your future operating environment, they should have:

- Experience in your targeted career field(s).
- Currently work or previously worked in the company that interests you.
- Or, both – preferably.
- Possibly transitioned from military service into their new career or current job.

EVERYONE LOVES TO TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES.

So, ask your subject if they could explain how they became so successful in their career; they’ll jump at the chance to hear themselves talk. But, if you ask them to help you find a job, they will most likely point you towards the recruiting office or their careers page. Not much help there.

HOW TO CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Here are eight steps to conduct useful informational interviews with professionals who have experience in your targeted career field(s) so you can learn about your future operating environment:

1. **Research the individual you are meeting.** Use LinkedIn, Facebook, Google, their colleagues or contacts, or their company website. Make sure they have experience in your targeted career field(s).
2. **Have a plan and purpose for each question.** This is not a job interview. It's about seeking information. You must identify what you'd like to learn in advance.
3. **Succinctly share your story and purpose.** First, very briefly introduce yourself and explain your purpose for meeting. Carry a resume just in case.
4. **Show some respect (stroke their ego).** People love to talk about themselves. Ask them how or why they were so successful, or comment on a specific accomplishment of theirs to provoke them to share more.
5. **Don't ask for a job; ask for professional advice.** You are on a mission to learn about the industry or career operating environment. If you want a job, go speak to HR or a recruiter instead.
6. **Get them to name names.** Ask if there are others whom you should "debrief." Then, ask them to introduce you to this other professional.
7. **Ask for referrals.** Although it is not the purpose of the "debriefing," any referral from a respected professional will benefit your underlying effort.
8. **Follow up with a "thank you" message.** Always send a personal thank you note and keep the debriefer informed of your progress.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW OUTCOMES



From conducting Informational Interviews, you will:

- Learn career-specific language (which better prepares you for resume writing and more effective job interviews).
- Find potential career paths including internal career paths you did not know existed.
- Capture requirements needed to enter your targeted career field(s).
- Determine more about the hiring process and timelines.
- Discover the realities of working within your desired career field, industry, or potential business.
- Identify the correct entry level into your targeted career field(s).
- Understand company culture and values and their importance to your future acclimation.
- Define or clarify your salary expectations and potential career progression.
- Enhance your network.
- Possibly obtain the job of your dreams.

SOME SUGGESTED INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How did you start out in this career?
- Is there something you wish you had done differently?
- Is there something you wish you'd known before you accepted a job or started work with your employer?
- Is there a skill you wish you had before starting out in this career?
- Tell me about the career path that led you to your job. [Apply some information from your previous research to make this a specific question, e.g. I understand you started as a technician in Dallas; so how did you end up working in production in Phoenix?]
- What experiences best prepared you for your career field choice?
- In this career field, what is a typical initial job?
- Is there a typical career path in this career field?
- Is it common for those in this career field to "follow" that path in the same company?
- What type of education, degree or certification will best prepare someone for this field?
- What type of professional organizations associated with this career field would you recommend joining?
- What type of conferences or networking events would you recommend participating in to stay current with developments or best practices in this career field?
- What do you think your career field will look like in the future?
- What's your biggest challenge in your current role?
- Who depends on you and your performance?
- Whom do you depend on?
- What do you like most about your job?
- What's the most challenging part of your job?
- What kind of problems do you face on a day-to-day basis?
- Tell me what happens in various divisions of your agency, like the [client side], the [finance side], the [media buying side], the [contract side].
- Where do you see your career going from here?
- What's the culture like at [this company] compared to [prior company]?
- What's it like to work for this company?
- What do you dislike about this company?
- What are some of the long-term trends in your business?
- Where do you see this industry going?
- What is the work-life balance like in your company?
- How would you describe the leadership style in the company – for the senior leadership and for the mid-level managers?
- What is the expectation for your business leaders when it comes to coaching and mentoring their direct reports?
- Who else would you recommend I talk to? (Mention who else you've talked to in the field.)

STUDY COMPANY CULTURES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In combat, there is access to lots of information and raw data about your operating environment and the enemy. But to be precise in your action and to enable timely decisions, you need actionable intelligence, or refined, up-to-date information. Actionable intelligence will enable you to be decisive and exploit advanced knowledge to your direct benefit.

To develop actionable intelligence, you must drive the collection of information and intelligence based on your strategic objective – securing a new career.

HOW TO CREATE ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE IN YOUR MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION:

1. Frequently review your “Top 10” needs and always remain focused on them.

2. Research a company’s culture. Know what you want. Look for a company with a culture that matches your values and personality and aligns with your “Top 10” needs.

- Use the web to research the company’s publicly stated values, goals and attitudes.

- Access websites where employees comment on their company’s culture (e.g. Glassdoor).
- Interact with company employees, personally or on social media.
- Ask current contacts for insights on company culture.
- Create informational interview opportunities with employees, customers, suppliers and partners.
- Visit the workplace to assess the environment, surroundings and employee attitudes.
- Ask specific questions during the interview process.

3. Research the company in other areas associated with your Top 10. This could be:

- Company culture
- Existing career fields and possible career paths
- Business operations
- Leadership and company philosophy
- Growth and advancement opportunities
- Funded educational opportunities
- Employee benefits
- Insurance programs
- News reports about the company

Guided by your Top 10, you can drive your transition intelligence collection by asking purposeful questions during informational interviews, networking, and during job interviews, creating actionable intelligence. This will enable decisiveness and an ability to exploit newly gained advanced knowledge to your benefit.

ATTEND JOB / CAREER FAIRS AND NETWORKING EVENTS

Job or career fairs and even networking events are pre-arranged battles and skirmishes that could lead to a quick victory in your military-to-civilian transition war. Or you can use these events to better shape your future operating environment by practicing your new combat techniques with recruiters and hiring managers. If anything, you can create useful encounters to expand your network and your knowledge of a company, its culture and values, and its employment opportunities.

WHY DO COMPANIES PARTICIPATE IN JOB / CAREER FAIRS – WHAT’S IN IT FOR THEM?

- Maximize recruiting and minimize cost: These events are great opportunities to access large pools of potential candidates at a low cost and with minimal effort.
- Rapidly distribute information - marketing: Companies often announce their talent needs to all participants before and during the events
- Abbreviate their selection process: Interviews can be conducted on site and sometimes offers are made to save time.

- Build their brand: Presenting a company brand in public and alongside big-name companies can immediately improve a company’s reputation.
- Meet and network with peer companies: Meeting other like-minded companies establishes mutually beneficial relationships where best practices and even talent may be shared.
- Expand their talent network for future needs: Many companies grow their database of talent that they can call upon when future needs arise.

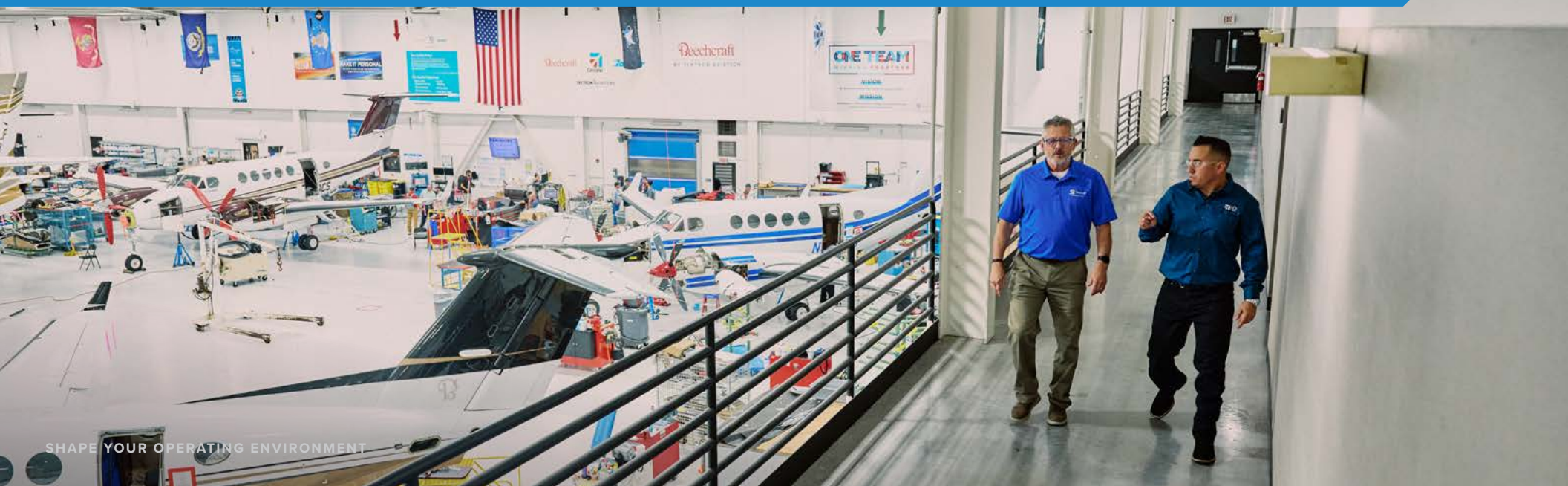
WHY SHOULD YOU PARTICIPATE IN JOB / CAREER FAIRS – HOW CAN YOU BENEFIT?

- Research multiple companies: Very quickly, learn about the company’s culture and values.
- Expand your network: Create a goldmine of networking opportunities; also, conduct impromptu informational interviews or arrange to meet after the event.
- Learn about opportunities associated with targeted career field(s): Learn about current and future job opportunities, and the required credentials for each.
- Practice using the language of your targeted career field(s): Practice speaking your “new” language, whether it be a general discussion, an impromptu informational interview, or an interview with a hiring manager.
- Compare your military skills and credentials: Assess the relevance of your military skills and experiences to your targeted career field(s) by learning about job requirements and career paths.
- Attend free workshops and seminars: Learn and grow. Most events offer additional experiences or tutorials that will improve your performance throughout the military-to-civilian transition.
- Get your resume reviewed: Professionals often review and may offer suggestions on how to improve your resume.

YOUR (REALISTIC) JOB / CAREER FAIR OBJECTIVES



- Enhance your network – gather new contacts
- Learn more about potential companies and their culture
- Learn more about a company's opportunities
- Learn more about qualifications needed for your targeted career field(s)
- Improve how you present yourself to non-military professionals
- Leave a positive first impression with a selected company
- Receive from event organizers to a listing of the open roles that specific companies or all companies intend to fill at the event.
- Find a job to which you can apply
- Learn about the projected timeline for hiring someone into this job
- Get invited to an interview
- Determine next steps – how to follow-up



WHERE CAN YOU FIND THESE MILITARY COMMUNITY SPECIFIC JOB / CAREER FAIRS

There are quite a few ways to identify and locate these job / career fair announcements. This is NOT an exhaustive listing:

1. Your base, installation or post will have a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) office (also referred to as Soldier for Life (Army), Marine for Life (USMC), and often co-located with the Military & Family Readiness Center (Air Force) who will maintain a list of installation-sponsored events.
2. Your local community workforce center will employ a Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) who will maintain a list of veteran or military oriented events.
3. Local and Regional Veterans Affairs (VA) offices and Vet Centers will be aware of local events.
4. Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) often host these events: e.g., VFW, American Legion, DAV, etc.
5. Several nationwide organizations host live and virtual events across the country. You can visit their websites to learn more: Bradley-Morris/RecruitMilitary, Hiring Our Heroes, Hire GI, Hire Heroes USA, Cameron Books, Korn Ferry (Lucas Group), Orion, Bradley-Morris, Military Hire, VeteranRecruiting, Hire-A-Vet, Heroes MAKE America Manufacturing Career Fair, etc.
6. Your National Guard Headquarters will host several events throughout the year. Sometimes homecoming or Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events will have a job / career fair component to them. At a minimum, they will maintain a listing of local events to consider.
7. MilitaryX (<https://militaryx.com/>) includes a searchable list of Job Fairs for Veterans by city, state and zip code.
8. Military.com compiles a list of events throughout the year.
9. CareerRecon website (<https://careerrecon.com/job-fairs-military-veterans/>) maintains a comprehensive listing of Virtual Job Fairs for Military and Veterans.
10. Doing a Google search (or use any Search engine) for “Military Job Fairs Near Me” or “Veteran Career Fairs in (city)” will result in a quality listing of events you should consider.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THESE BATTLES AND SKIRMISHES

Here are thirteen steps to help you make a favorable first impression upon first contact at one of these events:

1. Register early and, if permitted, provide in advance a generic resume that highlights the breadth of your military skills and experiences along with your education.
2. Figure out which companies will attend and identify those that may offer opportunities in your targeted career field(s) and in your preferred geographical areas of interest. (This is a hiring manager’s favorite.)
3. Research the identified companies to assess their culture and values. (This is a critical step for you!)
4. Research whether your selected companies are military ready, have a military recruiter, or have a military employee resource group – these companies will be more prone to hiring you.
5. Develop your plan of attack for the day of the event - decide which of these companies’ tables you will visit.
6. Develop a customized resume for each of your targeted career field(s), then print several copies of each.
7. Rehearse your personal introduction and greeting, identifying who you are, what your career field interest is and what

your relevant skills and experiences are, your geographical preferences and the earliest date you can start work...and do it without using a single military word, title, phrase, or acronym.

8. Contact event organizers to see if these specific companies provided a listing of the open roles they intend to fill at the event.
9. Visit the selected companies' career sites, review relevant job descriptions.
10. Send an email or InMail to the military recruiter, notifying them of your interest in the company or intention of applying to one of their jobs.
11. Before the event, apply for one of these jobs – ONLY if you meet all the specified requirements and after customizing your resume to that job description. (Print off all online responses to your application from the company and carry with you.)
12. Procure a notebook and pen or fully charge your Notebook or Phone to capture essential information from company representatives during the event.
13. 13. Select appropriate clothing to wear to reveal you are a professional and ready to work.

DURING THE HEAT OF BATTLE

What should you expect from the participating company?

1. You will most likely meet a recruiter who never served a day in their life; so, you should ensure your introductory presentation is tailored to someone who doesn't know anything about the military – NOTHING!
2. You may find a hiring manager who will assess talent for a specific need. (Oftentimes the hiring manager will NOT be at the company table. Instead, they will be in a separate room to conduct interviews.)
3. You may find a military veteran employee in attendance; someone

who can translate your skills and experiences for the recruiter and hiring manager. Sometimes this employee is a member of the employee military veteran resource group.

4. The company's effort may be divided into several different objectives. Here are the four most common ones:
 - Hire immediately to fill an urgent need (normally advertised before the event).
 - Build a pipeline of talent to fill a specific and recurring need.
 - Build upon their database of talent for future, unspecified needs.
 - Generally, increase awareness of their company and brand, their culture and values and their interest in hiring military community members.
5. They may ask you to "sign-in" (electronically) so they can capture your information in their database.
6. Do not get offended -- They may NOT ask for your resume because the event organizer often has a centralized database for all participants, and your resume is included.
7. The company representative may ask questions to learn more about your suitability and interests.
8. The representative may provide additional information and give you leads that are not available on the employer's website.

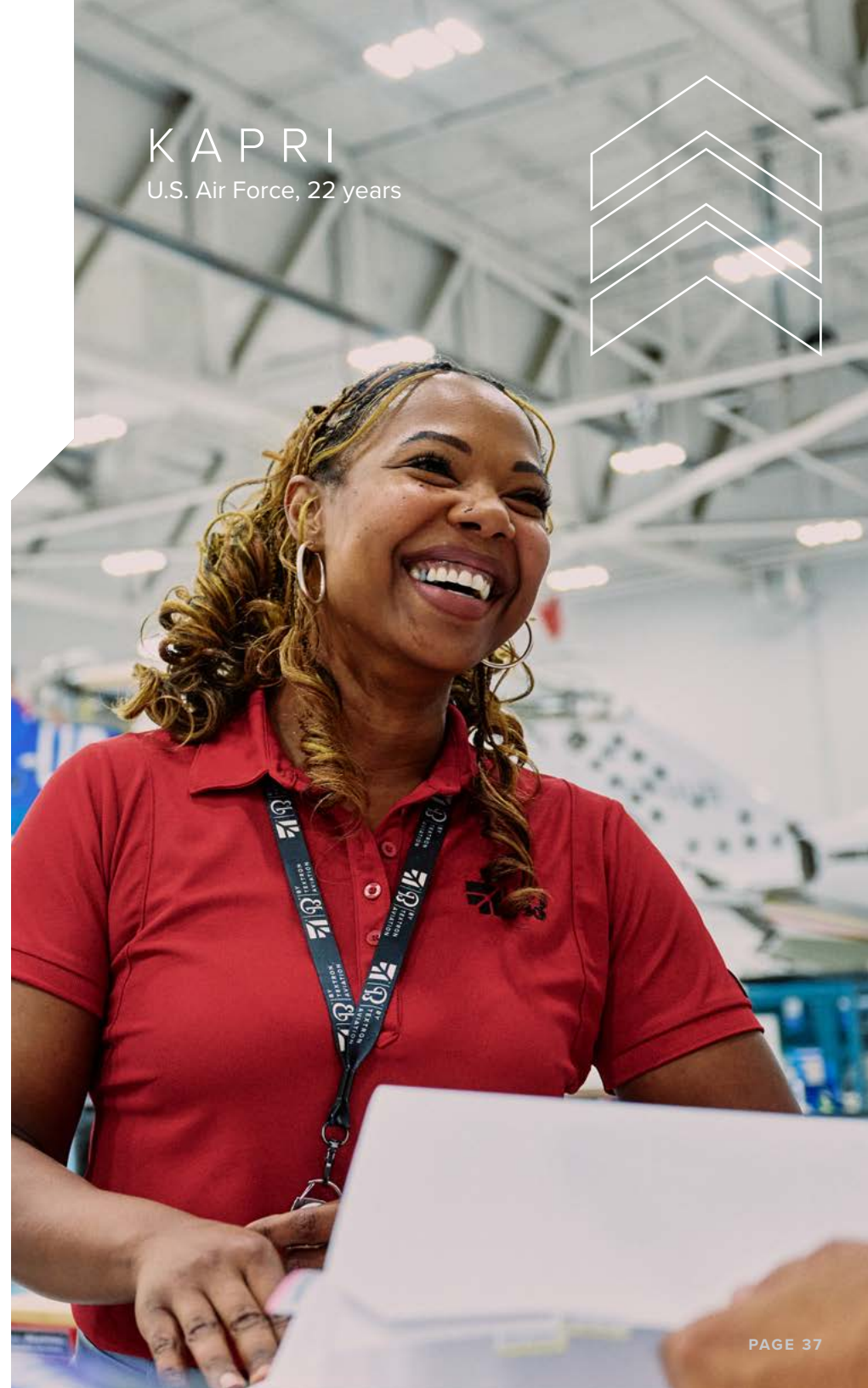
Three things you should **NOT EXPECT** from the participating company.

1. The company asks you to apply for a job on the spot. This will only happen if you are perfect for the company's immediate needs, and they need you to apply before they can properly interview you.

2. The company representative invites you to participate in an interview. This may happen, but only for those attendees who are suited for the job. You might be the lucky one. But don't expect this.
3. The hiring manager offers you the job or hires you at the event. Similarly, this can happen, but very infrequently. Timing and perfect alignment of the needed skills are essential. So, don't expect this either.

Here is how you handle your “first contact” with a recruiter or hiring manager of your selected company:

- Review any notes you have about the company before approaching the table, so you don't embarrass yourself.
- Even if “traveling” with a support group, approach the table by yourself, have at least one copy of your resume handy and have something on which to take notes – pen and paper, notebook, mobile phone.
- Provide a firm handshake, introduce yourself and learn who you are speaking with – recruiter, hiring manager, military community employee, or member of the company employee resource group.
- Deliver your personal introduction and greeting – keep it to 30 seconds: explain your career field interest; present your relevant skills and experiences and your geographical preferences; and announce the earliest date you can start work.
- Ask what the company's objective is at the fair.
- Ask if they would like a copy of your resume.
- Inform them about the job that you applied for before the event.
- Listen intently to their response and take notes.
- Ask for a business card or contact information.
- Be professional, polite and positive.



If the company representative asks you if you have questions:

- Ask about the company culture and values.
- Ask about work-life balance at the company.
- Ask if the company has a military Employee Resource Group and if you can get more information.
- Ask if there is someone in the company who would be interested in participating in an informational interview so you can learn more about your targeted career field(s).
- Ask if you can connect with the company representative on LinkedIn.
- Ask about their greatest current needs and future needs.
- Ask for feedback on your 30-second personal introduction.
- Ask what makes them a better company for employees than their peer competitors.

QUESTIONS TO AVOID AT A JOB / CAREER FAIR



- What exactly does your company do?
- What can you do for me?
- How much do you pay?
- How much time off or how many vacation days do you give your employees?
- Does your company have any jobs for me?
- Given my military experience, what can I do for you?

REARM AND REORGANIZE

In between battles, before proceeding to the next company or table, take notes highlighting:

- Your impression of the engagement
- Your impression of the company
- Topics of discussion with the company representative
- Any follow-up agreements – did you promise to email them, or agree to connect on LinkedIn, or guarantee you would follow-up?
- Self-reflect about your performance – do an AAR; that way you get better at the next engagement.

AFTER THE DUST SETTLES

At the conclusion of the event you should send a thank-you email to remind the company representative who you are, what your interests are and any specifics you discussed:

- Ask the company representative about next steps.
- Follow-up on all leads – build your own database.
- Compare your impressions of the company with friends and colleagues who also attended the event.
- Complete all follow-up agreements.
- Organize all the information you gathered at the event.
- Do a personal AAR.

A few days after the event, those companies who are interested in you may send a pre-formatted email that:

- Thanks you for stopping at their table.
- Includes a link to their careers page.
- Invites you to join their professional network.
- Offers resources and links to their social media sites.
- Provides you with some contact information – either for a recruiter or their military resource group.

NARROW YOUR JOB SEARCH

In combat, you must concentrate your power and effort only on those things that will achieve your objective. In your military-to-civilian transition war, you must do the same, even when it comes to searching through job boards and websites. Narrow your search to only those jobs that are related to your targeted career field(s).

Informational interviews and networking can confirm for you which career field(s) to target and help you to identify the companies with an appropriate culture and the suitable jobs in your targeted career field(s).

1. Know yourself. Focus on your “Top 10” and the things you determined were essential to your satisfaction and achieving your career end state.

2. Know the company. Explore the company’s general website to get a feel for its culture and expected employee values. Ask yourself, “Is this company and its culture and values acceptable to me?”

3. Know the company’s career opportunities. Do a quick search to verify that the company has job opportunities in your targeted field.

4. Research available roles suited only to you:

- Visit the company’s career site.
- Search roles only in your targeted career field(s).
- Refine your search using keywords or location searches.
- Sign up for email job alerts so the company’s tools do the work for you.
- Join the company’s professional network if offered.

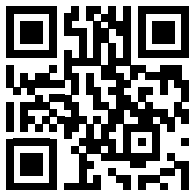
Narrowing your efforts will allow you to concentrate only on what’s important and will produce immediate and positive results. You will find jobs that are suited to your skills and with a company that has a culture and values aligned with yours. Concentrating your power on fulfilling your “Top 10” needs will improve your chances for military-to-civilian transition “victory.”

SEARCH FOR ROLES AT TEXTRON AVIATION

Once you've properly targeted your career field(s), it's time to search for available roles.

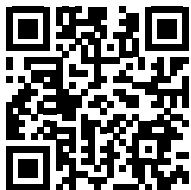
Textron Aviation's military career website is a great place to start searching for available jobs! Follow these simple steps:

1. Visit



<https://txtav.com/military>

OR



<https://txtav.com/SkillBridge>

2. Click [Apply Here](#) to explore our careers.

3. Create an account –

- Although you will NOT be able to create an account until after you have clicked on a job description, you can establish your own [Username](#) and [Password](#), then click [Login](#)
- If you already have an account, you will login with your established [Username](#) and [Password](#)

4. In the [Add/Edit Filters](#), you can search using one, some, or all the following options:

- **ID or Keyword search** – Use keywords that may be found in the title or body of the job description. If you know the job reference number, insert that instead.
- **All Job Fields** – There are 18 options – 17 are the different career fields.
- **All Locations** – Includes all U.S. and overseas locations where you can find a Textron Aviation facility or opportunity. Caution: Opportunities in different locations are not the same because “missions” of an individual site and capabilities may be different.
- **Items Per Page** – This tool will help you control how many job matches will appear on the page.

If you need help determining which career path (Job Field) suits your skills and experiences, try reaching out to the recruiter or veteran you know from Textron Aviation.

5. Each job opportunity match that appears will include:

- How recently the job was listed on our military career page.
- The reference number (be sure to write this number down for future reference).
- Job summary.
- Job responsibilities.
- An [Apply Now](#) button.

6. You MUST click on the [Apply Now](#) button to:

- Review the entire job description including:
 - The responsibilities.
 - The requirements (education and experience).
 - The qualifications.
- Apply online.
- Add your Job Cart.
- Access a more advanced and specified job search.

7. Additional tools on this site exist to help you manage your search for multiple roles:

- **My Submissions** – you can discover the details related to all your draft and completed applications. You can review the most recent status of your submissions and when it was last updated too.
- **My Job Cart** – when reviewing a job description and before applying, click “Save Job.” Then return to this cart to see all the jobs you added.
- **My Saved Searches** – visit this tab to see all the job searches,

including the filters and criteria that you saved. That way, when you return to our career page, you can reuse the exact same search.

- **My Referrals** – if you made any referrals to our company jobs, you will find them here.

8. You can do an [Advanced Search](#) for open jobs if you have detailed criteria or requirements:

- **Job Number** – If you retained your notes of a previous search, just add the 6-digit job number job here to return to the job description.
- **Keywords** – Insert a word or phrase associated with a skills or responsibility and our system will present every job description that includes that word.
- **Job Field** – Just like in the basic search, you can find all 18 career field options by clicking on the down arrow.
- **Location** - Includes all U.S. and overseas locations where you can find a Textron Aviation facility.
- **Organization** – This list includes all independent locations and facilities where we have jobs.
- Additional search criteria include:
 - Posting Date (Today, Yesterday, Last 7 Days, Last 14 Days, etc.)
 - Urgent Jobs
 - Schedule (Full or part time)
 - Shift (First Shift, Second Shift, Third Shift, Compressed Work Week)
 - Job Level (Individual Contributor, Team Leader, Manager, Director, Executive)
 - Job Type (Internship, Standard, Experiences, Temporary Work, Entry Job)
 - Employee Status (Regular, Temporary)
 - Travel (No, 5% of the Time, 10% of the Time, 15% of the Time, etc.)

9. Consider getting email notifications on any job opportunity that matches your interests:

- **Login** – Go to Textron Aviation Career (<https://txtav.com/careers>) site. Click Sign In (top right). Enter your credentials.
- **My Account Options** – In the top right corner, just below the Sign In button, click on My Account Options.
- **Correspondence** – Scroll to the bottom of your account page, to the Correspondence box. Click the Edit symbol.
- **Update** – Click the first box: “Send me an email notification whenever a new position matching my profile is posted (job posting notification).”

10. Additionally, you can save your search for email job alerts on our corporate Career page (<https://careers.textron.com/>):

Send Me Similar Jobs

Enter your first name

Enter your last name

Enter your email

(###) ###-####

Daily

How would you like to receive alerts for job postings?

Email

☐ I agree to receive email and text message updates related to my saved search. Message and data rates may apply. We use cookies to offer you a better experience. By accepting this option, you consent to the use of cookies in accordance with our Cookie Policy.

SUBMIT

SAVE YOUR SEARCH FOR EMAIL JOB ALERTS



Search for jobs on **Textron**
(our Corporate HQs) career page:
<https://careers.textron.com/>

Once you have entered all the necessary filters for your search criteria and after opening a job description, click “Send Similar Jobs,” then provide the following:

- Enter your **First Name**
- Enter your **Last Name**
- Enter your **Email Address**
- Enter your **Phone Number**
- Click on the down arrow to select how frequently you wish to receive alerts: **Daily, Weekly, Monthly**
- Click on the down arrow if you wish to receive the alerts via **Email or Text**
- Click in the box indicating you wish to receive these alerts.
- Click the **SUBMIT** button

*You will automatically receive emails or texts announcing newly opened roles that match your selected interests.

JOHN
U.S. Army, 33 years



A close-up photograph of a person's arm and shoulder. They are wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt with a white logo on the sleeve that consists of a stylized 'T' and a 'B'. The person is working on a metal part, possibly a propeller or a similar mechanical component, which is mounted on a workbench. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the workbench and some tools.

USE TEXTRON'S MILITARY SKILLS TRANSLATOR

The military prepared you for many contingencies, but not for your job search. If not done properly, it will become overwhelming rather quickly. There are hundreds of jobs listed on a career page. Job titles are deceptive. Job descriptions are written in a different language and use terms and acronyms you won't understand...and you don't have your interpreter at your side.

Textron's Military Skills Translator can help you identify open roles that align with your skills, experiences and passions.



Use this tool to translate the skills you learned serving in the military—including your specialties and subspecialties—into civilian professional qualifications that match up to open positions here at Textron Aviation. Our Translator will quickly compare the various skills and attributes of your military experiences to open positions we have that day and present a list of those jobs for you to review.

This tool is NOT the Silver Bullet for your military-to-civilian transition. Therefore, it is best to combine the results from using this tool with other efforts, like informational interviewing, networking, attending job fairs, etc. You can also leverage other Military Skills Translator tools like Military.com:

<https://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/skills-translator>

1. Visit <https://txtav.com/careers/military>



2. Click on the Explore Openings tab within the Military Skills Translator box.

3. You can search multiple ways:

- In the first search box, you can enter your Military Occupational Classification Code (MOS, AFSC, Rating) or Title.
- In the second search box, you can enter a civilian job title or a keyword that defines the civilian career field.
- In the third search box, you can enter the city, state, country of your geographical preference or limitation.
- You can leverage one or all search boxes simultaneously to narrow your search, but if you don't insert your military specialty or subspecialty, you'll lose the advantage of the translator.

Then, click on Find Jobs.

4. You can also leverage filters along the left side of the site to refine your search:

- Sort by Relevance or Date. This will list the identified jobs in sequence according to the date they were posted to our career page; most recent will be on top.
- Filter by Military Titles. Hundreds of MOS, AFSC, Ratings are included in the list. Find and click on your specialty or subspecialty, and the jobs that populate the page will correspond to your skills and experiences.
- Filter by Country. The countries where work will be done in these identified roles will be listed for you to sort through.
- Filter by State. The state associated with these identified roles will be listed so you can select the one best aligned with our geographical preferences.
- Filter by Title. This tool will create a list of open and relevant roles in alphabetical order.

5. Be sure to apply the tips presented in the next section, especially “Understanding Job Descriptions” and “Use The Job Descriptions to Your Advantage” before you apply to one of these jobs. This way you can make sure you are fully qualified and have relevant skills and comparable experiences before you apply.

6. Repeat this process more than once if you have multiple military careers or specialties.

This is a single resource for you to combine with other tools, resources and efforts. You still must determine what career will help fulfill your priorities you established as your “Top Ten,” and a job that will satisfy your passions, and will allow you to use your skills and experiences to your advantage.

AIM FOR THE RIGHT TARGET

You've matched your skills and qualifications to the perfect civilian role.
Now it's time to confront your next challenge – the online job application.

- 48 The Enemy's "Weapon of Choice" – Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
- 50 Understanding Job Descriptions
- 51 Use the Job Description to your Advantage
- 53 The Application





THE ENEMY'S “WEAPON OF CHOICE” — APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS (ATS)

When developing a plan of action, it is essential for you to know your enemy's most effective and dangerous weapon system. Understanding how your enemy employs that threatening weapon will allow you to plan ways to avoid its hazardous effects and achieve victory. For many companies, an ATS is its weapon of choice.

The application is supposed to be a friendly interaction. For many military community job seekers, however, the application process presents unknown challenges and complexities. These challenges and complexities are like minefields in that they can absolutely stop you in your tracks.

PURPOSE OF THE ATS

This automated system is intended to streamline the recruiting and hiring processes for a company.

- Simplifies processes and saves time for recruiters.
- Assists the recruiter with managing many job applications and applicant information.
- Provides a capability for companies to showcase employer brand and company culture.
- Helps recruiters to source candidates that match the criteria for specific jobs.
- Enables a better applicant experience.
- Facilitates scheduling multiple screening calls and interviews.
- Screens and confirms candidate qualifications relative to the job description.
- Aids in the rapid review of hundreds of resumes.
- Auto-generates reports and communication between recruiters, applicants, hiring managers, as well as interviewers and the selection or hiring team.
- Enables a better applicant experience.

MINEFIELDS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Nothing is more tragic than when you stumble upon an unknown “friendly” minefield that was designed to protect you. Its effect brings you to a dead-stop. But, if you have the minefield map, you can safely navigate around or through the minefield to continue the mission.

The ATS is a computer program employers use to organize and review applications. It works like a large database that searches for specific keywords, certifications, education and professional qualifications. The system looks for this information in a certain format, so how you present your resume matters. Understanding this should encourage you to avoid the hazardous effect of the ATS – and lead you to properly present **ONLY** the key facts – your relevant skills, certifications, degrees, credentials and comparable experiences – in a professional format.

Without the correct information – keywords, certifications, education, or professional credentials, your application will possibly stall behind hundreds of others, like a convoy that drives up on a minefield.

Improper or unfamiliar resume formatting will not be recognized or understood, causing your application to vanish into the “Black hole.”

APPLICATION LANDMINES

Practically all applications are completed online.

As simple as the process appears, over one-third of all military community applicants are automatically rejected – because of mistakes the military community applicant makes.

These rejections result from two identifiable “landmines”:

Landmine #1: Required Qualifications. Members of the military community apply for jobs for which they are not fully qualified:

- The Job Description includes these critical “essential” items. You must meet 100% of them or your application will proceed to the virtual trash can without anyone ever reading your resume.

Landmine #2: Irrelevant Resume: military community members write resumes that are not customized to the expectations of the hiring manager which are delivered in the job description:

- The Job Description presents the responsibilities you will have in this role. Your resume must reveal you have relevant or comparable experiences in fulfilling these responsibilities.

What’s tragic is that the Job Description is the minefield map and is often ignored, leaving you to step straight into the minefield

THE JOB DESCRIPTION IS LIKE YOUR MINEFIELD MAP.

Understanding the purpose of its contents relative to your application and resume will aid you in navigating through the application process.

UNDERSTANDING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Every job listing has a unique job description. Study the job description as you would your “mission from higher headquarters,” because as with any mission, you must fully analyze it to have a complete understanding of what’s expected of you. During this detailed review, you must assess if you are fully qualified and if you will be competitive for the job, given there will be other applicants. This detailed review will additionally help you customize your resume, which may get you invited to an interview.

PURPOSE OF A JOB DESCRIPTION

Job descriptions outline the main duties and responsibilities involved in a job. They are written by the company’s hiring manager with assistance from the recruiter and HR personnel, and the purpose is to:

- Explain what is expected in this job to attract relevant candidates to apply.
- Indicate necessary skills and abilities to perform the job successfully within certain environmental conditions (your task, conditions and standards).
- Describe legitimate minimum qualifications (specified and implied tasks) to screen out unqualified applicants.
- Serve as a reference guide for determining the salary range.
- Aid in the development of reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities.
- Fulfill the needs of several HR processes, including recruitment, selection and appraisal, and job evaluation and training.

Did you know that job descriptions can be used to your advantage on your application and resume?

Learn how on the next page.

USE THE JOB DESCRIPTION TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

When you find a suitable job, it's important to recognize why you are interested. You should continually assess whether this job with this company will help you achieve objectives in your "Top 10." Let's break it down so you can leverage the information to your advantage.

ANALYZE THE JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Job Title - Look beyond the job title. Civilian job titles often look like military job titles, but the requirements will often be vastly different.

- Learn how to transform your military skills in the "Write a Resume" section of this guide.

2. Location - Consider where the job is located and determine if you are willing to relocate there.

3. Company Overview - Is this company acceptable to me? Can I see myself here?

4. Job Summary - Imagine yourself in this role and determine if it will be personally and professionally fulfilling. Consider whether it will help you achieve the things included in your "Top 10."

5. Attributes - This is a list of the unique characteristics you will need to succeed in this role.

- The hiring manager will expect you to highlight these characteristics in your resume and during your interviews.

6. Job Responsibilities (What you will do in your role)

- This is your list of specified tasks. Review them and analyze your ability to perform them – to standard.
- (Note that this is where you identify your specified, implied and essential tasks.)
- In your resume and during your interview, you must be able to show competence in the tasks outlined in this section. To learn how to incorporate this into your resume properly, review the "Make it Relevant" section in this guide.

7. Education / Experience - You must meet or exceed the education or certification standards listed.

8. Qualifications

- Qualifications are often non-negotiable – you must meet them all. Sometimes exceptions can be made, or alternative qualifications will be acceptable.
- Review the section in this guide titled "The Application" to better appreciate the importance of these qualifications when applying.

9. APPLY BUTTON - Do not push this button until you have taken the Two-Step Test (See next page). This will prevent you from applying frivolously and help you develop a resume that highlights relevant competency. The first test confirms you are fully qualified, and the second test helps you assess whether you will be competitive in the selection process, given that others will also apply. This competitive assessment is often underestimated in value. You will be competing against the "standards" detailed in the job description, and you will be competing against the qualifications and experiences of other applicants.



JOSIAH
U.S. Air Force, 20 years

TWO-STEP TEST

STEP 1.

Review the Qualifications listed in the job description (Education and Experience) and ask yourself: “Do I meet 100 percent of the qualifications?”

A. If you do not, then you should start looking for another job.

B. If you do, move to Step 2.

STEP 2.

Review the Job Responsibilities (what you will do in the role). Then, ask yourself: “Do I have relevant skills and comparable experiences to do everything that is expected of me on a daily basis?”

A. If not, you may still apply, but chances are you won't get called for an interview.

B. If the answer is yes, you should get to work on writing a relevant resume.

THE APPLICATION

Applications are an important step in the official selection process, and your participation is absolutely required – no matter how badly a company desires your expertise.

YOUR OBJECTIVE: To officially announce your desire for employment in a specific open role.

THE BUSINESS' OBJECTIVE: To make a legally defensible listing of the applicant's employment history, educational background, degrees, qualifications, references and more. Almost all companies use online applications to streamline and simplify this data collection process.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS: Last year, nearly 30 percent of military job seekers were disqualified because they did not provide proper responses to pre-screening questions (they did not meet 100% of the qualifications).

To avoid falling into this pit, follow these simple rules of thumb:

- **Qualifications:** You must meet them all – 100%.

During the application process, you will be asked to identify whether you meet the qualifications listed in the job description. Do not apply if you do not meet every requirement exactly as stated in the question. If you do not meet just one of these critical requirements – if your answer to the qualifying question is “NO” – then your application will probably be rejected. At a minimum, your application will not be considered favorably. No one will review your file or resume, and no one will ever pick up the phone to speak with you.

- **Preferred Qualifications:** You can meet some or all.

You will also be asked to identify whether you meet the preferred qualifications listed in the job description. Apply, even if you don't meet them all. Though you might be competing at a disadvantage, you could get the opportunity to speak to someone and overcome any professional deficiency identified with your answer.

APPLICATION TIPS

1. Start applying for open positions three to five months prior to your availability date.
2. Keep in mind that some military and civilian job titles are similar, but the requirements will be vastly different.
3. Before you apply for a role, verify your qualifications by taking the Two-Step Test under the “Using the Job Description to Your Advantage” section in this guide.
4. Adjust your resume to emphasize your relevant skills and qualifications, and your comparable experiences that relate to the Job Responsibilities included in the job description.
5. Apply directly to that role.
6. You may apply for multiple roles, but it's best to apply for roles only within your specific areas of expertise.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

- Don't forget to thoroughly review your application, ensuring that you completed all required fields.
- Attach your most updated and customized resume. (Be smart about the filename you use for this critical document – the recruiter will see it.)
- Consider attaching additional documents: Transcripts, Certificates, Licenses, DD Form 214.
- Alert each of your references that you are applying, so they are prepared for any queries about you.



WRITE AN “UNCLASSIFIED” RESUME

A solid resume could score you an interview for the job of your dreams, so make sure yours is well prepared using the following tips and tools.

- 56 How to Write a Unique, Customized Resume for a Specific Job Description
- 58 How Your Resume is Typically Used
- 60 The Enemy’s Weapon of Choice Strikes Again (ATS)
- 61 30 Seconds to Make an Impression
- 64 15 Resume Tips
- 65 Speak Their Language
- 67 Make it Relevant
- 68 Translate Your Military Skills
- 70 Failed Resume Writing Strategies





HOW TO WRITE A UNIQUE, CUSTOMIZED RESUME FOR A SPECIFIC JOB DESCRIPTION

The Job Description contains the unclassified treasure map that gives you the clues you need to find the gold – an offer for employment. Just follow the map!

For each job to which you apply, you must have a unique and customized resume. You must introduce only relevant and comparable skills and experiences to those presented in the job description. Then highlight the related outcomes and accomplishments. And, normally, you must eliminate practically everything else from your career experiences that are not pertinent to responsibilities or expectations in the job description.

A recruiter will not have a “top secret clearance” needed to read your “encrypted” or “classified” resume, so include only words and phrases that are common in your targeted career field(s) and that you learned during your informational interviews. In other words, do your best to eliminate military words -- titles, terms, noun and nomenclature of equipment, references to deployment or exercise names, military processes, ship names, etc.

An “unclassified,” customized resume provides a relevant (to the basic qualifications) summary of your skills and comparable (to the responsibilities) experiences and abilities. It also emphasizes qualitative or quantitative outcomes (the “so what” of an accomplishment). And it focuses on the value you created while doing activities like those presented in the job description.

KEYS TO WRITING AN “UNCLASSIFIED” RESUME

1. Focus very narrowly on the job description.

2. NOTHING More.

- Understand how the resume is used, who reviews it and what they are looking for during their review.
- Study the job description; do a Mission Analysis-like review to identify what skills and experiences the company is looking for.
- Present ONLY your relevant skills and comparable experiences that the company is looking for in the job description.
- Eliminate the use of all military terms, titles, references, nomenclatures, exercise names, ship names, etc.
- Quantify ONLY the right things – the value that you created or what can be called the “so-what!”
- Include a “so-what” for every accomplishment or experience that you include in your professional summary; ALWAYS!

DON'T LOOK BACKWARDS

Let someone read your resume for 30 seconds, then take it away and ask them one question:

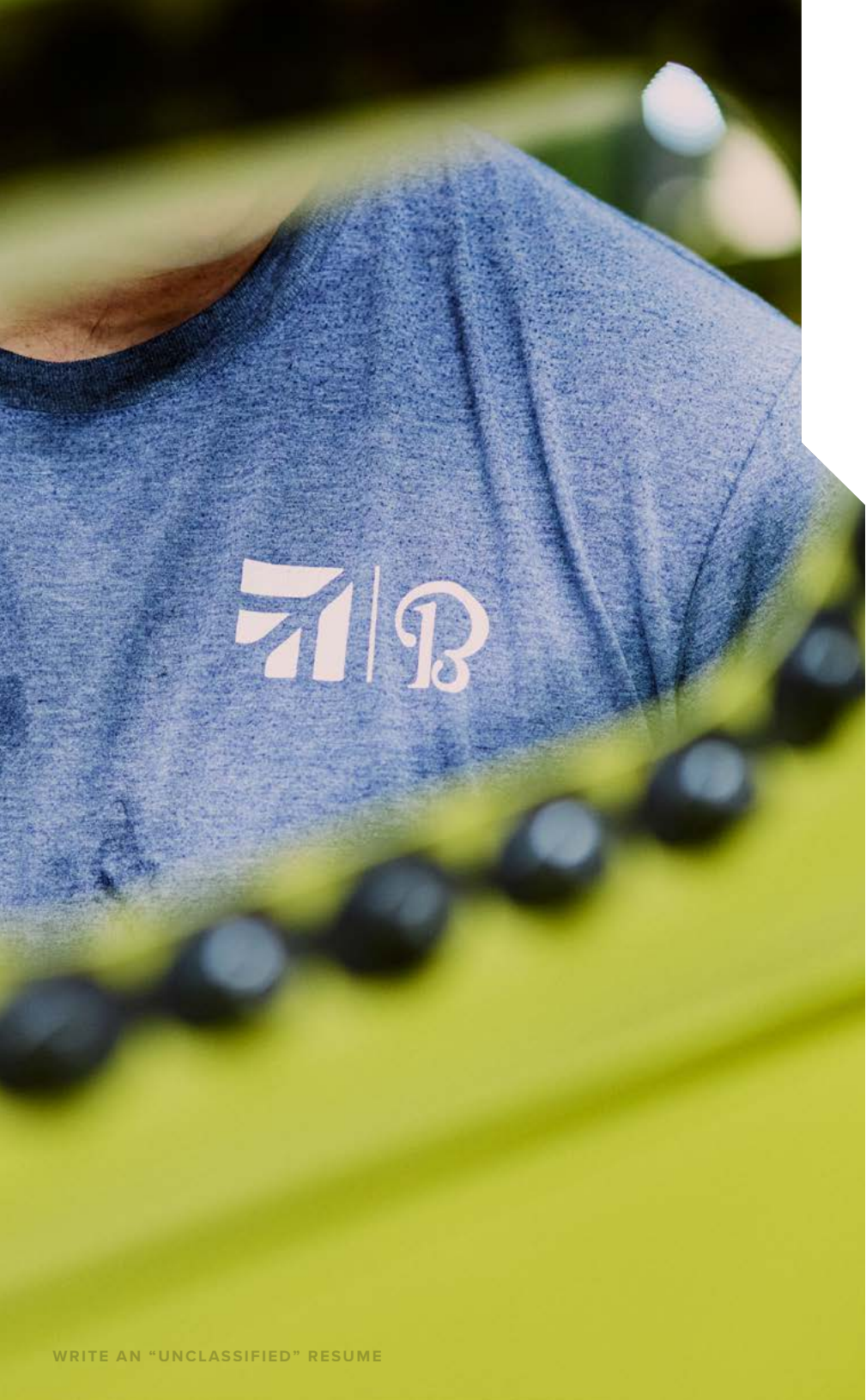
“WHAT CAREER
FIELD AM I
PURSUING?”

If they don't answer with your targeted career field, then you have *NOT* written an appropriate resume.



RICKI

U.S. Army Reserves, 2 years + U.S. Navy, 4 years



HOW YOUR RESUME IS TYPICALLY USED

In combat, it is crucial you understand your enemy and know how they apply their “weapons of war.” Without this knowledge, you won’t know how to beat them. In this transition war, it is critical you understand how your “enemy” – the recruiter or hiring manager – will use your resume. Otherwise, you will not win this conflict.

Only if all qualifications are met will anyone even access your resume.

1. Your resume is first touched by the recruiter, and most likely reviewed in under 30 seconds (The National average for this first review is 13 seconds):
 - **Recruiter’s Objective:** Identify which fully qualified candidates should undergo additional screening to confirm experience, and to also create the opportunity to do initial assessment of your character – is your character appropriate for the company culture?
 - **How:** Recruiters do a crosswalk between your resume and the relevant skills, pertinent experiences and ability to fulfill responsibilities presented in the job description. Remember, they helped write the job description.
 - **Result:** On average, about 1/3 of all applicants will receive additional screening.

2. If the recruiter determines you are a fully qualified candidate, and you possess relevant skills and comparable experience, your resume and the notes taken during the additional screening will be forwarded to the hiring manager for interview consideration.

On average, less than 50% of those candidates who underwent additional screening will be recommended for interview consideration.

3. The hiring manager is the next to touch your resume and will most likely study your resume.

- **Hiring Manager's Objective:** Identify which fully qualified candidates should be invited to an interview.
- **How:** Hiring managers will complete a comprehensive review of your resume while studying the recruiter's notes developed from the additional screening.
- **Result:** On average, around 1/3 of those who underwent the additional screening (between 3 and 5% of all applicants) will be extended an invitation for an interview.

4. Everyone on the interview team will be given your resume to prepare for your interview.

- **Interviewer's Objective:** Confirm that your professed skills and experiences are truly relevant and comparable to those expected in the job; also, and usually more importantly, confirm your character is consistent with the company culture.
- **How:** Interviewer will study your resume to develop situational-based as well as direct questions related to your skills and experiences.
- **Result:** The company will deliver an offer to only one applicant.

5. After the hiring manager selects you for an offer, a compensation team will be given your resume. They confirm critical information to develop salary and bonus considerations.

- **Years of experience:** More experience justifies a higher salary within the pre-approved range.
- **Relevant skills and certifications:** Specialized or in-demand skills can influence salary premiums.
- **Education level:** Advanced degrees may bump the offer, especially in technical or leadership roles.
- **Career progression:** Demonstrated growth, promotion, or increasing responsibilities and advancement may support a higher compensation tier.
- **Industry background:** Experience in high-paying industries may be taken into consideration.

THE ENEMY'S WEAPON OF CHOICE STRIKES AGAIN – APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS (ATS)

The ATS relies on specific formatting and keyword recognition. Understanding this should encourage you to avoid the hazardous effect of the ATS – and lead you to properly presenting ONLY the key facts (your relevant skills and comparable experiences) in a professional format.

KISS – Keeping your resume simple will allow the ATS, recruiters and hiring managers to quickly grasp why you are a good fit for their job. This will ensure you receive an invitation to an interview and can keep advancing towards a victory in your military-to-civilian transition.

- Use a simple and clean format.
- Present only relevant skills, credentials, degrees and only professional credentials – the job description will define what these are.
- Write with industry-specific terms, not military-specific titles, rank, references, jargon, etc.
- Label sections clearly.
- Do not use headers, footers, fancy fonts, columns and boxes.
- Do not try to “trick” the ATS by including keywords in white font or adding a section labeled “keywords.”
- Avoid acronyms and abbreviations.
- Save your resume in a compatible file format – .docx or .pdf.

Here are ten (10) online resume writing tools you should consider for helping you defeat the most dangerous effects of the ATS:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| • Zety.com | • Resume-now.com |
| • LiveCareer.com | • EnhanceCV.com |
| • ResumeGenius.com | • ResumeHelp.com |
| • MyPerfectResume.com | • ResumeNerd.com |
| • ResumeLab.com | • KickResume.com |

30 SECONDS TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION

Recruiters review hundreds of resumes for each job opening they manage and often manage multiple requisitions simultaneously. On average, they spend much less than 30 seconds scanning each resume. They will not read long paragraphs. They will read clear, concise, bullet points.

YOUR RESUME OBJECTIVE

Present your relevant skills and comparable experiences so you get invited to an interview.

Recruiters (and hiring managers) quickly evaluate your professional skills, experiences, outcomes and accomplishments.

YOUR MISSION

Your mission is to make your resume:

- Easy for the recruiter to scan.
- Aligned to the job description.
- Focused on relevant outcomes.
- Written in civilian, not military language.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY:

- Open with a short, targeted summary that highlights what you will do, not everything you already did.
- Deliver a mission statement about who you are professionally (e.g., maintenance technician, supply chain professional, warehouse manager, engineer, help desk technician, etc.).
- Keep it 3 to 5 sentences or bullet points – concise and operationally relevant to the job description.
- Focus on capabilities and impact, not rank or military jargon.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- **TELL THEM WHO YOU ARE:** Lead with capabilities, not rank. (Employers hire for abilities, not hierarchy.)
- **TARGET THE OBJECTIVE:** Orient on the job description, not your history. (It is not a recap of your entire military career.)
- **SITUATIONAL UPDATE:** Discuss what you can do, what results you have delivered in critical related areas, and what value you will bring to the hiring manager.

COMPETENCIES:

- Identify six to eight skills that are essential to the mission the employer is asking you to perform.
- Ensure you can confidently perform each competency.
- Write them in civilian terms.
- Make sure they amplify the capabilities you highlighted in the professional summary.
- These skills must appear in the job description – explicitly or implicitly.

CORE COMPETENCIES - CHECKLIST

Ask yourself:

- Is it relevant to the job?
- Does it reinforce my Professional summary?
- Can I demonstrate it with experience?
- Is it written in “civilian” language?

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES:

- Highlight only critical, relevant experiences that directly support the job description.
- Connect your skills and experiences to the specific outcomes the employer is asking for.
- Quantify the value you created — metrics are the strongest proof of impact.

- Include at least one bullet point per major task listed in the job description (more is fine).
- Prioritize your bullet points so the most impactful and relevant appear at the top.
- Use clear bullets, not paragraphs.
- Start each bullet with a strong past-tense action verb, followed by the outcome or result (led, managed, improved, coordinated, increased, reduced, produced, enabled).
- “More” is not better; “relevant” is.
- Be concise, direct and focused on impact.

BULLET POINT ORIENTATION

ACTION - What did you do?

SO WHAT? What was the impact?

- Write the task and present the outcome
- Write the activity and what it resulted in
- Write the experience and the difference it made
- Write the accomplishment and the value it created

QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES – WHY YOUR EXPERIENCE MATTERS

- Hiring managers will want to know:
 - Why is your experience important to them.
 - How your skills will help their team accomplish their goals.
 - The value you created in previous roles.
 - How your outcomes translate to the role they need.
- Prioritize your bullets relative to the Job Description.



OUTCOME AND ACCOMPLISHMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Saved money
- Won contracts or bids
- Increased revenue generated
- Increased individual/team contributions
- Improved safety performance
- Increased sales or revenue
- Increased efficiency in performance or production
- Entrusted with (specify) high-value assets or responsibilities
- Enabled continuous operations
- Mitigated risk to operations
- Achieved benchmarks
- Earned recognition or awards

NOTE: Use tools like O*NET Military Crosswalk, My Next Move for Veterans, Hiring Our Heroes Resume Engine, or your Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) to translate skills into civilian terms.



15 RESUME TIPS

Use one of our suggested term translators and these helpful tips to define your skills in terms a civilian recruiter will understand.

1. **Write to the job.** Every job description is unique, so each resume should also be unique.
2. **Eliminate the “objective” paragraph** to give the recruiter more time on the body of your resume. (Plus, your objective is clear when you submit the application, so there is absolutely no need to waste precious seconds of the recruiter’s time on wasteful words.)
3. **Limit your core competencies (areas of expertise or strengths) to four to six.** Emphasize strengths suitable for the responsibilities presented in the job description. Anything more, and you’ll be perceived as a “Jack of all trades, master of none!”
4. **Highlight any education, or practical application of leading teams** that you successfully led or managed to success.
5. **Know your audience.** Use words that are understood in the private sector, business or targeted career field(s) and that you learned during the informational interviews.
6. **Your resume should not look like an efficiency report or an awards citation.** Rather than listing previous duties and responsibilities, highlight qualitative outcomes and accomplishments – show how you added value to your organization.
7. **Never allow the recruiter to assume what skills you acquired through your experiences;** clearly state them.
8. **Write straightforward, active statements that showcase your relevant skills and experiences** aligned with the expectations presented in the job description.
9. **Don’t oversell your abilities.** Just because you worked on a high-level staff does not mean you are an executive leader.
10. **Do include specific and relevant leadership and management experiences,** especially if you are applying for a leadership or management role.
11. **Other than job titles, remove military references** – ranks, organization names, titles, military school names, equipment titles, military jargon, exercise titles or names, etc.
12. **Highlight your risk management experiences** and concentration on safety, emphasizing compliance, including environmental compliance.
13. **Mention teamwork, cooperation and collaboration** – highlight the soft skills the business will most assuredly be looking for, including problem solving and analytical skills.
14. **Be concise.** Easy-to-read resumes get read. Reduce the amount of text on the page.
15. **Never use “I.”**

Though this list is not all encompassing, it was gathered from the experiences of one military recruiter, and verified by numerous hiring managers and recruiters.

SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE

A resume is your chance to highlight your relevant strengths and accomplishments. Use the following examples and helpful tips to define your skills in terms a civilian recruiter will understand.

Weak: Hold a top-secret security clearance.

Stronger: Integrity, trustworthiness and ability to manage information resulted in being given greater responsibilities, authority and access to sensitive data.

Weak: Prepared and disseminated daily activity reports to higher command.

Stronger: Enabled senior management to make timely decisions by increasing their awareness of the organization's overall performance by collecting relevant information, then drafting succinct reports.

Weak: Commendation Medal awarded by Major General _____, Commander of _____.

Stronger: Commended by the leadership team for enhancing operations and increasing the team's efficiency while performing under pressure, and by meeting the needs of every customer through personal diligence.

Weak: Maintains accounting system associated with supply management.

Stronger: Enhanced management of critical supply chains by ensuring the continuous flow of essential information through successful operation and maintenance of an enterprise-wide information technology system.

Weak: Successfully planned current and future military training exercises for an organization in excess of 1,000 personnel.

Stronger: Expert in analyzing operations and individual performance to identify organizational and individual training needs. Developed multiple training plans and inspections, which improved and sustained the team's effectiveness.

Weak: Named "Best Leader" in a Company of 150 personnel during a live-fire training exercise resulting in the second highest score in a unit of more than 1,000 personnel.

Stronger: Critical thinking skills, risk management and safety program experience and superb leadership led to being designated as a top leader in the organization.

Weak: Supervises or performs duties involving request, receipt, storage, issue, accountability and preservation of expendable supplies and equipment.

Stronger: Improved the efficiency of several supply chains servicing multiple customers by identifying their needs and establishing priorities of effort. (You could also be more specific by quantifying how many units or customers you served.)

LEAD VS MANAGE

You "lead" people but you "manage" processes.

- Use "lead" or "led" when pertaining to people.
- Use "manage" or "managed" when referring to processes or programs.

MAKE IT RELEVANT

Want your resume to reach the hiring manager?
Customize it – for every role for which you apply. Then, double-check that your details are relevant to the job description using this easy exercise.

1. Make a photocopy of the worksheet to the right, or simply make your own version using a blank sheet of paper or spreadsheet.
2. On the left, list the specified, implied and essential daily tasks from your job description analysis. (Learn how to analyze a job description in the “Using the Job Description to Your Advantage” section in this guide.)
3. On the right side of the worksheet, list the experiences, skills and certifications you will detail in your resume.
4. Connect the daily tasks on the left to your qualifications and experiences listed on the right.
5. If something in the right list doesn’t connect back to items on the left, you should probably remove it from your resume.
Exceptions: Retain quality comments that can quantify the value you created in leadership, management, or risk management.

TAKEAWAY

- On a solid resume, the job’s daily tasks on the left will connect to a skill or experience you’ve listed on the right. Remember that these skills and experiences came directly from your resume. If they don’t match up, you might not be qualified for the job.
- There should be little or nothing in your resume that doesn’t have a line going back to the List derived from your job description analysis. This ensures that you don’t conceal your relevant strengths with a lot of unnecessary verbiage.

MAKE IT RELEVANT

Daily Tasks in the job description:	Your Relevant Skills and Comparable Experiences:
a. _____	1. _____
b. _____	2. _____
c. _____	3. _____
d. _____	4. _____
e. _____	5. _____
	6. _____
	7. _____
	8. _____
	9. _____
	10. _____
	11. _____
	12. _____
	13. _____
	14. _____

MAKE IT RELEVANT

Daily Task in the job description:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

G. _____

Your Relevant Skills and Comparable Experiences

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

TRANSLATE YOUR MILITARY SKILLS

Swap military jargon with universally understood words
using this easy tool.

JOSH

U.S. Air Force, 22 years



MILITARY**CIVILIAN BUSINESS**

Commander	Director or Senior Manager
Executive Officer	Deputy Director
Field Grade Officer	Manager
Company Grade Officer	Operations Manager or Section Manager
Watch Captain	Supervisor
Warrant Officer	Technical Specialist or Department Manager
Action Officer	Senior Analyst
Senior NCO (Enlisted)	First-Line Supervisor
Branch or Division Chief	Executive or Manager
First Sergeant / Senior Enlisted Leader	Personnel Manager
Sergeant Major	Senior Advisor
Chief Master Sergeant	Senior Advisor
Commander	Director, Senior Manager, President
Executive Officer (XO)	Deputy Director, Assistant
Chief	Principal
Squad Leader / Lead Petty Officer	Team Leader
Enlisted or Assistant Crew Member	Assembler, specialist, team member, technician
Supply Sergeant /Logistics Specialist / Materiel Manager	Supply Manager or Logistics Manager
Operations NCO	Operations Supervisor / Operations Leader
NCOIC	Manager or Coordinator
Platoon Sergeant	Supervisor, instructor, trainer
Medic	Paramedic
Radio Operator	Communications Technician
Seabee	Construction Worker
Infantry	Security-Force
AI or ASI	Additionally Skilled In
Combat / War	Conflict / Hazardous conditions
Combat Arms	Security-Force

MILITARY**CIVILIAN BUSINESS**

Company or squadron or wing	Company, department, or section
Medal	Award or commendation
Military personnel office	Human Resources
Mission	Task/function/objective
Operation	Continuous Operations
Military occupation specialty (MOS) / Specialty Code / Rating (AFRC)	Career Specialty or career field
Squad or platoon or flight	Team or section
Reconnaissance or ISR	Data collection and analysis
Regulations	Policy or Guidelines
Security clearance	Integrity and Ability to manage sensitive information
Service members	Employees
Subordinates	Direct Reports or Employees
Deployed	Temporarily assigned, traveled
TAD or TDY	Business Trip
PCS	Relocation
NCO Academy	Leadership or Management Training
OER / NCOER	Performance rating or Evaluation
Soldiers / Marines / Sailors / Airmen	Personnel, staff, employees, individuals, people
Uniform Code of Military Justice	Legal Action
ANCOC / BNCOC / PLDC	Advanced leadership development course
Officers Career Courses	Training Courses, Career Development Training
Battalion	Unit, organization, agency, team
Headquarters	Corporate offices
After Action Review	Performance Review, Debrief, Postmortem
Chain of Command	Organizational hierarchy
Commanded	Supervised or Directed
Field Exercises (FTX)	Training, Operations training

FAILED RESUME WRITING STRATEGIES

Recruiters routinely reject military community resumes primarily due to their irrelevance to the job description.

- Last year, more than 30% of military community applicants had their applications rejected because of their poorly aligned resumes; they were not customized to the job description.
- Rejected applicants often presented resumes that highlighted superb skills and experiences, but which had nothing to do with the skills and experiences presented in the job description.
- Rejected applicants often presented resumes that were full of military terms, titles, references, nomenclature, etc.
- Including quantitative data can be a difference-maker, but this is a common shortfall for military community resumes noted by recruiters because the military applicant tends to quantify information related to the task instead of quantifying the outcomes or accomplishments.

FOUR FAILING STRATEGIES

1. Providing something resembling more of a curriculum vitae – a comprehensive listing of one’s entire professional experiences regardless of the desired skills and experiences presented in the Job Description.
2. Attempting to describe complexity by quantifying information related to the task instead of quantifying information related to the results or accomplishments.
3. Cutting/pasting accomplishments directly from military efficiency reports and award citations.
4. Including military terms, titles and references that turn the file into a “classified” document intended only for military audiences with a “need to know.”

WHAT TO AVOID

- One-size-fits-all approach – every Job Description is different; therefore, every resume is different.
- Listing “tasks” you were assigned or “responsibilities” in your previous jobs even when not relevant to the job.
- Copying expectations verbatim from the job description.
- Excluding how you added value – to every bullet.
- Including irrelevant experiences that have nothing to do with the job description.
- Quantifying your responsibilities instead of your outcomes and accomplishments.
- Forgetting to proofread.
- Creating an inappropriate file name for your resume

HOW TO PRESENT MILITARY DATA

Military members often quantify the wrong things. They often present military data to address size, scale and complexity of the challenge.

- Size of units and numbers of soldiers in a military organization does NOT equate to numbers of direct reports. E.g. a Platoon leader has 3 direct reports -- not 30. But military community resumes often present “led a platoon of 30.”
- Size of or dollar amounts of military budgets is not relatable to the private sector. Most private sector companies do not manage budgets as in the military; instead, they intend to MAKE a profit.
- Value of assigned military equipment is not comparable to the private sector. Most companies focus more on the ability to maintain equipment to enhance continuous operations.

Business leaders don’t understand the relevance of what military community applicants quantify.

- Business leaders often misunderstand the data because the information is not relevant to the business world.
- Business leaders often cannot appreciate how this data relates to their needs or to their team’s objective.
 - Remember 94% of the American population never served in the Armed Forces.

The value you created with an accomplishment is more important to business leaders.

- Business leaders want to know what value you created and see its relevance to job description responsibilities.
- They prefer to learn about the “so-what” of your outcomes and accomplishments.
- They want to know how your actions contributed to the success of the organization.
- More importantly, they want to know how you will add value to their team/company.

Recruiters and hiring managers will spend much less than 30 seconds on your resume.

- Numerous studies reveal that businesses will spend less than 30 seconds on a resume.
- It’s preferable to present information that quantifies the value created instead of focusing on quantitative data explaining the size, scale and complexity of the challenge.

It is important to realize that recruiters and hiring managers are not only investing money and resources when they select you to join their team. They are also putting their reputation on the line.

It is recommended that your resume is not focused on yourself or what you did in the past which you think defines you; instead, make it about the employer’s needs.

GATHER INTEL FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

You've conquered the job search, and you're ready to face the front line. Proper preparation is the key to triumph in the final, most intimidating battle – the interview.

- 74 Interview Process
- 75 Interview Types, Venues and Tools
- 76 Interview Pointers – Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse
- 77 Come Prepared
- 78 Questions You Should Ask Your Interviewer
- 79 Leave Happy
- 80 Beware of Preconceptions





INTERVIEW PROCESS

This is a multiple-phased “operation” for hiring new employees. It is vital for the company to evaluate your skills and character properly and thoroughly.

INTERVIEW PURPOSE

1. The *company* determines if you are a good fit for their company in this role, at this time.
2. *You* determine if the *company* is a good fit for you, at this time.

INTERVIEWER'S OBJECTIVES

1. Confirm the candidate's skills and experiences are relevant to the company's needs.
2. Assess if the candidate's character is aligned with the company culture.

To achieve their first objective, the interviewer will usually ask questions about your skills and experiences directly related to the those presented in the job description – daily responsibilities, basic and preferred requirements. Sometimes they will ask about specific experiences you included in your resume.

To achieve their second objective, the interviewer will normally ask situational-based questions to better understand your thought process, to assess your problem-solving skills, communication skills and how your values orient you when overcoming challenges to meet goals.

In many cases, your interview experience will resemble more of a conversation. In other words, you won't just receive a battery of questions. So be prepared for multi-part questions and follow-up questions or requests for clarification. Also, be prepared for and elicit a discussion with the interviewer.

YOUR OBJECTIVES

1. Get the Job Offer.
2. Confirm this company and this role will lead you to your “Top 10”.
3. Accurately reveal your character and the value you can create for the company.

To achieve your first objective, you should follow the tips and guidance in the next section, below.

To achieve your second objective, you should prepare questions aligned with your “Top 10.” You may not have the opportunity to ask all prepared questions, so prioritize them. And, if you know who will interview you, then align them with the appropriate interviewer; the one who may be best prepared to answer. (See section below titled “Questions You Should Ask the Interviewer.”)

To achieve your third objective, you need to come prepared. Know what the company's expectations are for their employees and analyze how your contribution and performance will create value for the company. And get comfortable answering situational-based questions so you conclude each answer with a description of what you learned from that experience and how you apply that lesson today.

INTERVIEW TYPES, VENUES, AND TOOLS

Knowing the purpose of and the type of interview the company will conduct will have a direct effect on how you prepare, perform and behave.

INTERVIEW TYPES:

- **Screening** – Usually conducted by the recruiter with the intent of identifying the 3 to 5 candidates to be interviewed by the hiring manager or the selection committee. Members of this committee usually have specific knowledge about the role.
- **Technical or skills test/assessment** – Usually reserved for skilled-trades roles or specialist positions; often conducted by a technical professional and is designed to assess your skills.
- **In-person** – Usually conducted by 3-4 separate interviewers who will provide input to the decision maker – the hiring manager; these interviewers may have held this job previously or worked in a similar environment. They usually have specific and first-hand knowledge about the role.

INTERVIEW VENUES:

- **Telephonic** – Usually a shorter session and used principally for the screening.
- **Video Interview Tool (e.g. HireVue)** – Often used as or to complement the screening interview.

- **Virtual** – A remote experience leveraging video conference platforms where more than two people can be involved; this venue can support all interview types.
- **Face-to-Face** – (also referred to as in-person interviews) usually the final opportunity to earn the job offer. Often hosted at the actual work site and may include a tour.

VIDEO INTERVIEW TOOLS – WHAT TO EXPECT:

There are both Live and On Demand video programs.

- A live interview will connect you with recruiters and hiring managers in real time. Interviews under this venue are like face-to-face interviews.
- An on-demand video will let you record responses to pre-determined questions without the recruiter or hiring manager's presence. Your recorded answers can be shared amongst the hiring or selection team. • The procedure will resemble this sequence:
 - The recruiter will send you an email with an embedded link that contains the questions you must answer.
 - You will be given time to review the questions and prepare your answers.
 - When ready, you begin the video to answer each question independently, within a specified time.
 - You may review each answer before you return the file to the recruiter.
 - If you do not like your answer, you will often be afforded one opportunity to re-do your answer.
 - Once completed, you return your completed file to the recruiter.

INTERVIEW POINTERS

The key to your success is in this critical engagement is to properly prepare. Interpreters are not allowed to accompany you to your interview. So, practice speaking plainly, drop the military jargon and **REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE.**

1. Talk about “I.” This is about you and the value you can create; avoid emphasizing your team (we) and its accomplishments.

2. Reveal your character. For situational-based questions, the interviewer assesses your character from how you reveal it when describing your performance in a situation. Conclude with a positive takeaway.

3. Embrace past failure. Get comfortable discussing your professional weakness or past mistakes and failures. These can show humility and self-improvement.

4. Don’t be afraid of silence. Take a second to create an outline of your answer to avoid rambling responses and ensure you answer the question fully.

5. Do your share of the talking. Think of the interview as a conversation, creating give-and-take with the interviewer.

6. Prepare questions in advance. Ask questions to determine if this opportunity will fulfill your “Top 10” needs and learn if “this” company and “this” job are the right fit for you.

7. Don’t be first. Do not initiate discussion about salary or wages. But, be prepared to express your value in a salary range or wage. There will be time to negotiate.

8. Know the company’s general business situation.
What service or product do they provide and for whom?
(*The hiring manager’s favorite.*)

9. Understand the company’s culture and values. Show how your qualifications and experience contribute and add value to their business needs, and how your character aligns with their culture.

10. Turn off your phone. Better yet, leave it in the car.

COME PREPARED

Your recruiter or coordinator should provide necessary logistics information, including date, time and location, names and titles of those who will interview you, links, or connection instructions for video assisted venues, parking and entrance instructions for in-person opportunities. If you have a question or concern, it is best you get it clarified beforehand and save embarrassment.

- Come dressed for success. (If you don't know what's appropriate, ask the recruiter in advance.)
- Leverage all that you learned from your Informational Interviews, use the professional words and language appropriate for your targeted career field(s) – speak plainly, drop the military jargon so you don't need an interpreter.
- Arrive on time, but not 30 minutes beforehand. Five minutes in advance is perfect.
- Carry a portfolio or folder or an old-fashioned NCO notebook that includes the following items:
 - Blank paper on which you can write notes or outline your answer.
 - Put the word “I” on the top of each blank piece of paper to remind yourself that you must talk about the difference you made; your team is not with you, and they won't get hired along with you either.
 - A list of 15 questions – This is where you achieve your objective for the interview:
 - ▶ *Gather the remaining information about your “Top 10”*
 - ▶ *The interaction is conversational, so some questions may be answered before you ask them.*
 - ▶ *You don't want to respond with an empty stare when they ask, “so, what are your questions?”*
 - ▶ *See section below for suggestions: “Questions You Should Ask the Interviewer.”*
 - A copy of the Job Description for your reference.
 - A list of the company's employee values for your use and reminder.
 - A few copies of your resume – although everyone should have already studied it and have a copy.
 - A copy of your DD Form 214.
 - A copy of your academic certificate or diploma.
 - A photo ID.
 - A list of your references including their contact information – phone number, email address, etc.
 - If required, a copy of your Disqualification (DQ) Statement or Memorandum For Record.
 - Breath mints.
- Research those who are scheduled to interview you.
 - Review their bio (biography) on the company's web page.
 - Do a “Google” search on them.
 - Review their LinkedIn profile and maybe even their Facebook page.
 - Why?
 - ▶ *Identify their role and experiences so you can ask them appropriate questions.*
 - ▶ *To lessen the tension in the interview room by mentioning something you have in common.*

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK THE INTERVIEWER

To help you achieve your objective of confirming this company and this role will lead you to your “Top 10,” consider asking questions. Asking thoughtful questions will also leave a great impression. It will show you are interested, enthusiastic and engaged.

Here are thirty (30) questions you can consider asking during your interview:

- Can you define the leadership style of the supervisor?
- How would you describe the management style within the company?
- Can you describe the working environment or culture of the company?
- How well does the company do at living up to its values?
- Can you describe the work-life balance in this company? And, in this role?
- How are conflicts handled in this company?
- Can you give me an example of how I would collaborate with my supervisor or manager?
- What made you decide to work for this company?
- How long have you worked with this company?
- What do you like most about working for this company?
- Where else have you worked in the company?
- Why do you continue to work for this company?
- What do you find most exciting about this company?
- What is your biggest concern for this company right now?
- How long has this position been open?
- Why is this position open – is it a new role or did the previous employee get promoted?
- What is the highest priority task or project for the new hire for this position?
- What is the company's top priority for the team that I might be joining?
- Will I be required to supervise other employees in this role? If so, how many?
- What sort of opportunities are there for continued training and education?
- What sort of opportunities are there for broadening, growing, or advancing my experiences?
- Can you share what skills or experiences in my background grabbed your attention?
- Is there anything about my background or experiences that makes you hesitant about moving me forward in the selection process?
- How does my background compare to other candidates you are interviewing?
- Do current employees have a preference in the selection process or hiring?

- What is the biggest challenge I could face in the first 90 days?
- How will my success be measured?
- How will I and how frequently will I receive feedback on my performance?
- How does the company leadership communicate important information to its employees?
- How does the leadership respond when an employee comes up with a good idea?
- Does the company have a Veteran employee resource group that I should consider joining?
- How many other candidates remain competitive in this selection process?
- What is your timeline for making the hiring decision? – Or – when should I plan on hearing back from you?
- What is a typical day like in this role?

LEAVE HAPPY

Thank everyone who was involved in the process, even the Administrative Assistant.

- At the first opportunity, send a “Thank You” note to those who interviewed you.
- Remember, this is a competition, so don’t overestimate your performance outcome.
- Begin to prepare for your negotiation – review your desired outcomes.

As soon as you send those “Thank You” notes, commence searching for another job and even draft a new customized resume and apply while you wait to hear your interview results. This is a tough battle; only one candidate will be victorious. And you don’t want to lose any momentum if you are not the one selected for this job.

BEWARE OF PRECONCEPTIONS

As a military member interviewing for a civilian role, your skills could be misinterpreted based on your delivery and demeanor. The following are common perceptions and some tips to keep in mind:

The underlying issue for incorrect perceptions of the military community is the cultural and communication gap that exists between the military and civilian populations.

According to the VA, 94% of the current American population never served in the military.

- This means they do not understand the military community member, their language, or their culture.
- They cannot connect the dots between military skills and experiences and their relevance to business needs.
- It leads to misunderstanding, miscommunication and tremendous barriers to the military community member attempting to transition or acclimate to their new operating environment once hired.
- These misunderstandings of your character and language, most often made evident during the interview, present barriers to the military-to-civilian transition.

COMMONLY PERCEIVED STRENGTHS – REINFORCE THESE IN YOUR INTERACTION:

Critical and creative thinking skills – Military Community members often demonstrate these sought-after skills, which also offer a strong baseline for entrepreneurship and initiative.

Compliance – Top companies look for candidates who can balance requirements versus risk and have the ability to hold themselves and others accountable.

Sense of urgency – This is a strength but do be careful. When overplayed, it can be perceived that you are too intense.

Leadership – Often at a young age, many are responsible for managing and training direct reports, are comfortable delegating and providing clear guidance and instruction. Lead by example.

Compassion – Leaders and managers who exhibit compassionate leadership traits enable their team to reach self-fulfillment.

Quick learning – Accustomed to completing rigorous programs, adaptable and agile. Also confident in their ability to learn new skills. Be careful not to portray arrogance or cockiness.

Problem solving – Several processes exist that help the military think critically and solve complex problems efficiently and innovatively.

NEUTRAL

Keep in mind that though you have strong attributes, broad experiences and valuable skills, you may be lacking experience in one or more critical areas.

COMMONLY PERCEIVED WEAKNESSES – AVOID FORTIFYING THESE VULNERABILITIES DURING THE INTERVIEW:

Flexibility – Relax. Stiff posture and short responses feed the stereotype that the military community are not flexible.

Humility – Rather than stating that everything you do is a success, show your dedication to truth, a willingness to listen and learn and the ability to sincerely seek criticism.

Change – Be open to change. Military members are viewed as checklist-oriented, afraid of having their ideas challenged or challenging the ideas of others.

Emotion – The civilian world wants you to show passion for your work and in the pursuit of your goals.

Word choice – Eliminate military words and titles, also known as jargon. This helps avoid confusion and delivers your message or point more clearly.

Control – Exhibiting controlling leadership qualities feeds the perception that military leaders are “drill sergeants” or possibly micro-managers.

Intensity – Military leaders and managers can be stereotyped as “blindly charging the hill.” Be open to challenge and listening to the ideas of others.

MARCO
U.S. Army, 12 years



NEGOTIATE A WIN-WIN RESULT

You nailed the interview, and you're waiting to receive your offer. When that happens, the company will deliver its best offer. They worked hard to screen and review hundreds of applications and resumes and hosted quite a few interviews to find and select the best suited and most qualified professional. They do not want to lose you at this point. But they will be prepared for you to negotiate. So, let's make sure you're fully prepared for this critical step in your military-to-civilian transition war.

-
- 84 Initiating Trust
 - 85 Prepare Before You Negotiate
 - 87 You Got the Offer – Now What?
 - 88 Negotiating the Offer
 - 89 How to Decline an Offer





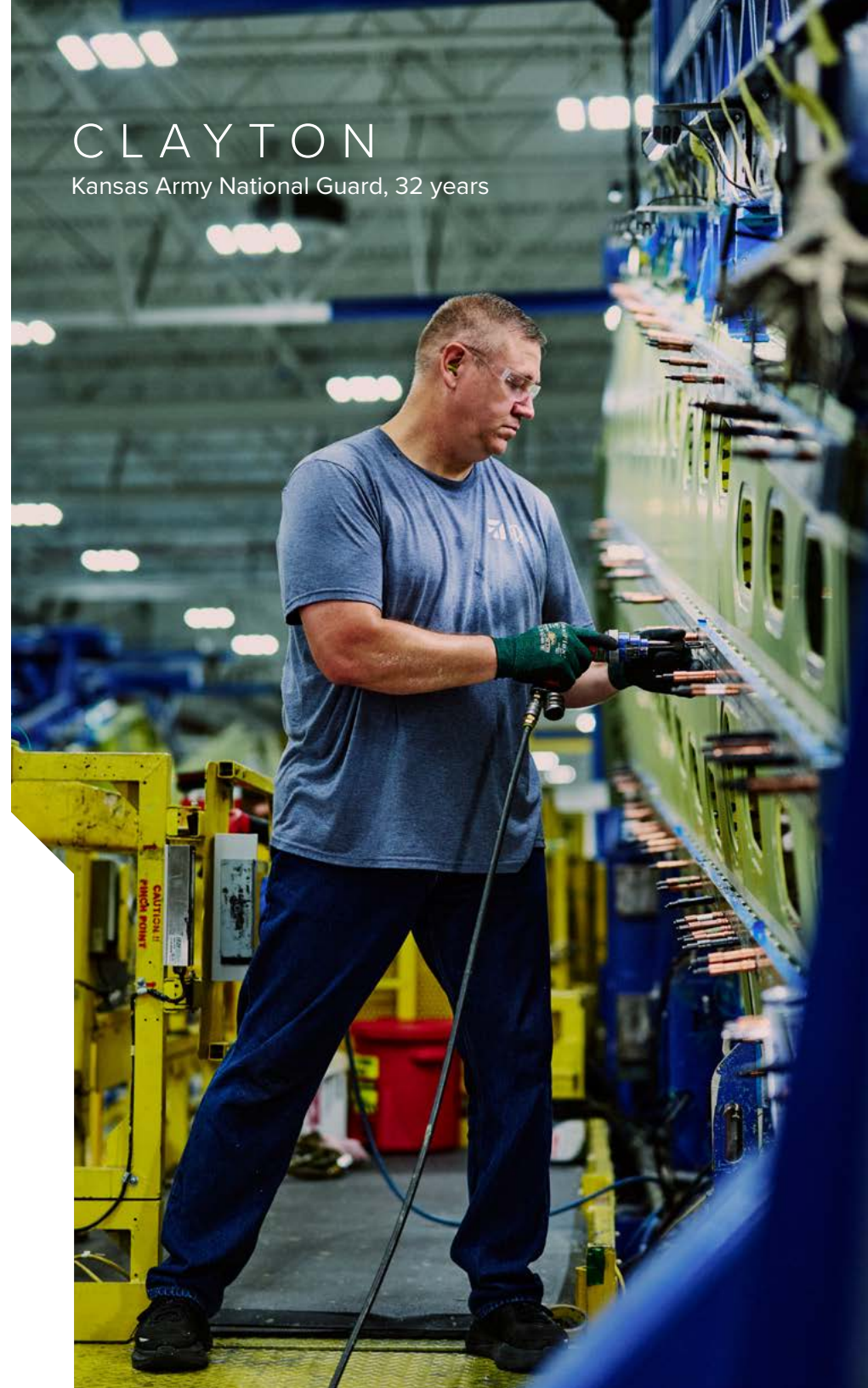
INITIATING TRUST

Every company will anticipate negotiations; however, they typically prepare a quality offer, so you don't have to.

- It is important to consider the post-negotiation relationship because those sitting on the opposite side of the table may soon be your new teammates, or even your new boss.
- Everyone wants a long-term association and a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Reaching a win-win conclusion will initiate trust between you and your new manager or boss.
- Your trustworthiness will determine your success in this role and career.
- If you trust others, chances are they will reciprocate.
- Trust in the workplace increases productivity, improves morale and reduces stress.

GOAL MUST BE “WIN-WIN”

- The person with whom you are negotiating is most likely going to be your teammate or boss.
- So, it is imperative you focus on achieving an outcome where everyone comes away happy, or at least all parties are satisfied.
- Work towards a mutual “Yes.”



CLAYTON

Kansas Army National Guard, 32 years

PREPARE BEFORE YOU NEGOTIATE

Technically, it is best to identify the company culture, acceptable work arrangements and salary ranges before you apply. Orienting your networking, informational interviews and interview questions on these same topics will put you in an advantageous position.

THINGS TO DO WEEKS BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Defining your negotiation strategy should begin long before you receive an offer – preferably during the self-evaluation and career research phases of your military-to-civilian transition. Use this time to reflect on your needs, wants and your worth so you're prepared to receive, analyze and negotiate any offer that comes your way.

Evaluate yourself

- Know your current compensation package and determine what you need to retain your current quality of life.
- Define the minimum salary you need to maintain that quality of life.
- If relevant, know the value of your retirement paycheck.
- If relevant, know the value of your Veterans Affairs Disability Compensation package.

- If relevant, study the TRICARE retiree health and dental insurance programs – you can compare these to what the company offers.
- Learn if your final move benefit is still available and if it is sufficient to support any planned relocation.
- Be sure to include “higher household authorities” (*Household 6*) in your negotiation preparations.

Evaluate the company and location

- Learn the impact of state taxes on your total income, including any retirement pay.
- Learn what the cost of living is in the employment area.
- Research (Salary.com, Indeed, Glassdoor, etc.) what similarly skilled workers make in the employment area.
- In a humble way, assess your worth to the company – how much value you can create for them?
- Know that the company could care less what the military paid you – they won't take that into consideration.

USEFUL INFORMATION TO GATHER DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Ask questions to help you better understand the role requirements and duties and how it fits into the company's vision. This will help you assess the value you will create for the company, which is the biggest determining factor when negotiating an offer.

- Ask questions to help you understand potential growth and advancement opportunities. This will help you assess if this job will be professionally fulfilling.
- 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 received your offer, ask for time to review and consider it. Be sure to include time for "Household 6" to review and provide input. Salary is not the only thing to consider – review the entire deal.

Compensation packages may provide programs that will strengthen the financial offer and may also be negotiated, sometimes more easily than salary alone. They might include:

- Start Date
- Telecommuting or remote work
- Signing bonus
- Vacation and personal days
- Differential pay and authorized time off to enable service in the reserve components
- Medical and dental insurance, as well as vision assistance programs
- Life insurance
- Relocation support
- Investment programs with corporate matching
- Retirement plans with corporate matching

To reinforce the salary, companies may provide bonuses as an incentive for value creation and retention:

- Spot bonuses for accomplishments
- Variable bonuses for performance
- Annual compensation adjustments for performance and perceived increased potential and value creation
- Annual review for increased salary

Two often overlooked but critical items to consider with any offer are:

1. Does the company provide for developmental or "broadening" experiences, including credentialing and additional training and education? *(Progressing in the company will increase your responsibilities, authorities and experiences, along with corresponding increases in pay and benefits.)*
2. Will the company offer advancement opportunities? *(Adding to your portfolio increases future compensation.)*

YOU GOT THE OFFER – NOW WHAT?

Continue focusing on your “Top 10”. They want you on their team, but don’t get a big head or get emotional over it. Take the time to compile all the information you’ve gathered throughout this stressful process.

1. Thank the company for the opportunity and for their trust in you and confidence in your ability to create value for them.
2. Ask for time to study the offer – agree on a date and time when you will respond to their offer.
3. Review the offer:
 - Compare the offer against your “Top 10” needs - validate your desired outcomes
 - Re-evaluate what you learned about the company’s culture
 - Assess the company’s predicted outcome
4. Review the opportunity and offer with “higher household authorities” (*Household 6*).
5. Once you comprehend the entire offer, then prepare your response.
6. Respond on time.

SHOOT FOR A WIN-WIN CONCLUSION



- Establish a cooperative relationship to achieve the best outcome.
- Leverage your newfound cultural awareness and style of communication.

NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

Here are 10 steps to successfully negotiate a job offer:

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

1. **Review your “Top 10” needs.** Will this job with this company help you become the best version of yourself?
2. **Play detective.** Evaluate the company and confirm its culture and the opportunities it offers to grow and advance.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

3. **Validate your desired outcomes.** Ask questions to confirm your “Top 10” needs; assess the value you will create for the company and discover what that value is worth to them.
4. **Validate the company’s predicted outcomes.** Ask questions about the role, its connection to the company vision and the value they expect you to create.
5. **Reduce the stress.** Waiting for the job offer can be painful, so ask about the company’s selection timeline.

REVIEWING THE OFFER:

6. **Buy time to strategize.** Once the offer comes, ask for time to review, and talk it over with “Household 6.”
7. **Salary is not the only thing to consider.** Review the entire deal including benefits, which are usually easier to negotiate: signing bonus, retirement plans, insurance, vacation and personal days, relocation support, etc.
8. **Assess the offer against your and the company’s predicted outcomes.** Does the offer equal the value they expect you to create? Does it incentivize you to perform? Does the entirety of the compensation package strengthen their financial offer?

DURING THE NEGOTIATION:

9. **Stand firm on your desired outcomes:** But avoid ultimatums unless you intend to walk away permanently.
10. **Fixate on win-win: Get to a “yes.”** Be reasonable, knowledgeable, flexible and enthusiastic.

HOW TO DECLINE AN OFFER

Sometimes there are reasons to decline the offer. It is just as important to prepare for this eventuality. In case you must:

- Be kind and polite.
- Thank the company for their offer and for their trust in you and confidence in your ability to create value for them.
- Tell them that unfortunately, you will have to decline.
- Provide them an appropriate reason for your declining their offer.
- Thank them again and wish them good luck in finding a quality employee for this role.



KAPRI
U.S. Air Force, 22 years

BRANCHES AND SEQUELS

Like anything associated with combat, things won't happen just like we plan them. Success often comes from increasing opportunities by incorporating flexibility into your plan with contingencies. In military planning, we refer to these contingency plans as "branches and sequels." Creating branches and sequels for your military-to-civilian transition planning will increase the potential for victory.

- 92 Learn By Doing: SkillBridge
- 95 Expand Your Knowledge: Student Veteran
- 98 Continue To Serve: Reserves or National Guard





CREATING FLEXIBILITY

Your military-to-civilian transition will never go exactly as you planned. Creating flexibility by studying all the options available besides transitioning directly into a second career may be beneficial. You can evaluate the possibility of participating in a SkillBridge internship, or going to school, or joining the National Guard and Reserves. Planning for these branches or sequels may present alternative directions you never previously considered in your military-to-civilian transition war.

JOHN
U.S. Army, 33 years



BRANCHES AND SEQUELS

LEARN BY DOING: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SKILLBRIDGE

Before conducting combat operations, my team and I spent hours and hours practicing our individual and collective skills. We started in the classroom and progressed to performing our tasks in mock or simulated environments that closely replicated real combat situations. We were learning by doing, honing our skills to attain successful outcomes. This concerted effort enabled us to successfully apply complex skills in unfamiliar environments.

SkillBridge internships fit within our military tradition of learning by doing, giving transitioning service members the opportunity to apply their finely honed skills in an unfamiliar environment, one where they will soon find themselves working – in your new career field and job.

WHAT IS SKILLBRIDGE?

1. An opportunity to experience civilian work through apprenticeships, internships, or industry training during your final 180 days of active duty.
2. An unpaid experience to evaluate the career you are pursuing, and which skills can enable you best.

3. The goal is to help you find meaningful employment with a reasonable expectation of comparable living wage and post-service employment. But there are no guarantees of employment after completing the program.
4. You continue to receive your military compensation and benefits while participating in the program, which is typically 90–120 days long, but can extend to a maximum of 180 days.

SKILLBRIDGE HELPS YOU IN YOUR TRANSITION

1. “Learn by doing” the civilian work you are passionate about.
2. Gain first-hand knowledge of the civilian work culture and how you can successfully apply your skills within the unfamiliar civilian work environment.
3. Educate an employer on what type of a high-performing employee you can be, expose the relevance of your skills and experiences to the job and reveal your character.
4. Fill knowledge and information gaps about your career field and about a company or business culture.
5. Experience civilian leadership and ways to collaborate with stakeholders, peers and supervisors.
6. Possibly earn valuable certifications and licenses.
7. Increase the probability of getting a job offer and a great start to your new career.

SKILLBRIDGE BENEFITS THE COMPANY OR EMPLOYER TOO

1. Helps them find top talent within the military community.
2. Expands the military community knowledge that they hire members of the military community.
3. Provides a free evaluation of your skills and experiences and a free assessment of your character – even before making a hiring decision. Consider it a 90–120-day interview.
4. Gives them the opportunity to refine or enhance your skills to those required in a specific job or series of related jobs.
5. Presents the chance to educate you on why you should work for them when you complete your internship.
6. Gives them access to a motivated and highly trained workforce.
7. Increases the likelihood of post-service employment for and retention of participants and others in the intern’s network.

HOW TO GET STARTED IN SKILLBRIDGE?

1. **Determine your eligibility.** You must have completed at least 180 continuous days of active service and have 180 days or fewer remaining before your discharge date.
2. **Get approval.** Get approval from your unit commander. It is recommended that you seek approval at least 9 to 12 months before your separation date.
3. **Discover internship opportunities.** Visit the DoW SkillBridge website (<https://SkillBridge.osd.mil>) and visit the “Find a SkillBridge Opportunity” page which has search functions to identify a company aligned with the program.
 - You can search by Keywords (e.g. a career or job title) or location (where you wish to intern)
 - You can also click on the Partner tab and type in Textron Aviation
4. **Reach out to SkillBridge partner companies.** Most companies will want you to apply and interview for their internship opportunities.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY

1. Treat this search for an internship like you do a job search.
2. Confirm the Internship opportunity is aligned with your targeted career field.
3. Verify that the company hosting the internship is one you could work for at the conclusion of the experience.
4. Research the company and its SkillBridge internship reviews to ensure it is a valid and useful opportunity.
5. Examine if the company offers additional benefits like career training, certifications, or licensing in areas or with equipment necessary for your career field.

6. Ask if the company will provide a military veteran mentor throughout the internship experience.
7. Request that the company creates informational interview opportunities with other employees within the same career field or related job.
8. Consider that the company’s investment in SkillBridge is to find someone who has a high probability of converting to a full-time employee.

REMEMBER, AS AN INTERN:

1. You are still a government employee. So don’t accept gifts from the company or otherwise violate your ethics.
2. You are NOT an employee of the company.
3. You are training and learning by doing, not displacing an employee.
4. You MUST keep your chain of command informed and updated.

SKILLBRIDGE RESOURCES:

- **DoW SkillBridge:**
<https://skillbridge.osd.mil/>
- **DoW SkillBridge Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):**
<https://skillbridge.osd.mil/faq.htm>
- **DoW Transition Assistance Program:**
<https://www.dodtap.mil/>
- **DoW SkillBridge Resources Page:**
<https://skillbridge.osd.mil/resources.htm>
- **National Association of State Workforce Agencies, Hilton Honors Military Program:**
<https://www.naswa.org/partnerships/hilton-honors>



EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE: BECOME A STUDENT VETERAN

Often, before we get promoted or advance to another level of leadership, we must expand our knowledge through special military education or by attending a developmental leadership school. These milestone events enhance our capabilities, expand our understanding of the military profession and prepare us for increased responsibilities.

Becoming a student veteran and earning a degree can help you develop new skills, refine your career end state and increase knowledge about your targeted career field. Expanding your knowledge can increase your career opportunities, improve your chances for advancement and growth and enhance your earning potential.

Moving from a highly structured, hierarchical environment in the military to a less-rigid environment on a college campus is often difficult to navigate and much less detailed.

**DON'T GET A DEGREE JUST TO HAVE ONE
– CONNECT YOUR EDUCATION TO YOUR
TARGETED CAREER FIELD**

1. Determine what your GI Bill benefits are and how to apply them.
2. Through your Informational Interviewing determine what degree is best for you to advance in your targeted career field.
3. Decide whether you want to attend a traditional “brick-and-mortar” school or get your degree online.
4. Identify which veteran-friendly schools offer the degree you are pursuing.
5. Ask the schools to confirm what credits they will accept from your military experience by using your Joint Services Transcript (JST). The results may reduce the time it takes to graduate and the cost it takes to earn the degree.
6. Research whether these identified schools have a student veteran organization or association or veteran resource center. Built-in support structures may be essential to your success.
7. Confirm your identified schools accept your GI Bill benefits and investigate what their specific administrative process is on applying your benefits.
8. Make a financial plan. Your GI Bill benefits may go a long way in covering your education expenses, but you must cover your non-school-related expenses.
9. Working full or part-time may add the final funding pieces for you, so you might consider finding a work-study job with your school.
10. Seek information on Financial Aid and explore the availability of scholarships.
11. Determine the availability of childcare and/or affordable housing near the campus.
12. Verify if and how you can leverage your VA Medical benefits if you enroll in a school. There is often a direct correlation between student veteran access to mental health-related services and academic success.

BECOME A STUDENT VETERAN

1. Check into the on-campus veterans services to learn how to:
 - Connect with health care on campus. Do not wait until you are sick or overly stressed. By then it is too late.
 - Connect with the student veteran organization or association.
 - Find where the VA's VITAL (Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership) program is nearest to you. (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/student-veteran/vital-program.asp>)
2. Join the student veteran organization or association to gain access to:
 - Additional resources, scholarships and internship information.
 - Leadership and relevant professional development programs.
 - Online networking and support forums.
 - Advocacy for student veteran issues on campus, locally and nationwide.
 - A supportive network, including business partners who may be looking to hire you.
 - Advisory center
3. Build a support system immediately. They will hold you accountable for your goals, be there when things get tough and cheer you when you succeed. Besides connecting with friends, family, and other military veterans or military family members, consider:
 - Checking in and registering with the local VA. You can benefit from their resources and camaraderie.

- Finding a local Veteran Service Organization to meet other veterans with similar backgrounds, build a network and to remain current with veteran benefits.
4. Use your military training to succeed: military discipline, your proactive approach to problem-solving and your determination.
 5. Learn to cope with your non-veteran classmates. Accept the potential of feeling frustrated and even anger toward your classmates who won't understand your experiences and reveal a tremendous lack of maturity compared to you. Contain your feelings.
 6. Continue your physical fitness training and maintain a healthy study-life balance, or work-study-life balance.

STUDENT VETERAN CHALLENGES

1. Student veterans are less likely than non-veteran students to invest time outside of the classroom on activities not essential to the completion of their course because of parenting responsibilities, work, or other factors.
2. Student veterans report difficulties transitioning from a military style of technical learning and a hierarchical organizational structure to a university learning environment.
3. Military service members and veterans relocate often due to service, and these frequent moves make it challenging for veterans to establish residency in any one state for the purpose of qualifying for in-state tuition rates at public institutions.
4. Because of deployments while in school, veterans may experience the loss of scholarships, tuition dollars and academic credits during the academic school year.
5. Student-veterans have detailed life experiences that nonveterans often cannot comprehend.

6. Many student-veterans do NOT self-identify as a former military service member for various reasons, which frequently frustrates the effort of building a support system.
7. Student veterans often face mental health challenges even in the non-threatening college lifestyle. According to recent studies, depression and PTSD are the most prevalent. Leaving a structured environment into an unstructured one can, at a minimum, result in anxiety.

“SOFT SKILLS” CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATION SUCCESS

1. Soft skills, or people skills, are personal attributes or habits relating to how you interact with colleagues, solve problems and manage your work. (They are non-technical skills.)
2. You can apply the same soft skills to various professions and transfer them into your new and foreign operating environment.
3. Because of the unfamiliarity of your new operating environment, you may be discouraged from applying your military-honed soft skills. But they are essential qualities for navigating new situations and challenges.
4. Oftentimes you will begin applying valuable soft skills as a natural reaction to a situation, without even thinking about it.
5. Group work is prevalent in today's educational environment, which will require the use of your soft skills.
6. Soft skills that will be valuable to you in your new operating environment:
 - Time management
 - Planning
 - Adaptability in the face of adversity
 - Leadership
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Growth mindset
 - Active listening
 - Resilience
 - Communication
 - Problem-solving
 - Patience
 - Discipline

STUDENT VETERAN RESOURCES:

- **Student Veterans of America (SVA):**
<https://studentveterans.org/>
- **About GI Bill benefits:**
<https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/>
- **Student-veteran guide to College success:**
<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/higher-education-for-military-veterans/>
- **College Navigator:**
<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- **Service 2 School:**
<https://www.service2school.org/>
- **Aid for Military Families (Federal Student Aid):**
<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/military>
- **VA College Toolkit:**
<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/student-veteran/index.asp>
- **Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE):**
<https://depressioncenter.org/outreach-education/college-mental-health/peer-advisors-veteran-education>
- **Warrior-Scholar Project:**
<https://www.warrior-scholar.org/>

CONTINUE TO SERVE: RESERVES OR NATIONAL GUARD

Many who leave active-duty service retain the call to service and desire to remain associated with other brave men and women who have the same calling. A terrific sequel to an active-duty career is one in the Reserve Component – the Reserves or National Guard.

By joining the reserve component, you can simplify your military-to-civilian transition and effectively ease yourself into civilian life. You can “continue to serve” and retain the sense of purpose that military service gives you while adding flexibility in your life. You can work full or part-time, go to school, change your military specialty while training one weekend out of each month plus two weeks for annual training. Additionally, you may take advantage of Reserve- and National Guard-friendly employment policies that companies may present.

REASONS TO CONSIDER

There are several reasons to consider this sequel to your active-duty military career (this is by no means an exhaustive list):

1. Additional money for education.
2. Supplemental professional growth or career advancement within your civilian career or job.
3. Strengthen relevant technical skills.
4. Retain access to benefits like healthcare and retirement contributions.
5. Increase opportunities to change your military specialty.
6. Take advantage of re-enlistment bonuses that may not have been available on active duty.
7. Job security.
8. Gain more control over your life.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSFERRING TO THE RESERVES OR NATIONAL GUARD?

Regardless of your military service while on active duty, you must meet certain criteria to be considered for the Reserves or National Guard. These may include:

1. **Physical fitness:** You will need to meet the most recent physical requirements for height, weight and medical status
2. **Education:** Your qualifications must meet the requirements of the branch in which you would like to enlist.
3. **Background:** You will need to hold a current discharge order and have an approved conditional release in place.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED STEPS TO TRANSITION FROM ACTIVE DUTY TO THE RESERVES OR NATIONAL GUARD?

1. **Contact your Transition Assistance Program (TAP) office:** Seek guidance and information and discover available options.
2. **Speak with a Reserve Component Career Counselor (RCCC):** Identify Reserve or Guard missions that align with your goals.
3. **Identify a suitable unit:** Choose a unit that is conveniently located near your residence.
4. **Contact a recruiter:** Reach out to the unit's recruiter to discuss your desired location and confirm openings in the unit aligned with your military specialty.
5. **Check eligibility requirements:** Ensure you meet necessary medical, physical fitness and security clearance standards.
6. **Submit necessary paperwork:** Complete required forms requesting transfer to the Reserves or Guard, including medical documentation and discharge paperwork.
7. **Attend required training:** Attend additional training to qualify for your selected Reserve or Guard position, including your military specialty.
8. **Maintain good standing:** Ensure you remain in good standing with your current command

RICKI

U.S. Army Reserves, 2 years + U.S. Navy, 4 years



WOMEN VETERANS

In combat, small units win because every member brings a decisive advantage to the fight. Success depends on individuals who can read the terrain, adapt under pressure and execute with precision — even when the environment works against them. Women who served know this better than most. They succeeded in formations, command formations and in cultures originally forged by and for men — and they didn't just survive; they led and earned respect.

102 Distinct Transition Realities

103 Tactics to Overcome These Challenges





WOMEN VETERANS

In combat, small units win because every member brings a decisive advantage to the fight. Success depends on individuals who can read the terrain, adapt under pressure and execute with precision — even when the environment works against them. Women who served know this better than most. They succeeded in formations, command formations and in cultures originally forged by and for men — and they didn't just survive; they led and earned respect.

The ability of women to excel in an environment not engineered with their presence in mind is not just resilience — it's a proven combat multiplier. That same strength becomes invaluable in the civilian workforce.

Women who served in uniform bring proven leadership, adaptability and mission-focused execution into the civilian workforce. Many succeeded in the hypermasculine military environments, rising to NCO, senior NCO and officer ranks. However, when transitioning to civilian organizations, women veterans may encounter leadership expectations, communication norms, or cultural perceptions that differ sharply from what made them successful in service. Recognizing these dynamics early helps women veterans enter the civilian workforce with confidence and clarity.

TOOLS FOR WOMEN ARE HARD TO FIND

Compared to broader veteran services, programs built specifically for women veterans can be less visible, especially early in their military-to-transition phase.

DISTINCT TRANSITION REALITIES

Cultural expectations of leadership.

- Civilian workplaces often have different expectations for how women “should” communicate or lead.
- The direct, decisive style that is respected in the military may be misinterpreted by those with limited exposure to military leadership.

Perceptions and bias.

- Sadly, and far too often, women veterans are not initially recognized as veterans, leaders, or technical experts.
- Some may hear: “You don't seem like you were in the military,” or “Women don't usually lead that way,” which can be discouraging or confusing.

Identity and re-assimilation.

- Women who already adapted to military culture may feel pressure to adopt yet another version of themselves when entering a civilian role.
- This creates unnecessary internal conflict, even when their authentic leadership style is exactly what employers need.

Limited visibility of support networks.

- Women-specific veteran programs are fewer, smaller and less publicized than mainstream veteran resources, making them harder to find during early transition.
- Women veterans often don't self-identify as veterans in public settings, limiting their exposure to resources, community events and employer-led veteran initiatives.

TACTICS TO OVERCOME THIS REALITY

Stay authentic in your leadership style.

- Do not dilute the competence, communication clarity, or accountability that made you successful in uniform.
- Translate your leadership style into business terms when needed but remain true to who you are.

Prepare for cultural differences.

- Civilian teams may not be familiar with military communication norms or the rank-based leadership you exercised.
- Expect questions, misunderstandings, or curiosity — and use them as opportunities to educate and build rapport.

Translate, don't transform.

- Use civilian terminology to explain your experience but avoid “toning down” your professionalism or presence.
- Your approach to standards, mission execution and team leadership is a competitive asset.

WOMEN VETERAN SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

- **Foundation for Women Warriors (FWW)** – Transition support, leadership development and financial navigation
- **Women Veterans Alliance (WVA)** – Professional development, conferences and networking
- **Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)** – Advocacy, benefits support and legal assistance
- **Grace After Fire (TX)** – Peer support and career navigation
- **VA Women Veterans Program Managers** – Located at every VA Medical Center nationwide



DANI
U.S. Air Force, 6 years

MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

On a battlefield, force multipliers often turn the tide of a conflict. A military spouse's career can be a force-multiplier. It amplifies financial stability, morale and readiness. It can create a strategic advantage for the entire military community.

106 Why it Matters

106 Complex Military Life

107 Why These Difficulties Exist

107 Strategies to Overcome These Challenges





MILITARY SPOUSE CAREERS AND EMPLOYMENT

On a battlefield, force multipliers often turn the tide of a conflict. A military spouse's career can be a force-multiplier. It amplifies financial stability, morale and readiness. It can create a strategic advantage for the entire military community.

In combat, every member of the unit plays a critical role—if one soldier is pinned down, the entire mission suffers. Military families operate the same way: when a spouse struggles to find meaningful employment, it creates pressure on the whole household, impacting morale, readiness and even retention. Their success strengthens the entire force.

HIGHLY EDUCATED AND SKILLED – YET, UNDERUTILIZED

Military spouse unemployment rates hover around 20-25%, far above the national average.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Military families often rely on two incomes to maintain a reasonable standard of living. Unemployment can create financial stress, impacting morale and retention.

- Employment provides purpose, identity and independence for the spouse. Lack of career opportunities can lead to isolation, depression and lower family satisfaction.
- Without employment, the spouse may lose valuable experience and networking opportunities which will negatively impact employment opportunities when the military service member separates.
- Spouses are highly educated and skilled, yet underutilized.

COMPLEX MILITARY LIFE

- Frequent relocations. Permanent changes of station (PCS) or moves to support the military member's career occur every 2-3 years. They disrupt career continuity.
- Licensing and certification barriers. Professions like nursing, teaching, real estate and cosmetology often require state-specific licenses, which do not easily transfer. After a PCS move, more money is required to secure the license or certificate in the new state.
- Employment gaps. Time off for moves or deployments or for recertification can create resume gaps. Many employers criticize these misunderstood times away from the workforce.
- Childcare and family responsibilities. Deployments often leave spouses as sole caregivers, limiting job flexibility.
- Limited local opportunities. Many military installations are in rural or less economically diverse areas, reducing job options.
- Employer misconceptions. Some employers fear military spouses will leave quickly, so they hesitate to hire.
- Professional network disruption. Frequent relocations often require military spouses to rebuild professional relationships and local networks, making career advancement more difficult than for non-military peers.

MILITARY SPOUSE CAREER PROGRAMS

- **DoD Military Spouse Employer Partnership (MSEP):** Connects spouses with vetted employers committed to hiring military families.
- **SECO (Spouse Education and Career Opportunities) Career Coaching:** Offers one-on-one career coaching, education planning, resume support, interview preparation and career guidance.
- **SpouseWorks:** Provides access to scholarships, fellowships, professional development opportunities, skills training and career resources.
- **Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Programs:** Career readiness workshops, networking opportunities, fellowships and employment resources.

WHY THESE DIFFICULTIES EXIST

- **Systemic Issues.** Licensing reciprocity between states is inconsistent.
- **Economic Factors.** Base locations often lack industries aligned with spouses' skills.
- **Cultural Misunderstanding.** Employers may not understand the resilience and adaptability military spouses bring.
- **Policy Gaps.** While programs exist, awareness and accessibility vary widely.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES

- Leverage military spouse career programs. Representatives will be connected with employers, training programs, fellowships, networking opportunities and career coaches who understand the military lifestyle.

- Use local workforce resources. Every community has a workforce center, and many will employ Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER). They will be well connected to businesses and employers.
- Overcome licensing barriers. DoW covers up to \$1,000 for license transfer costs, and some states have reciprocity laws which means they will accept your license from another state.
- Build a portable career. Focus on remote work, freelancing, or gig-employment. Or use Heroes MAKE America resources to become a certified production technician. Manufacturing jobs exist all over the country.

MILITARY SPOUSE RESOURCES

- **Interstate Licensing Assistance:** Many states offer military spouse license reciprocity or expedited credential transfer programs.
- **Military OneSource:** Free counseling, financial education, relocation assistance and family support resources.
- **My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA):** Career training and certification funding for eligible military spouses.
- **Heroes MAKE America:** Manufacturing certifications and career pathways that provide portable skills and nationwide opportunities.
- **American Job Centers/Workforce Centers:** Career counseling, job placement assistance, resume support and employer connections.

Supporting military spouse career success strengthens family stability, improves financial readiness, enhances military retention and unlocks the potential of one of America's most educated, resilient and adaptable talent pools. Investing in military spouses is not simply a family issue; it is a readiness and workforce issue, and a national economic opportunity.

LEVERAGE THE WARRIOR ETHOS

The Warrior Ethos defines our values. It's what motivates and drives us to do what's right. We often relied on our Warrior Ethos to overcome many personal and team struggles. Don't forget them while battling through your military-to-civilian transition.

110 Putting the Ethos into Perspective





LEVERAGE THE WARRIOR ETHOS

The Warrior Ethos defines our values. It's what motivates and drives us to do what's right. We often relied on our Warrior Ethos to overcome many personal and team struggles. Don't forget them while battling through your military-to-civilian transition.

Although the principles of the Ethos – placing the mission first, never accepting defeat, never quitting and never leaving a fallen comrade – were written for our men and women in uniform, its utility is not limited to military service. The Warrior Ethos is relevant in all walks of life.

PUTTING THE ETHOS INTO PERSPECTIVE

The military-to-civilian transition is challenging. The greatest barrier to transition: the cultural and communication gap that exists between the military and the people whom they serve.

We in the military lived by the Warrior Ethos. During our service, the organization, its success and its survival were more important than our own individual ambitions, goals and survival.

- We relied on perimeters to stay safe, secure and survive.
- We trusted others to do their part and communicate when they needed help – even when we could not see, hear, or touch them.

- We entrusted our comrades to provide “buddy aide” when needed or have us evacuated for advanced care.
- And the strong personal connections we formed were essential for the perimeter to work.

Transition challenges are exacerbated when immersed in this foreign operating environment; it can be painful and somewhat debilitating.

- We may perceive a lack of “perimeters”, and therefore a lack of reasons to form strong personal connections.
- The private sector can often appear more focused on the individual and their independence – more competitive rather than collaborative – and political correctness is expected over candor.
- Due to tremendous differences in organizational structures – especially regarding leadership – we may struggle to find meaning and purpose in work – see how our work contributes to the company vision.
- Non-veteran coworkers may perceive members of the military community to be too rigid, overly confident and excessively dedicated to the organization's mission

You may never close the cultural and communication gap completely, but you can reduce its effects:

- Make finding military-friendly companies one of your “Top 10” needs.
- Build your own perimeter by connecting with other military community members in your workplace, neighborhood, or community, then actively participate in veteran advocacy programs and initiatives.

- Educate non-veterans on your language and culture; not to convert them, but to help eliminate any preconceived biases as you acclimate to your new operating environment.
- Leverage your military skills and experiences within your new company culture for the greater good.
- Coach, teach and mentor others attempting the military-to-civilian transition.
- Find community programs or initiatives focused on military community or veteran challenges and bring co-workers along with you to volunteer.

R. Lee Ermy once said,

*“Everyone thinks that the VA takes care of veterans.
No. Not true. Veterans take care of veterans!”*

YOUR CHALLENGE

- Connect with other members of the military community in your new company, neighborhood and community.
- Bring them into your new perimeter.
- Then, turn around to help another transitioning military community member.



JULIAN

U.S. Army, 4 years

FIGURES

ii	PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER – MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION MATRIX	63	RESUME OUTCOME AND ACCOMPLISHMENT CONSIDERATIONS
3	THE LONG-TERM VALUE OF MILITARY TALENT	65	LEAD VS MANAGE
4	10 REASONS WHY OUR MILITARY COMMUNITY MAKES GREAT EMPLOYEES	66	MAKE IT RELEVANT
19	TIPS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR CAREER END STATE	66	RESUME TAKEAWAYS
23	“DANCE WITH THE ONE WHO BRUNG YA”	67	MAKE IT RELEVANT WORKSHEET
28	SCOUTS OUT!	70	FOUR FAILING (RESUME WRITING) STRATEGIES
30	INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW OUTCOMES	74	INTERVIEW PURPOSE
34	YOUR (REALISTIC) JOB / CAREER FAIR OBJECTIVES	74	INTERVIEWER’S OBJECTIVES
38	QUESTIONS TO AVOID AT A JOB / CAREER FAIR	74	YOUR (INTERVIEW) OBJECTIVES
42	SAVE YOUR SEARCH FOR EMAIL JOB ALERTS	84	NEGOTIATION GOAL: MUST BE A WIN-WIN
49	APPLICATION LANDMINES	87	SHOOT FOR A WIN-WIN CONCLUSION
52	TWO-STEP TEST	94	SKILLBRIDGE RESOURCES
53	BEFORE YOU APPLY	97	STUDENT-VETERAN RESOURCES
57	DON’T LOOK BACKWARDS	102	TOOLS FOR WOMEN VETERANS – HARD TO FIND
61	YOUR RESUME OBJECTIVE	103	WOMEN VETERAN SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS
61	YOUR (RESUME) MISSION	106	MILITARY SPOUSE – HIGHLY EDUCATED AND SKILLED
61	PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY	107	MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS
62	CORE COMPETENCIES – CHECKLIST	107	MILITARY SPOUSE RESOURCES
62	RESUME BULLET POINT ORIENTATION	111	WARRIOR ETHOS – YOUR CHALLENGE

NOTES

NOTES

[illegible]

