



**Remarks by Brig. Gen. David J. Bishop
Commander, Warrior Transition Command and
Assistant Surgeon General for Warrior Care and Transition**

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Good morning and thank you all for joining us today to learn more about the employment challenges facing our country's wounded, ill, and injured Veterans. I'm BG David Bishop, the commander of the Warrior Transition Command. I'm pleased that several of our campaign partners could join us this morning: Dr. Jeff Pon of the Society for Human Resource Management, Tim Isacco of Orion International, and retired Army SSG Rob Roberts.

For those not familiar with the Warrior Transition Command, it was established in 2009 to provide resources to the Army's wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers so that they can return to duty or move forward as successful veterans. Currently, we provide support and programs for 10,000 Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers who are located at 29 Warrior Units around the country. These Soldiers require more than six months of complex medical treatment – and 87% served in combat. Their sole mission is to heal and transition successfully back to their units or civilian life.

Throughout their recovery, each wounded, ill, and injured Soldier works with an interdisciplinary team. This robust team can include a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Nurse Case Manager, Physical Therapist, Ombudsman, Human Resources Representative, a Transition Coordinator, and a personal Advocate for our most severely wounded. Supplemental specialists are brought in based on the needs of the Soldier. In addition to focusing on the Soldiers' medical care, this team works with each Soldier to create a personalized Comprehensive Transition Plan. This personalized roadmap focuses on the overall well-being of our recovering Soldiers by focusing on six areas: Career, Physical, Emotional, Social, Family, and Spiritual.

We offer our wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers a variety of resources to help them re-focus on their career—what can they do, what do they want to do, and what needs to be done to get there. Just last week when I was at our Warrior Transition Unit at Ft. Belvoir, one of our transitioning Soldiers shared with me that he was going to take ownership of a family company with one of his high school friends. Between medical appointments and rehab, he is making his goal a reality. To help him, and all our wounded warriors like him, we have:

- Transition Coordinators – like personal career counselors



- Occupational Therapists – licensed clinicians who help bridge physical ability to job requirements
- Internship opportunities through Operation Warfighter with the federal government
- Access to education and certification programs
- As well as access to ACAP – Army Career & Alumni Program that helps with resume development, job-assistance workshops, and interview skills

While the Army wants to retain as many of our well-trained Soldiers as possible, the extent of their injuries often prevents that from happening. Many who we care for are unable to meet Army duty-requirements due to their medical disabilities and the rigorous demands of military service. While they might not be able to perform their Army duties – we know they still have a lot to offer other employers.

- Leadership experience managing a small 10-person squad or a large 5,000-person brigade
- Negotiating skills from their interaction with local government, business, and community leaders in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Determination and perspective from, in many cases, 2-5 years of medical rehabilitation from their injuries
- Commitment to mission – they are trained to research, plan, execute, and evaluate each action to ensure they are moving toward the goal at hand

As someone who's led Soldiers for nearly 30 years, what always stands out to me is trust. I can trust a Soldier to get the job done—and typically, under unimaginable pressure, with aggressive timelines, when failure is not an option. Often, they must assess the situation themselves and make critical judgments on their own and take initiative under tremendous pressure when no one is looking. It's this trust that enables our Army to accomplish our challenging missions around the world.

Yet, these valuable employees are struggling to find their opportunity for employment after returning home. Not only does this impact their long-term success financially, it also impacts their self-esteem—and, it impacts the economy which is why hiring veterans is a top priority for the White House and the Nation.

Through experience, research, and conversations with corporate and government leaders, we realized that we needed to help prepare employers and HR professionals—and ensure their concerns weren't a deterrent to employing a disabled veteran. This campaign is about setting the



conditions – not just preparing our Soldiers for a new career as a veteran, but preparing the employers about this unique population that has so much to offer to their bottom line.

To that end, we created the “Hire a Veteran” education campaign. Our goal for this campaign is for employers to gain clarity on how well military skills translate to civilian employment; PTSD/TBI, and reasonable accommodations—which will result in the employment of more wounded warriors. We hope to amplify the incredible value our wounded warriors bring to the civilian workforce given their unique training and experience; and we hope to illuminate the fact that PTSD and TBI are treatable conditions which are not unique to the military and that most individuals affected go on to have successful, productive lives; and that reasonable accommodations for our wounded warriors entering into the workplace are not difficult, expensive or a burden especially when compared to the value these outstanding individuals bring.

To reach HR professionals and employers we created a 10 minute video that addresses these top three misperceptions, as well as an online employer toolkit that is located at www.WTC.army.mil.

I’d like to switch our attention now and cue up our “Hire a Veteran” video. Please note that this video, as well as a shorter version, is available to download on our website and through our social media sites. You can distribute this video through your own communications channels – or better yet, play it for your staff and have an open discussion. Now, let’s play the video.

Unfortunately, the veterans you saw in our video couldn’t make it today – because fortunately they do have jobs. I did want to quickly give special thanks to them – not only for their service in uniform but for their willingness to share their experiences about their disabilities. Kirk Butler—a reservist who works for a large retail chain; William Plotner – who is now rebuilding ground zero through the World Trade Center project; and Jon Zagami who spent 7 years in medical rehabilitation before going to work at Caterpillar Financial.

At this time, I’d like to welcome Dr. Jeff Pon from SHRM, the Society of Human Resource Management. SHRM’s research was extremely informative regarding the employment obstacles facing our wounded, ill, and injured veterans that were addressed in the video.



Rob Roberts thank you for sharing with us your personal story today, and being candid about your employment experience. I know your candid reflections on your transition and personal employment experience will help make a difference for thousands of wounded warriors.

In closing, I'd like to thank our speakers today for their leadership and advocacy regarding the employment of our disabled veterans. Our hope is that through the "Hire a Veteran" campaign, we can collectively support the tens of thousands of disabled veterans who will enter the workforce over the next five years by providing them with equal access to fulfilling careers.

Our wounded warriors sacrificed greatly during their service to the Nation as Soldiers – and I know there is more they have to give as veterans.

I encourage everyone to join this campaign, go to our website at WTC.armymil, distribute the video, link to our online materials, get informed, and most importantly "Hire a Veteran."

Thank you.