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Photo Credit: Alexander McCoy



A purposeful transition

By: Chairman's Office of Reintegration, The Joint Staff

The Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provides contemporary and relevant information, tools, and training to ensure Service members are prepared for civilian life. Across the civilian realm, public and private organizations at the national, state, and local levels stand ready to assist veterans and their families as they return to communities.

Despite these efforts to assist in the transition out of uniform, transition remains hard for many of us. In fact, a recent University of Southern California School of Social Work survey of post-9/11 veterans found that more than two-thirds reported difficulty in "adjusting to civilian life." In another survey conducted by Blue Star Families in 2014, more than half of all veterans surveyed reported that their transition to civilian life was difficult.

Transition is made more difficult by the fragmented patchwork of Veteran Services Organizations (VSOs), veteran-serving not-

for-profit organizations (VNFPs), philanthropic organizations, and social services organizations that provide transition and reintegration services to veterans and their families. More than 40,000 of these organizations offer supportive services to transitioning Service members and veterans. While these efforts offer great potential for easing the challenges inherent in transitioning from the military, knowing where to start and successfully navigating the supportive services offered by these organizations is daunting.

While no maps exist to assist you in navigating through this patchwork of private-sector support, there are waypoints. This article illuminates some of those waypoints, making it easier for transitioning Service members to plan a purposeful transition from military service.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR TRANSITION

The single most important thing a Service member can do to prepare for a successful transition from service is to take ownership of it. A significant amount of your transition planning should be spent thinking through what you want to be and do as a civilian.

While your veteran identity will remain a key aspect of your life, it should not define you. Identify your personal and professional goals after your military service; realize your goals may change over time as you develop a clearer understanding of who you are and what you hope to accomplish. In an earlier article published on the blog Task and Purpose (taskandpurpose.com/chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-office-do-these-5-things-when-transitioning-to-civilian-life), we offered several recommendations on steps Service members can take to understand the field, craft and execute a realistic plan, and successfully reintegrate into a civilian community ready to embrace the values and skills that characterize military service.

CONNECT TO YOUR NEW COMMUNITY THROUGH A VETERAN ORGANIZATION

Veterans return to communities, and it is in those communities that they will find a new career, a home, and renewed sense of purpose. Connecting to people who live in your new community is critical to your ability to complete a successful transition from **see page 4**

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from page 3 Service member to veteran. Recognizing the importance of these community connections and finding a renewed sense of purpose following military service, veterans who preceded you have established multiple organizations to help you make these connections.

Some examples include Team Red White and Blue, The Mission Continues, Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America, Team Rubicon, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the USO.

ACCESS A COMMUNITY VETERAN SUPPORT NETWORK

Recognizing that veterans and their families will often have multiple transition-related needs when they arrive in their new community, VNFPs and communities have recently come together to establish integrated community support networks. While numerous models of these networks exist, the basic premise behind each is the delivery of veteran support services through an integrated and networked system of public sector and private sector service providers in the local community that collectively provide holistic support to transitioning Service members and veterans as they reintegrate into communities.

Through the collective impact of the network members working together to serve the needs of veterans and their families, these community networks are able to rapidly connect veterans and their families to the assistance that they need as they transition into their new community. While these networks do not exist in every community, their numbers are growing rapidly

as their efficacy increases. Some examples of these integrated community support networks include America's Warrior Partnership (americaswarriorpartnership.org/mission), America Serves (america-serves.org), Vets' Community Connections (vetscommunityconnections.org), and Mission United (unitedwaybroward.org/missionunited).

GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESS TO SERVICES THROUGH A VETERAN SUPPORT PORTAL

Given that a Google search for "veteran transition support" will yield nearly 64 million search results, it's easy to see how using the Internet to find assistance can be challenging and frustrating. The good news is that several user-friendly portals have emerged to help veterans access assistance through the World Wide Web. Although these portals utilize different models ranging from social media-integrated map-based search tools to locality-specific curated content, they help filter much of the noise that will crowd out useful information in a typical Web-based search. Use of these portals can not only assist transitioning Service members and veterans find valuable information with less effort, more importantly, they connect Service members and veterans directly to organizations that provide the assistance Service members and veterans need to connect to their new communities.

Some examples of these portals include Veterans Network of Care (veterans.networkofcare.org), Unite

Us (uniteus.com), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring our Heroes Dashboard (www.myhoh.org), as well as the community-specific portals established by the integrated community support networks mentioned above.

As mentioned, there are numerous public and private organizations at the national, state, and local levels ready to assist veterans and their families as they return to communities. The examples outlined above are just a few of those entities that assist transitioning Service members with: taking charge of transition, connecting with a local veteran organization, accessing a veteran support network, and gaining knowledge through a veteran support portal. The ability to effectively navigate through these waypoints will enhance the transition from uniform to a civilian community.

At the end of the day, purposeful transition is accomplished by understanding what one needs, and knowing where to go to find the resources necessary to achieve success. The ability of our nation and communities to provide services required for a successful reintegration has a direct impact on the past, present, and future military member. Our qualitative military edge on the globe is derived from the strength of our all-volunteer force, we must work collectively with both public and private organizations to exceed reintegration needs, to inspire the future all-volunteer force, and to spark a purposeful transition. Only then, by working together, will we achieve

SUCCESS STORY

Tahlia Burton

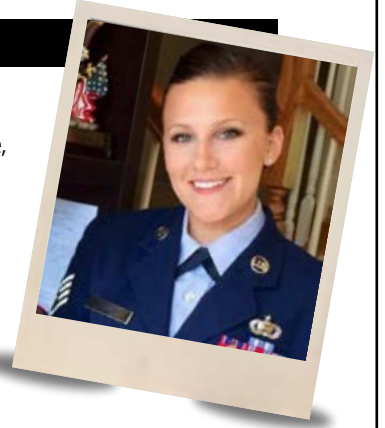
I spent six years in the Air Force as a Chinese, French, and Pashto Cryptologic Language Analyst. As a dual-language subject matter expert and instructor, I was fortunate to be able to work and train all around the globe. When my re-enlistment window opened, however, I wasn't sure what I wanted next. I considered cross-training, defense contracting, and pursuing a commission, but what I wanted most was to go to college and build on the skills and knowledge that I acquired in the military. I'd spent my entire adult life in the Air Force, however, and all of the independence and self-confidence I had learned was directly derived from my military experiences.

The thought of leaving my comfortable life and career was an immensely daunting prospect, so I sought the advice of my squadron commander, my family, and a few friends who had already made the transition from military to civilian life. They all told me the same thing: to make sure I had a solid plan, and to "go big or go home" if I was going to leave such a rewarding career.

I wanted to make the best use of my education benefits. I wasn't sure whether Ivy League universities accepted veterans using the GI Bill. I discovered that Columbia University has the largest veteran community in the Ivy League, with more than four hundred prior-enlisted undergraduates! I reached out to U.S. Military Veterans of Columbia University (Milvets), the student-veteran organization on campus, and current student-veterans at Columbia helped me with my application and gave me invaluable advice.

Having the support and encouragement of the Milvets student-veteran group, my command, family, and friends certainly ensured my success. I never would have dreamed that a mediocre high school student could be accepted into one of the best schools in the entire world, but Columbia recognized the growth, self-discipline, and determination that I gained through military service. They gave me the opportunity to continue my success story in New York City. It's truly been the opportunity of a lifetime.

At Columbia, I am not only accepted, but celebrated for my skills and experiences as a veteran, and I'm able to maintain a connection to the military through my involvement in the Milvets group. I hope to be able to inspire other veterans to apply to top-tier schools like Columbia University, because they deserve the very best for selflessly serving our country.



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Career help through the Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Economic Communities Initiative

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) believes in the power of collaboration. We know that Veterans are best served when communities come together to share knowledge, resources, and networks that strengthen their collective impact.

With this principle in mind, VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald launched the Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI) campaign in 25 communities across the country to promote local collaboration, dialogue, and partnership among organizations that serve transitioning Service members, Veterans, and their families. VECI is part of McDonald's department-wide transformation called MyVA, which is dedicated to putting Veterans at the center of everything VA does and enhancing strategic partnerships to extend VA's reach of services.

As part of the campaign, Economic Liaisons in each VECI community collaborate with government leaders, businesses, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations to help build an integrated network of support and resources for Veterans and

their families. Economic Liaisons participate in activities such as:

- Raising awareness of the benefits of investing in veterans
- Equipping employers with information and tools that will help them hire and retain Veteran employees
- Working with community partners and policy experts to find ways to overcome education and career challenges that Veterans and their families face
- Encouraging educational institutions to help Veterans use their education benefits to gain the skills they need for career success
- Making connections among the numerous community organizations that serve Veterans and their families to maximize their impact

To learn more about VECI and connect with the Economic Liaison in your area, visit www.benefits.va.gov/veci/veci.asp

VA's partnership with LinkedIn

VA has partnered with LinkedIn to add their robust job search services to the toolkit VA provides through the Transition Assistance

Program. Service members, Veterans, and their spouses can import their LinkedIn profiles directly to the Veterans Employment Center™ (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs>). LinkedIn is also offering a one-year Job Seeker Subscription, valued at more than \$360, at no-cost for all Veterans.

Transitioning Service members, Veterans, and their families are encouraged to create a profile on the VEC™ to connect directly to employers who have made a commitment to hiring them. VEC™ users can search more than 2.2 million job postings, access the Military Skills Translator to translate their military skills into language civilian employers understand, and find information on special government and partner programs.

To learn how to take advantage of the Job Seeker Subscription, visit specialedition.linkedin.com/veteran-job-seeker/.

To create a profile on the VEC™ go to www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs

Learning Hubs

VA is launching Learning Hubs in 27 cities across the country this year, in partnership with the

American Red Cross, The Mission Continues, and Coursera to provide a combination of online and local in-person classes for Service members and Veterans at no cost.

VA Learning Hubs provide transitioning Service members and Veterans the opportunity to study online and in a classroom with their peers at no cost, all while developing new skills and earning new credentials.

Each week, online modules are completed outside the classroom while class sessions provide opportunities to discuss course materials with peers, hear from local subject matter experts, and to network. Upon completion, graduates may elect to receive one free Verified Certificate from Coursera.

VA Learning Hubs were modeled after a similar Department of State program, which has hosted more than 200 courses to educate communities across the globe since 2013.

To learn more about VA Learning Hubs, email VeteranEmployment.vbaco@va.gov.

Source: The Department of Veterans Affairs

Direction, benefits, compassion:

How Transition Assistance Advisors help veterans secure benefits

By Kathryn Eads, PhD,
Deputy Program Manager, Ctr.

In 2005, the National Guard and the Department of Veterans Affairs signed a memorandum of agreement to establish National Guard Transition Assistance Advisors (TAAs), who assist members of the Reserve Component secure their benefits, entitlements, and services, including for health care, education, housing and financial assistance.

Located at each state's or territory's National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters, TAAs are charged with providing "...Direction through the maze of programs available to Veterans and connection to earned Benefits, with the Compassion of someone who knows what it's like to transition from Active Duty." Despite the almost 200,000 phone calls, emails, and walk-in requests received so far in 2015, 95 percent of responses are provided within 24 hours. For more information on the National Guard TAA Program, or to reach the Transition Assistance Advisor in your state or territory, go to www.jointservicessupport.org.



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The American Legion supports today's transitioning service members

Nation's largest veterans service organization provides benefits assistance, career guidance and more Army veteran James Harris was wounded during his second tour in Afghanistan by an improvised explosive device. He still suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and seizures.

After his VA doctor recommended a therapy dog for Harris, a long search ensued. Finally, a

family member reached out to the American Legion. Only eight days later, Harris was united with Sky, a service dog.

"I'm really touched from the bottom of my heart because I've never experienced anything like this before," said Harris, a member of American Legion Post 73 in Valley Center, Kan. "Overjoyed would be the best word. (The American Legion) went above and beyond to

do this for me."

This is just one example of how the American Legion – the nation's largest and most influential veterans service organization – assists veterans and transitioning service members in communities throughout the nation. Harris received assistance from the Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program, which turns donations into gifts for wounded veterans and service members. OCW has provided therapy resources, equipment for sports adaptive therapy programs, clothing for homeless veterans and other necessities.

In addition to OCW, the American Legion provides support to transitioning service members in a myriad of ways.

- VA benefits: Oftentimes when returning to civilian life, veterans try to receive their benefits but are caught in a maze of bureaucracy. The American Legion has dedicated representation for health and other benefits that veterans earned through their service for themselves and their families. For example, the Legion has more than 2,000 accredited service officers. These experts provide a free service for veterans, helping them through the complicated process – from understanding their benefits to applying for them and appealing them, if necessary.
- Financial resources: When tough times hit families, the American Legion is there. Perhaps a veteran with minor children at home is out of work. The Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program



Photo provided by the American Legion

James Harris, left, is congratulated by a member of the American Legion Riders after a ceremony at McLaughlin Park in Valley Center, Kan. Operation Enduring Freedom veteran and Post 73 Legion member James Harris received the service dog to help him deal with PTSD/TBI and seizures. American Legion Family members helped raise funds for the dog.



Photo provided by the American Legion

Hundreds attend the Hiring our Heroes Job Fair at the Pacific Views Event Center at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

provides cash grants to families facing such challenges.

- Career opportunities: Regardless of which branch of service a transitioning servicemember is leaving, the new veteran faces similar challenges in adapting to civilian life. Among those are finding a rewarding job. Every year, the American Legion coordinates, sponsors and promotes hundreds of job fairs and career events. At these job fairs, veterans, service members and their families meet with hiring managers, fill out job applications and receive help with resume writing.
- Education assistance: For those choosing to further their education first, the Legion has been the strongest advocate in championing education benefits for veterans. In fact, the American Legion is credited with writing the original GI Bill, legislation that im-

proved millions of lives of World War II veterans. Since 2008, the Legion has worked with Congress to modernize and improve the GI Bill for today's generation of service members.

Whether veterans need help with benefits, careers, jobs or other transitioning assistance, The American Legion and its 2.2 million members are ready to help their brothers and sisters.

"Our commander helped me get into the VA system," says Juan Trejo, an American Legion member and graduate of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. "I just kept putting it off, and he kept telling me I had to do it. Finally he came over, took a half day off, and explained it. We went over to the VA and got me hooked up."

Source: The American Legion National Headquarters

SUCCESS STORY

Cameron McMahon

I joined the Marine Corps at age 22 as an 0352, anti-tank missile-man, and did one combat deployment in Afghanistan and a MEU off the coasts of Libya and Somalia. When I got out of the military, I considered doing security contracting or becoming a cop. I eventually realized that the only reason I considered security and policing work was because I had invested so much time into acquiring those skill, and didn't think I could do anything else. I didn't take the easy path by enlisting in the Marines, so why should I as a civilian?

Shortly after separating, I found out about the Yestermorrow Design/Build School near my home in Vermont. I started using my GI Bill there to study ecological design, natural building, woodworking, and permaculture. Once I got back in the classroom, my confidence grew, and I found valuable mentors among my teachers and fellow students. I realized that compared to everything I had experienced in Afghanistan, school wasn't so hard after all.

After studying physical and agricultural systems for the last few years at Yestermorrow, a buddy of mine from my old platoon told me about Columbia University, where he was going to school. He told me about how large, vibrant and incredibly supportive the veteran population was on campus. The thought of applying to one of the top Ivy League schools was daunting, but my buddy told me that he was confident that I would not only be accepted but would thrive there. With the help of the staff at Yestermorrow, letters of recommendation from former members of my Marine Corps chain of command, encouragement from friends, family and my buddy, I applied and was accepted as a transfer with the fall class of 2015.

I am now majoring in sustainable development, and my goal is to one day build an ecovillage for 300-400 residents with a full range of resilient community services. At age 29, I am well on my way to accomplishing my dream of building my own business, and the skills I learned at Yestermorrow and at Columbia University have truly set me up for success.



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SUCCESS STORY

Samantha Demezieux



If you asked me a year ago what I would be doing today, I probably would not have said attending Columbia University. I had spent a little over four years in the Marine Corps, and was approaching a crossroads; I could either reenlist, or end my service. I knew that I wanted to pursue higher education, so I opted to leave the Marine Corps.

I was unsure where to apply. I spoke to my friends and leaders about my interests, and was told that Columbia University would be a good fit. I almost laughed at the idea. I felt apprehensive about applying to an Ivy League school. However, my OIC told me he would write me a letter of recommendation, and my platoon commander shared some of his college anecdotes with me. I decided that I did not have much to lose, and applied.

I joined the Leadership Scholar Program that helps honorably discharged Marines continue their education. The LSP identifies qualified veterans and assists them in applying to colleges that would be a good fit. During the application process, LSP worked hard to advocate for me to my target schools. Through LSP, I received application counseling and help with my essay. LSP's relationship with Columbia University secured me a special admissions interview, and they suggested that I attend a session of the Warrior-Scholar Project.

The Warrior Scholar Project is a nonprofit organization that aims at ease the transition of veterans from service to the classroom. During my week-long course hosted at Georgetown University, I sat in a seminar-sized classroom filled with veterans from the different branches. We received lectures from professors at the university, and were visited by notable guest speakers, including a former U.S. ambassador. I learned skills like how to navigate a long, difficult text, and the elements necessary to write a good essay. Outside of specific classroom skills, we discussed concerns we had about returning to school. We were anxious about being the oldest person in the classroom, and worried about performing well after so many years out of school. Our WSP mentors helped assuage my anxieties with their personal stories about transitioning.

Around the beginning of May, I received an email confirming that I had been accepted to Columbia University. I was in shock, but I was elated. During my admissions interview, I was told that there was a very large population of military veterans at Columbia. I reached out to the former president of Columbia's student-veteran group, Milvets, and asked him questions about the school, the post 9/11 GI Bill, and living in New York. Although he did not know me, he was happy to answer all my questions. I had not even started attending classes, but I already felt like part of the community.

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Finding jobs through eMentors

Veterans are leaving the military with advanced skills and extensive leadership experience, yet still not getting offer letters from their employers of choice. Where can they turn for guidance? Over 5,000 veterans have overcome tough transition challenges with the help of mentors found through a veteran-run Web-based mentoring program called the Veteran eMentor Program. This program has directly helped 42% of participating veteran protégés find jobs. In the words of the Program Director, Stefanie Goebel, "Web-based mentoring really works for military members who are located all over the world and often lack professional networks in the towns where they hope to settle."

The program is simple. Mentors and protégés start by completing an online profile. From there, protégés can search for and select a mentor (mentors can reach out to protégés, too). When the mentor accepts the protégé's invitation, the relationship begins. The mentoring pair then works together to establish goals and develop a plan of action. Mentors and protégés communicate primarily online, but may decide to talk on the phone or even meet in person.

The eMentor Program is made up of two programs for the two distinct audiences it serves: the Veteran eMentor Program and the Military Spouse eMentor Program. All transitioning military members, Veterans, and spouses are invited to join. Both programs are currently seeking volunteer career mentors. "We are always looking for volunteer mentors from all career fields to serve our ever-increasing population of protégés," says Stefanie. "Mentors don't have to be affiliated with the military and can assist even if they don't have time to mentor one-on-one. They can simply answer questions that protégés post or join in the website's discussion forum as time allows." Go to the website mentorheroes.org and select one of the "Join Now" buttons to get started as a mentor or a protégé. The program is free.

Veteran protégé Fawne, a post-9/11 veteran, was frustrated working only entry-level jobs since his separation from the Army a few years prior. He was tired of not being able to support his family in the way he had as a soldier. He knew he had to do something different. He joined Veteran eMentor and his mentor suggested he shift his focus to project management. Fawne agreed and was rewarded with a very special opportunity: "My mentor helped me

find a temporary position in my new career field as a project manager. Now I'm getting the experience I need to be competitive for a permanent project manager job."



Caitlin Brandl

Caitlin, a Coast Guard Officer veteran, was seeking work in Montana, but wasn't getting any response to the resumes she was submitting. An eMentor reached out to her and suggested she seek employment with the State of Montana. Caitlin loved the idea and after her mentor helped her revise her resume to fit a few open positions they found, she began to get interviews. Caitlin and her mentor conducted mock interviews on the phone and soon after, Caitlin was hired. "It was incredible and humbling to have that much support from someone I didn't know before. When I was offered my job, my mentor was the first person I called with the news and she celebrated with me."

A military spouse participant, Kaleah, found herself in the common position of seeking employment after a recent move. Her eMentor's willingness to share her professional network made all the difference to her job search. "In just a few short weeks, my mentor has been able to connect me with a valuable contact and help me identify a position she thought I was a fit for. I applied and just received word today that I got the job! I'm really grateful for the program. Without someone to help me navigate and put in a good word for me, I would have continued to struggle, especially since I don't have any contacts in the area."



Kaleah Williams

The eMentor Program is a partnership of the nonprofits AcademyWomen and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Hiring our Heroes. For more information, please contact the Program Manager, Erica Hemmy at hemmy@ementorprogram.org.

Source: *Hiring Our Heroes/U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation*

SUCCESS STORY

Rob Henderson

I enlisted in the Air Force immediately after high school and worked as an electronic warfare systems technician, repairing aircraft missile warning systems and updating countermeasure methods to jam infrared weapons and prevent them from assaulting military aircraft. I served for 8 years in locations including Germany and Kyrgyzstan.

After being honorably discharged, I knew I wanted to attend college, but wasn't sure where to begin. I decided to attend an academic workshop, hoping to sharpen my skills and train to be a student. During a writing lesson, I met Zach McDonald, who explained that he worked with an organization called Service to School. He told me how Service to School provided free application assistance to veterans, including help with essays and advice from a student-veteran mentor who had already succeeded in their transition. This program was exactly what I needed.

Zach connected me with an "undergraduate ambassador" named Mike Anderson. Mike was an Air Force veteran attending Stanford University, one of the best schools in the country. Mike told me about his experiences as a veteran at Stanford and encouraged me to aim high. He gave me tips on how to best shape my application if I wanted to gain admission into a highly selective school.

One worry I had was that I didn't have the "right" qualifications to enter a highly selective, prestigious university. I was not exactly a model student in high school. But over the course of serving in the military, I'd grown and matured. Mike and I discussed how skills like leadership, dedication, and teamwork, which I had developed in the Air Force, actually made me an attractive candidate for top schools. I just had to make sure the person I had become could shine through on a college application.

Over several months, I sent my Service to School mentor regular updates on my progress. Along the way, I found out which colleges had special admission programs for non-traditional students, practiced for a college interview, and received critiques of my draft application essays. The essays were particularly challenging, because it was hard to fit my unique background into a 600-word limit. However, after months of writing, getting feedback, and re-writing, my essays became concise and compelling. I submitted one of them to The New York Times, where it was published in May of this year.

I'm now a full-time student at Yale University, a member of the Ivy League, where I plan to major in either psychology or cognitive science. I want to learn about how trauma affects human behavior and how we can mitigate its effects. On campus, I've formed friendships with both traditional students and fellow veterans and it has become apparent to me that while veterans may come from different backgrounds than traditional undergraduates, the skills we learned in the military can help us succeed in the classroom and beyond.



IAVA: Connecting veterans with resources and community

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (www.IAVA.org) is the leading post-9/11 veteran empowerment organization (VEO) with the most diverse and rapidly growing membership in America. As a nonprofit founded in 2004 by Iraq War veteran Paul Rieckhoff, IAVA's mission is to connect, unite and empower post-9/11 veterans. Celebrating its 11th anniversary, IAVA has connected more than 1.2 million veterans with resources and community.

In 2015, IAVA celebrated an incredible milestone in serving more than 5,000 clients through our Rapid Response Referral Program (RRRP).

Since its inception in late 2012, IAVA's RRRP has helped veterans use their new GI Bill, find doctors and legal support, access emergency housing and financial assistance, partner with mentors for career guidance, connect to mental health treatment, and much more. RRRP is help without the hassle. It is confidential, responsive and always free.

In addition to a base of services in our New York City headquarters, there is now dedicated staff on the ground in California to meet the needs of veterans and their family

members. While financial support for the program is focused on these two states, IAVA never turns away anyone. Veterans can contact IAVA at anytime, as there is no need for an appointment, and all support can be provided over the phone.

RRRP is staffed by masters-level social workers and are either veterans themselves or trained in veteran cultural competency. VTM's spend an average of six hours with each client to make sure veterans' concerns are addressed.

Our transition managers help vets connect to resources for any issue they may be confronting and advocate on their behalf to ensure benefits are received. We partner with over 100 local and national "best in class" resources like PATH (People Assisting the Homeless), Operation Mend, Jericho Project, Valiant VA Claim Services and New York Legal Assistance Group.

If you are a veteran in need of support, please contact a RRRP case manager by calling 855-91-RAPID (855-917-2743), emailing transition@iava.org, or visiting www.IAVA.org/RRRP.

Source: *Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America*

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Transition and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families

By James Schmeling, Managing Director, Programs; Co-Founder, Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)

The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University focuses on the post-service life course of military veterans and their families. Importantly, this begins before transition, and ideally should start with informed decision-making. These decisions should include whether to pursue training or education, career preferences (both for the military member and the family member), informed decisions on places to live, and a general assessment of what will be important post-service along with the path to arrive at that goal.

To that end, IVMF has partnered over the past several years to do research on what works, and why, and to share that with military members and families before and during transition, and with veterans and their families after transition. In addition, we've partnered with stakeholders who serve military members and families in transition and with veterans and families after transition to help them understand what works and why, and help them achieve their goals.

We've also created programs to assist in transition, through training and education (Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV), Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (VWISE), Veteran Career Transition Program (VCTP), and Boots to Business, B2B: Reboot - vets.syr.edu/education), through informing on choices in careers, geography of choice and more.

We've helped establish coordinated service networks in several cities (NYServes in New York City; nycserves.org) and regions (NC-Serves in Metrolina North Carolina; ncserves.org), with more coming (AmericaServes in Pennsylvania and South Carolina). And we've just launched a new career and education project with the Schultz Family Foundation, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and business and industry partners called Onward to Opportunity, which is provided on bases, starting in September at Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Camp Pendleton, to military members before and during transition and to spouses anytime during their service.

Perhaps most important is that IVMF works with not only military members, families, and veterans, but also with those who will engage with them before, during, and after transition. Working with the private sector for careers and entrepreneurial opportunities (100,000 Jobs Mission, Hiring Our Heroes, Coalition for Veteran Owned Business), for education, or for community engagement, the IVMF strives to ensure that these organizations understand the great value veterans and their families bring. These activities and research provide them with insights into reasons some transitions may be challenging (e.g., skills transferability, language and style barriers) and the ways they can overcome those challenges (employee resource groups, training and education for hiring managers and recruiters), as well as de-stigmatizing concerns such as PTSD and TBI, to have access to a talent pool that's unparalleled and renews itself with every transition. Providing cultural competency to organizational actors creates environments that understand why veterans may want to work in their companies, and how to attract, retain, and promote the best talent.

IVMF engages with our stakeholders extensively through social media as do our programs team and community engagement team. Our research is published, including weekly research briefs that may assist those in transition (vets.syr.edu/research).

Our mission – “serving those who have served” – and the IVMF's commitment to social, economic, education and policy issues affecting veterans and their families post-service is paramount to our collective impact. Our staff, public and private partners, and funders passionately work together to empower our nation's veterans to realize their own American Dream – the same dream that they defended in service to all Americans– when they return home to their communities. To learn more, visit vets.syr.edu.



Photo provided by Delores Holloway

Angela Cody-Rouget is the founder and owner of Major Mom®, an organization developed to help individuals improve organizational skills.



Empowering military children during transitions

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) offers various professional development opportunities, both in-person and online. “Helping Military Children Find Their S.P.A.R.C.: Strength, Potential, Aspiration, Resourcefulness, Confidence” is available immediately in an online platform as well as frequently scheduled face-to-face trainings. This course explains the importance of Growth Mindset and uses strategies that can be applied with children and youth facing life challenges. More information on this and other valuable professional development training opportunities can be found at www.militarychild.org/training.

The MCEC also partners with many philanthropic organizations to help boost awareness of military and veteran-connected children; especially the children of transitioning Service members. Coming soon through a generous grant from the Bob Woodruff Foundation, the MCEC is developing a 6 hour course to enlighten service providers, educators, parents, and other caring adults on the challenges faced by transitioning family members. This course will be piloted in the fall of 2015 and will be widely available in early 2016.

Through parent trainer teams, consisting of primarily military spouses, the MCEC Parent to Parent™ program serves military families most affected by transition. Their goal is to empower the best “guidance counselors” (the parents) to be informed, positive, and proactive transition specialists at home by understanding the academic

as well as the social and emotional implications of school moves. These workshops help strengthen families and provide parents with the tools and proven practices that assure their children not only survive these tumultuous transitions, but thrive. These practical skills are even more essential for the family transitioning from the active duty lifestyle to the civilian sector. By giving parents proven tools and techniques to mentor their child(ren) throughout their educational experience, and offering concepts parents can use to help their children cope with uncertainty, Parent to Parent teams play a vital role in the communities they serve. Parent to Parent workshops are available through community-based teams and through one-day Parent Education Seminars.

Tell Me A Story® (TMAS) is an initiative created to empower military children by using literature and their own stories. TMAS is geared toward children ages 4-12. The mission of the TMAS program is to use literature as a tool for connecting parents and children. TMAS provides opportunities to open up discussion on difficult topics such as deployment, separation and moving. TMAS features the reading of a carefully selected book, and is followed by a facilitated discussion and a guided activity. Each family receives a copy of the book at the conclusion of the event.

Source: Military Child Education Coalition

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USO Transition 360 Alliance helps Service members plan for new future

For many transitioning Service members, leaving the military is riddled with a set of new firsts, from writing their first resume to looking for their first home and becoming part of a civilian community. According to the Department of Defense Transition to Veterans Program Office approximately 200,000 Service members separate from the military annually. These transitions will leave many people in our military communities wondering "what's next?" What does life beyond their uniform entail, and not just for themselves but for their families as well?

This year, the USO announced the formation of USO Transition 360 Alliance, an initiative designed to provide a 360 degree, holistic approach to successfully navigating the transition process.

By uniting the USO's global reach with the subject matter expertise of best-in-class partners Hire Heroes USA, Stronger Families, RP/6 and Comfort Crew for Military Kids we are able to help military families build a plan to support what we believe are the three key pillars to a successful transition: a career, a strong family, and a plan for the future.

Through our USO/Hire Heroes USA partnership, we are able to provide troops and their spouses with tools, resources and network opportunities to meet their career goals.

Additionally, the USO's partnerships with Stronger Families and Comfort Crew for Military Kids supports military families as they tackle transition challenges such as integration and relocation and helps families effectively com-

municate during this new stage of their lives. RP/6, a new partner for the USO, brings to the alliance the ability to connect service members with the networks within their local communities that have the resources to help them build a plan for their future. For example, a Service member who visits a USO-RP/6 center will be assigned a transition scout, who will evaluate his/her transition needs and connect them with the programs and services in their community that can best assist them. USO transition scouts are there for the Service member and his/her family throughout the transition process.

Military families who are within one year of their separation from the military and have previously taken part in a USO program or service are also eligible for USO



Soldier receives resume assistance from USO/Hire Heroes staff.

Transition 360 Alliance services.

After a career of deployments, relocations and new assignments, military families deserve America's support when they begin the transition process. For nearly 75 years, the USO has been by the side of our servicemen and

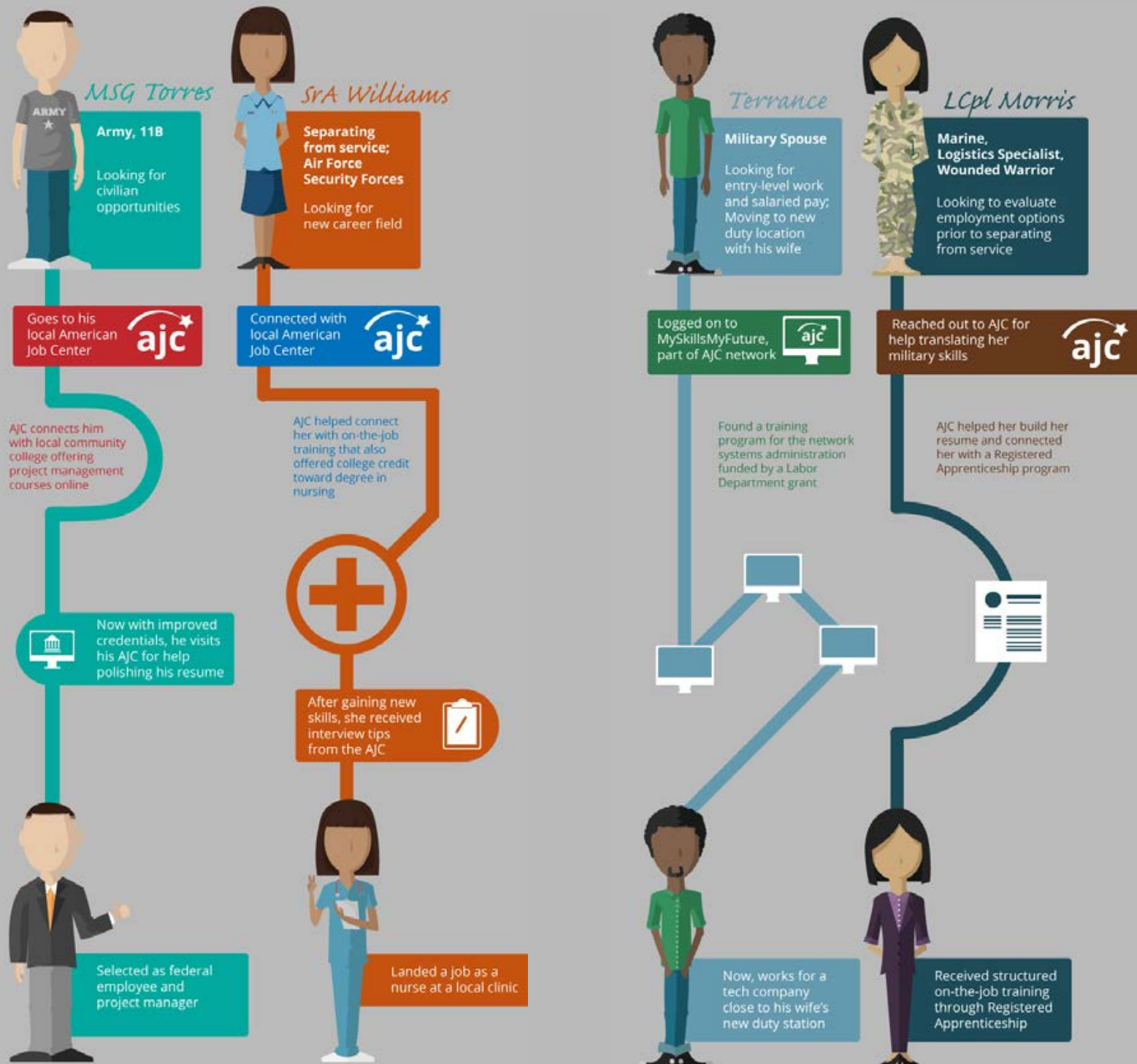
women and their families - from the moment they join the military, during deployments, recovery, and as they plan to transition from service. Visit us online at www.uso.org/360 to find out more about USO Transition 360 Alliance.

Source: United Service Organizations

WHAT'S YOUR PATH

Whether you are separating from service, retired and looking for work, or looking to upgrade your skills, the American Job Center network offers many paths to success. One of them could be right for you.

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Veterans' groups poised to help in VA claims process

By Ryan M. Gallucci

Whether you served four years or 40, odds are that you pushed yourself beyond your physical limit on more than one occasion because that's what the mission demanded. And now that you're getting out, you might notice that you're not exactly the same as you were when you first joined.

The good news is there are programs out there to help fix what the military broke. This is why service-connected disability benefits exist through the Department of Veterans Affairs. When VA grants a claim for service-connection, not only can VA compensate you for lost earnings potential, but VA also offers you access to health care for your service-connected conditions - conditions that private insurance companies don't like to cover, except for maybe a very steep fee.

To receive these benefits, you have to file a claim with VA. This is where accredited representatives from organizations like the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States can help. You may have learned about services like ours in your transition briefings, but you may be worried about what to expect.

Though you can file a VA claim all by yourself, the question is why would you? The VA claims process is complicated and requires meticulous attention to detail when completing the forms and identifying claimable conditions. This is where groups like the VFW help the most. We sit down with you one-on-one, review your military records, fill out the paperwork, and on some installations, we even file the paperwork on your behalf. We may also encourage you to get your personnel and medical records up to speed before you separate or retire, since your military records are the best way to document that a wound, illness or injury happened in service, and these records are nearly impossible to correct later on. You already have so much to worry about when getting out. This should be one less thing.

There is a misconception



that groups like the VFW are all volunteers who are just doing something nice in the hopes of recruiting more members to join the local post or chapter. The VFW service officers on military installations are highly-trained professional staff, accredited by VA to provide such services. VFW alone provides 80 hours of training and two proficiency tests each year to ensure that our reps are up to date on federal regulations, adept in handling personal information, and proficient in understanding health care terminology. By law, we are obligated to provide our services free of charge, and through our agreements with the military, we are prohibited from recruiting members to join.

Filing a VA claim is a responsible step to secure your future. Beyond care and compensation, a VA service-connected rating can serve as a gateway to other critical transitional benefits like priority of service at American Jobs Centers; federal hiring preference; vocational rehabilitation benefits; even set-aside small business contracts with the federal government.

The VFW, however, does understand that sometimes you still don't know if filing a claim is the right thing to do. If you have concerns about the claims process, or if you don't know whether or not you should file a claim, reach out to us. The VFW's representatives on military installations are all veterans who can relate to your transition experience and more importantly, we're here to help. To find the VFW's accredited on-base representatives, visit www.vfw.org/BDD.

Mr. Gallucci served with the Army's 4th Infantry Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is currently the VFW's deputy director of National Veterans Service.



Photo courtesy of VFW
Dawn Jirak, VFW assistant director for field operations, assists a service member and his spouse in preparing a VA claim at Joint Base Andrews.

The National Military Family Association: Together we're stronger

By Shannon Sebastian, Content Development Manager for the National Military Family Association

When a military member serves, their family serves, too. At the National Military Family Association, we urge our nation's leaders to keep military families at the forefront of their minds. How do we do this? Because we're a strong voice on the issues that matter, Congress looks to us to provide testimony on legislation impacting military families. We convey the needs of families, like yours, to those with the power to do something about it.

NMFA is there for transitioning military families, too. We know you've volunteered your life and your family has sacrificed through deployments, budget cuts, and our nation's longest war. At a time when military families should feel pride, honor, and accomplishment for completing a military career, you're facing uncertainty. And we're here to help.

Through our Operation Purple® programs, we offer ways for military families and children to reconnect. Our Operation Purple Camps are a place where military kids can spend time with their peers, who have experiences similar hardships—continued separations, frequent moves, and sometimes injury, separation, or retirement. Operation Purple Family Retreats helps families strengthen and renew their relationships after a deployment. And our Operation Purple Healing Adventures are family retreats designed specifically to help families dealing with injuries, including

PTSD. More than 55,000 kids and families have attended our Operation Purple programs.

Through a military career, we know it's common for military spouses to often put their own careers and ambitions on hold to support their Service member. NMFA's scholarship program helps spouses pursue everything from bachelor's degrees to Ph.D.s, and from yoga certifications to ESL classes. More than 3,000 military spouses have expanded their career options with the \$2.5 million in scholarships we've awarded.

Transitioning out of the military can sometimes leave families feeling like they've lost an identity they've known for so long. At NMFA, we value your perspective and time served, so we utilize retired Service members and military spouses, who care about military families, to make up the heart of our Association: our Volunteer Corps. Made up of over 200 Service members, spouses, parents, retirees, survivors, and veterans around the world, our volunteers keep an eye on local issues and concerns in their communities, and connect families with our support.

NMFA believes all military families, like yours, deserve programs and support that strengthen them, even after their transition to civilian life. Our association will continue to fight for these benefits and reflect the nation's respect for your service. Together we're stronger.

For more information on how NMFA can help your transitioning family, and to apply for any of our programs, please visit www.militaryfamily.org.

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Transitioning to the civilian world? Wounded Warrior Project can help

The change can be jarring. From a structured life that starts at oh-500 hours with a physical regimen, to having to push yourself to get out of bed, just to start the day. These anonymous quotes from wounded veterans who responded to the latest Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Annual Alumni Survey, tell the tale.

"The hardest thing for me is having that structure of order gone."

"For me it was the struggle with not having the structure and camaraderie that I had with my brothers in arms."

"Being submerged in a new workforce that doesn't have the same values."

"The transition from military to civilian life never discusses how different veterans and civilians are and how to interact."

More than 23,000 injured veterans answered the survey, making it the most statistically relevant sampling of this generation. Their responses help provide insight into the challenges wounded veterans face transitioning back into civilian life.

TOUGH TRANSITION

Adjusting to a different structure in the workplace can be difficult for some injured veterans, but even finding that new civilian job is its own challenge. Fewer than 50 percent of respondents from the 2015 WWP Annual Alumni Survey report being employed full-time.

Veterans Service Organizations like Wounded Warrior Project can help. WWP helps veterans in their



The Wounded Warrior Project offers bike rides to help Service members overcome physical, mental, or emotional wounds.

search for employment through several arenas. Warriors to Work® helps with resume and interview coaching, as well as networking opportunities. Warriors to Work can also help find employment opportunities with organizations that are more veteran-friendly, and works to inform potential employers about the benefits of hiring Service members. The program has helped nearly 2,500 wounded veterans find employment this year alone.

Warriors to Work is one of 20 free life-saving programs and services provided by WWP to help injured veterans on a daily basis. WWP's mission is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. The organiza-

tion's vision is to foster the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded servicemember's in our nation's history.

BEING A PART OF SOMETHING

Part of the transition for injured veterans is adjusting to civilian life. While in the military, Service members are part of a bigger mission and some jobs don't seem to share the same feeling.

Retired Corporal Corey Wellman transitioned out of the Marine Corps in 2013. He sums up the help of WWP in one sentence: "Wounded Warrior Project helps my family and I greatly by bringing

us in and allowing us to be part of something," Wellman said. Through gatherings and events, Wellman can talk with other military families. "That is something I needed."

SUPPORT THROUGH SHARED EXPERIENCES

The WWP Alumni program helps injured veterans become involved in their communities. Through gatherings and events, wounded Service members get to share their time with other veterans. This helps them realize they are not alone in their struggles, and it helps Service members understand they have brothers and sisters on the road to recovery, right in their city or town.

Transitioning to the civilian world can have another challenge – staying active. Not having the structure of PT (Physical Training) can lead some injured veterans to get out of shape. The WWP Physical Health and Wellness program helps create opportunities to exercise with fellow veterans. Soldier Ride® events, inclusive sports, and fitness classes can help get veterans back on track physically.

To read the full 2015 Annual Alumni Survey, go to woundedwarriorproject.org/survey.

Source: Rob Louis – Wounded Warrior Project, rlouis@woundedwarriorproject.org

Assistance for Veteran caregivers

Service members in transition are often leaving the military with wounds, illnesses, and injuries that will require ongoing care: Care that is frequently given at home by millions of family members, who are America's hidden heroes.

RAND estimates that there are 1.1 million caring for post-9/11 veterans. This selfless role can impose a substantial physical, emotional and financial toll on the caregiver, however, as they set aside their own career and life goals; military spouses forgo their own transition to the civilian workforce and parents take early retirement. These caregivers find themselves isolated as they selflessly provide care without compensation and often without sufficient knowledge of, or access to, available resources or a support network.

To address the increasingly critical need of these caregivers for their own "transition assistance," the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), in conjunction with the Military Caregiver Coalition of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, has created the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network (MVCN). The Network's core services, built on TAPS

20 years of the successful delivery of peer support to more than 50,000 military survivors, offers caregivers vetted access to three programs: peer mentors, peer support groups and a safe and secure online peer support community. Caregivers, and those who assist them, also have access to the MVCN Resource Library, Master Calendar and We Care Magazine.

"MVCN has turned into an invaluable resource for military caregivers, not only offering a secure way to share information with other caregivers, but for receiving support." – pre-9/11 caregiver

Recognized as an example of "sharing best practices" by the First Lady at the Council on Foundation's Veteran Philanthropy Exchange, TAPS and its partner military and veteran service organizations are working closely to ensure that those who care for the wounded, ill or injured in transition are supported where it's most needed — in their communities — by those who know most what is needed — their peers. For more information, go to www.milvetcaregivernetwork.org.

Source: Military and Veteran Caregiver Network

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Operation Homefront provides relief, resiliency, and support to transitioning military families

By John Pray, President & CEO
of Operation Homefront

After 13 years of war, almost every American knows about the challenges faced by our men and women in uniform. However, far fewer think about the challenges facing the growing number of Service members transitioning into civilian life. Since our founding shortly after 9/11, Operation Homefront has been focused on military families, offering a variety of short-term and critical assistance, long-term stability and recurring support programs specifically designed to meet the needs of families of Service members, veterans, and wounded warriors.

Transitioning Service members often find that their personal finances do not meet their families' needs. Even veteran families that are well prepared for the transition can be set back by an unexpected financial crisis like an emergency car repair or home issue. Operation Homefront's Emergency Financial Assistance Program aids military families coping with these issues and help meet unforeseen budget challenges. Payments are made in the form of grants, not loans, directly to service providers. Whether the need is to keep the lights on, help with the rent payment to keep a roof over their heads, or help with groceries to keep food on the table, the Emergency Assistance team at Operation Homefront is

there to provide support.

For wounded warriors undergoing rehabilitation as part of a medical separation from service, temporary housing challenges can be especially taxing. Injuries affect every member of a military family, and true recovery means that the entire family heals together. Operation Homefront's three transitional housing Villages – each located near a major military medical center – provide no-cost, fully furnished apartments to injured Service members and their families while they are receiving medical treatment or rehabilitation services, transitioning out of the Armed Services or waiting for approval of veterans' benefits.

The caregivers of wounded warriors also face tremendous challenges, often coping with a loved one who has been significantly changed by their service to our country. Our Hearts of Valor™ program honors the service and sacrifice of those who care for our nation's wounded, ill or injured warriors by providing a community of support. Post-9/11 caregivers receive access to our national in-person peer support groups which address the daily challenges of caregiving. Our annual all-expenses-paid caregiver retreats offer expert coaching and education on best practices in caring for wounded warriors. Caregivers also have access to one-on-one support from mental health professionals

who can provide up-to-date resources and local referrals.

For many military families served by Operation Homefront, the final step of their transition to civilian life is finding a permanent place to call home. Part of the American dream has always been owning a home. After helping to secure the freedoms all Americans enjoy, we want to help our warriors and their families realize their own American dreams. The Homes on the Homefront program provides veteran families with permanent, mortgage-free homes. Veteran families are placed in donated homes in communities where they have ties to assist them, and financial counseling by caring, highly-trained caseworkers ensures that they are prepared for the transition to home ownership. This program means generational change for many families, making life better for the children and grandchildren of our Service members.

These are just a few of the programs offered by Operation Homefront as we work to build strong, stable, and secure military families. With the help of thousands of volunteers and donors across America who want to show their commitment to those who serve, our programs provide relief, resiliency, and support to those who have worn our nation's uniform.



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Military OneSource Spouse Relocation and Transition Specialty Consultation

Are you a military spouse who is moving soon? Since Oct. 1, Military OneSource has offered free spouse relocation and transition specialty consultations to help military spouses navigate moving and transition-related challenges. These consultations are ideal for spouses unable to attend classes and those in need of flexible delivery options. Eligible spouses can call Military OneSource to schedule an appointment 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Military OneSource spouse relocation and transition specialty

consultants are familiar with the broad array of resources available through Military OneSource, and in their local communities. The consultant will also provide the spouses with a number of resources offered through Military OneSource, including education and career services, financial and tax consultation, non-medical counseling, and work/life consultations related to relocation.

Confidential help is available by calling 800-342-9647 or visiting Military OneSource.

Source: Military OneSource

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SUCCESS STORY

Jared Smith

I joined the Army a week after my eighteenth birthday, leaving behind a small town and a tumultuous high school career. After a few years—and a few deployments—I began to realize that after I took off my uniform for the last time, I wanted to get the best education possible. At the time, I knew little about college admissions, and especially admission to a top school.



Then, one day in a patrol base in Pre-Ranger, I met a young second lieutenant who was a Stanford graduate. Having worked in admissions after graduation and being admitted into a top institution himself, he knew the admissions process inside and out. We would talk about SATs and GPAs, community colleges and state schools, online schools and traditional institutions—but most of all, about how I could shape my educational future to be the one I dreamed of. I went from having no idea about how to get into a good school, to having a solid plan that had a chance of succeeding. After Ranger School, in empty conference rooms after overseas missions, I started studying for the SATs, intent on getting the best score I was truly capable of. I was accepted to the University of Oregon in 2014 and matriculated in the fall. But, the University of Oregon would only be my temporary home, as I knew that I wanted to transfer eventually.

The experience of having a mentor guiding me in my academic pursuits while in the military encouraged me to seek out help in the transfer process, and so I reached out to Service to School. They helped me translate my story—with all of its military jargon—into a narrative that allowed admissions officers to see what I could bring to their colleges. When the transfer admissions process ended this spring, I had offers from two of the top colleges in the country. Attending an Ivy League school seemed like an impossibility to me only a few years ago, but this fall I enrolled as a sophomore at Yale. I would not have been able to achieve this admissions success if not for the excellent advice I received from mentors who went through the process with me along the way.

Master it

Scholarships available for eligible veterans and military personnel

You've worked hard and climbed high. Now take your military experience and let our **innovative and affordable** graduate and undergraduate programs advance you to the top!

UT is a proud member of the Yellow Ribbon Program and offers generous scholarships and financial aid to supplement government funding. Get the most out of your Post-9/11 GI Bill while gaining valuable new skills and connections.

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From the battlefield to the classroom

The Warrior-Scholar Project offers free academic boot camps to veterans who are returning to college

Since 1944, the GI Bill has provided the financial support that has allowed enlisted military veterans to obtain a college degree. The benefits of the GI Bill can have transformational impact on not only today's post-9/11 veterans, but also on the estimated one million service members who will transition away from military service over the next five years.

However, successful transition from military service to a college campus can be extremely difficult. As older, non-traditional students, veterans often face not only academic challenges, but find that the social and cultural environment of a college campus is drastically different from that found in the military. All of these factors combine to make the highly demanding task of completing college even tougher for veterans.



WARRIOR-SCHOLAR PROJECT

Sadly, many vets are not adequately prepared for such a drastic change. Research has revealed that far too many military veterans fail to attain a bachelor's degree before their GI Bill runs out. According to a 2012 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, only 26.7% of post-9/11 GI Bill recipients reported the attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher before exhausting their education benefit.

The key to becoming a successful learner in a rigorous baccalau-



Enlisted Service members who are now Veterans attend a free boot camp to develop the skills to complete a four-year undergraduate program.

reate-level curriculum is not just learning to memorize and recite information, but also learning to analyze and critique. This is a vastly different form of learning from what enlisted veterans have experienced in high school or in their military training classes.

This is why military veterans who are returning to school need to first go back to boot camp.

The Warrior-Scholar Project (WSP) offers one- and two-week academic boot camps at leading universities across the country. These programs are offered during the summer months and are free of charge to military veterans who are returning to any two- or four-year college or university. Participants live in student dormitories on campus, dine in the campus dining hall, work daily with one-on-one tutors, and take customized classes from top academics such as Pulitzer Prize winner John Lewis

Gaddis (Yale) and former Ambassador Paul Russo (Georgetown).

The WSP boot camp curriculum is built around three pillars of support for the student veteran. These are (1) development of analytic "ninja" reading and college-level academic writing; (2) training in "tactical-level" academic skills such as note-taking, time management, study skills, academic research techniques, and test preparation; and (3) participation in discussion groups led by successful student veterans to address transitional issues and the social, emotional, and cultural challenges faced by most student veterans when they return to college. These three pillars combine to provide enlisted student veterans with the skills and confidence necessary to facilitate the transition from the military to college, increase graduation rates, and prepare student veterans to be leaders in the classroom.

The WSP experience doesn't end with the academic boot camp. The WSP staff continues to provide its Warrior-Scholar alumni with educational resources, support, and mentorship while they are in school.

The first WSP boot camp was held at Yale University in 2012 and has grown to a total of eleven campuses since then. Although the WSP has only been around for four summers, the results of the program have been stunning. Of the 251 alumni of the program, 100% of the student veterans who have begun the quest for a bachelor's degree are still in school, and the first WSP alumni to graduate are expected to do so in the spring of 2016.

To learn more, visit www.warrior-scholar.org.

Source: *The Warrior-Scholar Project*



Warrior-Scholars learn how to frame and develop their ideas in an academic context, think critically, and formulate an argument.

Attention Job Seeking Military Spouses!

Here you go again! So you're making another move with your military spouse and going back to "square one" in finding a new job in a new location. The Department of Labor has got you covered!

Step 1: Sign up and attend the Department of Labor's Employment Workshop on your installation.

This free workshop includes three days of classroom instruction that are specifically geared toward the mechanics of getting a good job. The DOL Employment Workshop Participant Guidebook and on-line curriculum can be located at www.dol.gov/vets/programs/tap.

Step 2: Contact your local American Job Center.

A military spouse who is unable to continue employment due to the Servicemember's permanent change of military station, or a military spouse who loses employment as a result of the spouse's discharge from the military, may be classified as a dislocated worker. Under this classification, a spouse may be eligible for free training and education opportunities through their local American Job Center (AJC).

With 2,500 AJC's nationwide, you will have access to a vast network of resources to address your personal employment and training needs. You can work one-on-one with a specialist to improve your resume, develop networking and interviewing skills, and connect with training and meaningful employment.

Go to www.servicelocator.org to find and contact your local AJC.

For more information visit www.dol.gov/vets #HireVETS #VETSLikeHer #VETSJobs #JoiningForces

Changing careers? Got you covered.

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