Dear transitioning service member,

Are you just beginning your military career, preparing to enter a leadership position or transitioning out of active duty soon? Regardless of where you are in your professional military career, it is never too early to start thinking and preparing for your post-military career and life. It doesn’t matter whether you intend to have a 10- or 20-year military career before you transition. Planning for your future does not negate or detract from your current commitment to a successful military career. Quite the opposite, early career planning helps you make thoughtful decisions about skill development, training and educational opportunities that will benefit both your military career and your future civilian career. In fact, research has found the earlier you start planning for your post-military life, the more successful you will be in achieving your goals. It will take dedicated time to plan your personalized goals, develop an action plan and identify career-planning resources and opportunities to assist you in carrying out this plan. All things considered, as a service member, you are skilled at planning, decision-making and putting in the hard work necessary to accomplish a mission!

The military services support this perspective of starting your planning early. Beginning in 2015, the military services began expanding transition preparation. Instead of scheduling transition preparation as an end of career event, the military services now embed career and transition planning elements throughout a service member’s military career — starting at the first permanent duty station.

So, now you know it’s never too early to start planning; where to start? Picking up this magazine is a great start! We’ve laid out this magazine in four sections to help you in developing your own personalized transition plan.

EDUCATION

If you plan to seek additional education or technical training, check out the education section. This section discusses how to access transition assistance information 24/7 through Joint Knowledge Online (‘Know Your Resources,’ see Page 4), as well as tips to consider before advancing your education (see “Transition Into Higher Education,” Page 5).

CAREER

If you plan to move directly into the civilian workforce, check out this section first. Articles in the career section discuss career-planning resources available to you and your family (for example, see “Top Tools for Your Transition,” Page 8), how your essential, non-technical skills gained in the military make you stand out (see “How Your Military Attributes Will Land You The Job,” on Page 13) and how to be more competitive when applying for federal government jobs (see ‘Where Are You Getting Your Federal Employment Information,’ on Page 15).

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

If you are interested in the possibility of starting your own business, check out the entrepreneurship section. See what resources and programs are available to assist you in starting a business (for example, see “Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship” and “Veterans in Agriculture,” Pages 22 and 30), and how even your spouse can get assistance in achieving their entrepreneurial goals (see “Achieve Goals,” on Page 21).

RESOURCES

And finally, for other helpful information, check out the resources section. See recommendations for creating a transition action plan to get you on the right path to success (see “Action Plan,” Page 32) and VA benefits available to you at every stage of your military career (see “Getting to Know the VA and your VA Benefits,” Page 34).

Of course, these pathways are not mutually exclusive. You may decide to further your education or technical skills, while also working or starting a business. Use the information in this magazine as a starting point and as a resource to plan the transition you want to achieve. For more information, services, resources, and recommendations, I recommend you visit www.DoDTAP.mil and then select your military service. I also recommend talking with your local installation’s transition office staff. They provide valuable transition support services and are available to personally assist you, as are many community-level support organizations. Take advantage of all the resources available to you and get started today!

By Karin Orvis, Ph.D.
Director, Transition to Veterans Program Office
KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

Access 24/7 transition assistance on Joint Knowledge Online

By Nancy Russell
Joint Staff J7 Joint Knowledge Online

In addition to classroom training, the Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success) Virtual Curriculum is available 24/7 on Joint Staff J7 Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) with 12 web-based courses, complete with tools and templates. These courses are accessible to you and your spouse with a CAC or user/password login. The online courses cover key issues and considerations for transition planning, financial planning, translating military experience and skills to the civilian sector, Veterans Affairs benefits, the Department of Labor employment workshop and development of an Individual Transition Plan. Optional training tracks include courses specifically created to help learn about accessing higher education, technical training or starting a business.

Transition GPS courses on JKO ensure accessibility for all service members and your family. It doesn’t replace schoolhouse transition classes, but it is unique in providing 24/7 access to training courses, tools and resources for integrated planning throughout the military life cycle. It also provides the opportunity to return and reuse support resources to update career planning and individual transition plans. The Transition GPS courses hosted on JKO contain resource documents that you can access through the Resource button while you are in the Transition GPS courses. These same resource documents are also available in your Announcements / Links tab on JKO, so you don’t have to be in a course just to access the resource files.

We recently asked U.S. Army veteran Jacqueem “JT” Spratley his thoughts on the online courses. “The best thing about TGPS online courses on JKO is that I can always revisit the curriculum at a later date on my own time,” JT said. “During my transition in 2015, the Army [TAP] program, ‘Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program’ (SFL-TAP), included a mandatory one-week course covering VA benefits, finances, employment and other transition tips and optional two-day workshops for finding technical training, how to leverage your GI Bill benefits for college and federal employment. At a later time, I can always revisit that same information and call the SFL-TAP center from sfl-tap.army.mil if I need further assistance. More veterans need to be aware of JKO and the amount of information available within these online courses,” he said. JT completed his degree in Information Technology and Management at Syracuse University upon his separation, where he supported the Student Veterans Organization as a web designer.

Courses on JKO at https://jkodirect.jten.mil
Search for “TGPS”

TRANSITIONING INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

Considerations for degree options, where to study, using your GI Bill and more

By Melinda Manyx
Transition to Veterans Program Office

After being accepted to Georgetown University’s McCourt School of Public Policy, Tech. Sgt. Collin Meisel was awarded the McCourt Scholars Scholarship, which includes full tuition, health insurance and a $10,000 stipend. Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force
WHAT TO STUDY?

The first item on your agenda: What do you want to study? Knowing that is of the utmost importance when planning to go to school. If you are interested and excited about what you are studying, it can make studying less of a chore and make you more likely to graduate on time.

Also, consider: How does this degree get me the job I want? The degree you are seeking must align with your desired career path. It will do you no good, or at least make the job search considerably more difficult, to get a degree in anthropology when you want to work in the world of business. Having the right degree chosen from the beginning increases your chances of graduating on time.

Having a plan and graduating on time increases your chances of graduating with little to no debt, meaning you can effectively use your GI Bill and not have student loan debt.

WHERE TO STUDY?

Some would say that where to study is just as important, if not more so, than what to study. It is increasingly important to consider where you want to go in relation to what you want to study.

Where you attend school is mostly about location. Are you looking to attend a school close to home? Maybe live with family? Choosing a school with little to no debt, meaning you can effectively use your GI Bill and not have student loan debt.

Military members wishing to continue their education can find that there are a variety of financial assistance programs to help fund their endeavors, such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill, In-state Tuition Assistance and more.

EXTRA CREDIT

To find out more, consider attending the Accessing Higher Education Track as part of your Transition GPS. Learn about achieving academic success, researching and comparing institutions, aligning education to career goals and financing higher education. Contact your local transition office or go to www.DoDTAP.mil.

If you have considered the above and have made up your mind about what you want to study and where you want to go, it’s time to apply. The easiest way is on the school’s website. Schools have made the process pretty simple and some even allow the use of the Common Application (commonapp.org). This is a website that allows you to fill out one application that can be sent to many different schools. Be aware, some schools still require a separate essay or additional documentation for admission. Most schools do have an application fee, but some schools will waive the fee for veterans who apply. Be sure to ask!

Apply on time, know the dates when documents are due to the school and have your application complete by the due date to be eligible for admission. It may take time for college transcripts, Advanced Placement scores, high school transcripts, etc. to reach the school, so plan accordingly.

As for the GI Bill, apply now and ensure you have the letter of eligibility to give to the school. You do not need to have been accepted or even know where you are going in order to apply for your GI Bill benefits. Do this early, as certain times of year may have a longer turnaround time for providing you the documentation necessary.

SO, THAT’S IT.

Contact your local transition office or go to www.DoDTAP.mil.
TOP TOOLS FOR YOUR TRANSITION

By the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service

Looking for the best resources to help plan your career or job search as you plan to transition to civilian life? The Department of Labor offers lots of helpful data in easy-to-use chunks, so you can quickly find what you are looking for. Whether in person at an American Job Center or online from www.veterans.gov or www.careeronestop.org, you can learn about different careers or connect with free training and resources to prepare for your next job.

Here are just some of the free tools available that can assist with your transition:

MATCH YOUR BACKGROUND TO DIFFERENT CAREERS

Military to Civilian Occupation Translator: Looking for civilian career fields that relate to your military work experience and training? Use this translator to find related careers and their typical duties, salaries and job outlook.

SkillsProfiler: Need to better understand what your skills are, and the careers that match them? This tool provides both, and generates a list of tasks related to any career you enter.

SEARCH FOR JOBS AND EMPLOYERS

Veterans Job Finder: Ready to put your military experience to work? Find job postings across the U.S. that relate to your military job title, skills, and training.

BusinessFinder: Ready to reach out to employers before you post jobs? Use the BusinessFinder to target businesses that may be hiring in your field.

LEARN ABOUT CAREERS YOU MIGHT WANT TO WORK IN

InterestAssessment: What careers best match your interests? This 30-question assessment takes less than five minutes to complete and shows you a list of careers that might be a great fit for you. From there, learn more about careers: whether they’re in demand, how much they pay, how much school you might need and what you might do in a typical day.

OccupationalProfile: Need to know how much you could earn, how much training is needed, what tasks are required, employer demand and other details about a career? There is also data available on nearly 900 occupations — be sure to check it out!

LicenseFinder: Does a career require a license in your state? Or in any of the 50 states? Find out, and get contact information for state agencies that oversee licensing to learn more.

SalaryKeeper: How much do different occupations pay? Find local, state and national median wages for any of nearly 900 occupations.

FIND EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING CONNECTIONS

ApprenticeshipFinder: Want to train on-the-job for a skilled profession and earn wages as you do? Locate an apprenticeship field office in your state for contacts to help you get started.

CertificationFinder: Which professional certifications are available in your field? How can you earn them? Also learn which certifications are in highest demand by employers.

LocalTrainingFinder: Where are the schools and training programs in your area? Find the best fit for you.

SHARPEN YOUR JOB SEARCH

ResumeGuide: Time to pull a resume together, or update your current one? Create the right resume for your situation using tips from the ResumeGuide, and learn how to market your resume and yourself.

LocalHelp: Wish you had local services to help in your job search? You can find your closest American Job Centers and other workforce services in your neighborhood and across the country. To find one closest to you, visit www.veterans.gov.

GET THE RESOURCES

By the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service

Did you know that apprenticeship programs allow veterans to learn a new trade while using your GI Bill benefits to receive a tax-free monthly stipend? So what other benefits are there for you to explore an apprenticeship program?

Here are our top 5 answers:

• A paycheck from day one, guaranteed to increase over time as you learn new skills.
• Hands-on career training in a wide selection of programs, such as health care, construction, information technology and geospatial careers.
• An education and the potential to earn college credit, even an associate or bachelor’s degree, in many cases paid for by your employer.
• A career once you complete your apprenticeship, you will be on your way to a successful long-term career with a competitive salary, and little or no educational debt.
• National industry certification upon graduation from a career training program and can take that certification anywhere in the United States.

The value of an apprenticeship program

Apprentices earn an average starting wage of $60,000 per year.

For more information, access our online toolkit at: https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/toolkit.htm. Learn more from our www.dol.gov website.
HOW TO WRITE A POST-MILITARY COVER LETTER

By Kathryn Abrahamsen
G.I. Jobs

Writing a cover letter is hard enough without having to try to convert your military life into civilian terms. It can be tough, but G.I. Jobs has a few tips on how to help you write a post-military cover letter to land you the job you want.

CONNECTING

The first aspect to focus on is making sure there is a connection. The military is a whole different world compared to that of civilian professionalism. It is important to choose words carefully in order to avoid a language barrier.

For example, when referencing an experience involving teamwork, be sure to say something along the lines of “my team” instead of “platoon.” There are many examples to pull from when relating the military to work experience. It’s just a matter of explaining it to an employer.

When discussing working together as a team, the military is a prime example of teamwork and listening to one another in order to survive. In the workforce, teamwork is also important to make sure the company as a whole is the best it can be. Attention to detail demonstrates your level of passion for the position to which you are applying.

RESEARCH

In addition, you can treat how you write as if you’re preparing a briefing. Research details of the company to know all that it offers. Determine where you would like to be placed, how you can see yourself growing within the company and why you want the position.

Making sure all aspects are grasped will lead to a well thought-out cover letter that displays your dedication and commitment to the employer. Employers are always impressed when you are able to demonstrate your understanding of the company and the work that they do. It shows a level of care and concern, meaning it is a position you truly want.

BE UNIQUE

Try your best to stand out. Companies get hundreds of cover letters daily and most have the same type of experience in the workforce. Try to draw from your personal experiences as well as professional. Reference an encounter from your military days that demonstrates teamwork or leadership.

In many cases, during an interview, an employer will ask about how you deal with various situations. Adding this reference in your cover letter will help them realize that you are experienced, driven and the best choice for the position. Approach it with the confidence that they would be crazy not to hire you.

This article originally appeared on GIJobs.com.
Because of their military training, veterans possess the physical and mental characteristics to set themselves apart from prospective job applicants. These military attributes will help you land the job you want, so be sure to stress them in your resume and interviews.

**TEAM PLAYER MENTALITY**
There is no "every man for himself" attitude in the military, and each person is ready to take the responsibility of taking care of someone else. A team player is just what an employer needs and wants to get the job done.

**STRONG WORK ETHIC**
Veterans are committed to getting the job done after working long hours in different environmental conditions and are willing to serve others before considering their own needs, so they quickly develop a strong work ethic. In businesses or organizations that have built their reputation on solid work values, the addition of a veteran to the team will not only be a boost in productivity but also in morale.

**AT EASE WITH THE DRESS CODE**
Wearing a military uniform is not necessary for a veteran when applying for a job, but don't think that a nice shirt and a pair of jeans will fit the bill either. A suit for men and skirt or dress slacks for women is necessary to be dressed for job success.

**TENACIOUS PROBLEM-SOLVERS**
Veterans are constantly put to the test and need to figure out quickly how to solve a problem to reach a goal, especially on the battlefield. These characteristics will serve them well as they start their journey on a successful civilian career. Employers will appreciate veterans’ problem-solving skills and tenacity as they apply them to the company’s goals.

**ABILITY TO PERFORM WELL UNDER PRESSURE**
An employer is searching for an employee who can tackle a problem without cracking under the stress. Military service comes with its share of stressful situations that no civilian could ever say has been part of their daily lives. Veterans are equipped to deal with anything that comes their way. They possess strong time-management skills and waste no time ensuring the job is done right.

**TRAINING, TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION**
Employers want employees who can hit the ground running without a lot of time in training and education. When serving in the military, veterans are exposed to technology and education that develops business and management skills that can be beneficial in a civilian environment.

**DEDICATION**
According to the experts at America’s Job Exchange, employers will realize how committed and dedicated a veteran is to getting the job done because of their years providing military service. Veterans should highlight what attributes he or she developed during their service that can be matched to the job requirements.

**LEADERSHIP**
Military service builds and maintains leadership standards that a veteran can utilize in a civilian career. Taking a lead on a new project or working with a team to develop project goals will be an easy task for a veteran, who understands the role and responsibilities of being a leader.
Employment with foreign government requires official approval

By Catherine Schmanski

Transition to Veterans Program Office

Considering working for or consulting with a foreign government after transitioning to civilian life? Working for a foreign government as a civilian — in any capacity — without congressional approval beforehand is prohibited. Congress delegated the approval authority to each Service Secretary and the Secretary of State. Without that official authority, you’re putting your military retirement pay at risk.

Known as the Emoluments Clause, retired military personnel are forbidden from receiving any type of compensation from foreign governments without the proper permissions. Compensation goes beyond just employment to include consulting fees and gifts. Therefore, before accepting any type of employment from a foreign government (contractors and subcontractors included), retired military personnel should contact an ethics attorney to discuss any potential implications.

Each service has an office where service members can learn and understand federal employment through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Feds Hire Vets (FHV) website? The U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Veterans Services office designed a computer-based Federal Employment Training module to ensure transitioning service members and eligible family members can learn and understand federal employment through Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) as part of the TAP Virtual Curriculum. In addition to providing a customized Action Plan, the “Continuing Your Service Through Federal Employment” course can also illustrate why federal employment may be a viable option.

Many transitioning service members find outstanding career opportunities within federal government agencies. There are many federal agencies besides the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security that are looking for your skills and expertise. This course will give you the information necessary to evaluate your options as you pursue federal employment.

Federal Employment Training: What’s involved?

Find Out if Federal Employment is for You: This section provides an overview of federal employment.

Types of Federal Jobs: Identify careers in the federal government that you may not have thought were available.

Hiring Advantages for Members of the Military Community: Discusses eligibility for Veterans’ Preference and special hiring authorities that you may be eligible for.

Decoding the USAJOBS Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA): Looks at how to identify critical elements in a job announcement and how to address them. Explains how to use USAJOBS to explore federal employment opportunities.

Get an advantage by using www.FedsHireVets.gov: Identifies different resources that can be used to assist with federal employment opportunities; assists with identifying eligibility for Veterans’ Preference and Special Veterans Hiring Authorities; and provides information for family members.

The federal training module is a complementary tool to the Department of Labor’s employment workshop for transitioning service members. Those participants interested in federal employment are directed to the Federal Employment Training module on JKO for a deeper dive into the information.

Recognizing that veterans discharged prior to the release of the module could benefit from the training, OPM, through the Feds Hire Vets portal gives them an opportunity to “master the art” of the federal employment process as well. It is available for any interested party under the Job Seekers/Veterans page on the Feds Hire Vets website.

Transitioning service members and veterans often rely on services provided through the DoD Transition Assistance Program, Veteran Service Organizations and other organizations for information on benefits, relocation and other assistance.

These services are second to none, and are certainly invaluable in providing guidance, resources and information. However, locating accurate and consistent federal employment information, despite open access to many public sources, can often be a challenge. As a result, veteran job seekers that use inaccurate or inconsistent information run the risk of missing out on federal employment opportunities.

The OPM Veterans Services Office works to manage expectations for transitioning service members seeking federal positions. We believe that leveraging the veterans training employment module and the www.FedsHireVets.gov website will serve as the primary tools for you to discover and understand important veteran federal hiring information directly from the source.

Our goal is to eliminate uncertainty and add confidence. The combination and utilization of authoritative, designated resources provide the credibility and accuracy needed for a successful job search.
Arizona Public Service supports its veteran employees through the VETRN employee resource group, for which it was recognized as a 2014 Department of Energy partner with utilities to train and support transitioning service members. Utilities want to operate as premier employers for the veteran community and are establishing new retention and professional development opportunities to keep their veteran employees growing and serving for life.

In October 2016, the DOE, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Veterans Administration (VA), the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) and five of the leading energy trade associations launched Veterans in Energy (VIE), a national organization that will provide transition, retention and professional development support to the growing population of military veterans who have chosen energy careers. VIE is designed to be a central platform for energy companies to learn and share “best practices” for recruiting, retaining and supporting veteran employees. For the individual veteran, an energy professional, Veterans in Energy will provide opportunities for outreach, networking and mentoring, recognizing the unique bond of military service and rewarding leadership with opportunities to advance in an energy career.

It’s not altruistic. In 2005, a national survey revealed that nearly half of utility personnel would retire within the decade, leaving critical technical and management gaps in America’s energy infrastructure. Recruiting became a priority. In 2006, the DOE, DOL and energy industry partners established CEWD, a nationwide network of state chapters focused on providing training and recruiting technically skilled young people into the industry, both for entry and mid-level high-demand jobs.

Then as now, veterans were a critical pool of ideal workforce talent for utility and gas companies. CEWD created the Troops to Energy Jobs program (www.troopstoenergy-jobs.com) to specialize and focus on valuable veteran job seekers. Troops to Energy Jobs provides training pathways and advice to the military job seeker, helps find resources to support education, translates military occupational codes (MOC) to civilian terminology and hosts job boards listing both open positions and a resume database service for the veteran. Utility members of CEWD receive detailed tools for recruiting veterans and guidance in creating internal employee resource groups to support their veteran employees and their families once hired.

These efforts brought many veterans in to the energy industry. With approximately 200,000 troops transitioning from active duty to veterans status each year, recruiting remains a crucial focus for the utility industry, which still continues to face challenges in finding sufficient skilled workers to fill gaps left by an aging workforce in management, field operations and more.

Keeping the talented veterans already serving within their companies now takes equal billing. In October 2016, VIE was born. Founding companies worked diligently to create a strong foundation for VIE as a volunteer-led national organization. Please check our website, veteransenergy.org, for updates, resource and events, including information on our annual Veterans in Energy forum. To learn more about the DOE Jobs Strategy Council’s public-private partnership with the energy and utility sector to hire veterans, which offers a platform of energy professions to veterans and transitioning service members, visit www.energy.gov or Veterans in Energy: veteransenergy.org.

Veterans in Energy founding members
- The Department of Energy
- Edison Electric Institute
- American Gas Association
- National Rural Electric Co-op Association
- American Public Power Association
- Nuclear Energy Institute
- Center for Energy Workforce Development
- Many individual gas and electric companies

Visit veteransenergy.org/our-sponsors to learn more.

CAREER

ENERGY INDUSTRY VALUES

THE VETERAN

Department of Energy partners with utilities to train and support transitioning service members.
Recently, a technical sergeant who was going through the medical separation process attended the Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success) courses on Los Angeles Air Force Base. Feelings of an uncertain future loomed, and the stress of learning how to navigate the civilian job market seemed daunting.

During the transition classes, questions arose: “What are the salary expectations?” “How long is the hiring process?” “What are the medical benefits for my family?” “How do I make an effective resume?” This situation is very common to transitioning service members.

All of the aspects of finding their next career can cause stress on the service member and their family. TAP Transition GPS courses were created to help alleviate the stress of the unknown, but at Los Angeles AFB we went a step further by capitalizing on special partnerships. At every Transition GPS class, Air Force Community Readiness Consultants (CRCs) teach the benefits of the American Job Centers (AJC). Starting with the Pre-separation Counseling workshop, to the five-day Transition GPS class and finishing with the Career Readiness Standards deliverable Department of Labor (DOL) Gold Card in the final exit counseling (Capstone), the AJCs are emphasized as the go-to resource for employment and training. These centers are a one-stop shop for newly transitioned veterans who are looking for employment opportunities. Since the AJCs are so interwoven with the transition process, how to best navigate the civilian job market from the hiring manager’s perspective. The tools and information help them plan and prepare to interact with companies once they are ready to apply for positions.

After the employer panel, the technical sergeant went to the Airman & Family Readiness Center to review his resume with the workforce enhancement team. After working hand in hand with the transition team, he received three job offers before leaving military service.

Your success is the happy ending that transition teams want to hear. This is just one of many success stories this partnership has afforded the men and women at Los Angeles AFB.
Service members receive resume help from employment specialists during a Hiring Our Heroes Transition Summit on Wheeler Army Airfield. Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Defense

Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) strives to help transitioning service members, veterans and military spouses by providing information, resources and tools to help in their search for employment in civilian life. Each year, HOH hosts several types of events for these audiences all over the country. I had the opportunity to attend HOH’s Transition Summit in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and learned first-hand about the information and professional assistance that service members and veterans have access to at these events.

As Marnie Holder, the Director of Transition Summits and Virtual Events for HOH, explained, “Transition Summits are designed to introduce active duty service members, military spouses and veterans to the vast array of resources available as they pursue meaningful employment and challenging careers beyond their service to the nation.”

So, if you’re lucky enough to be close to an installation hosting a summit, here are a few important things you will learn:

1. **Skills learned in the military are very valuable to employers.** Don’t under estimate the value of essential non-technical skills such as handling work stress, persistence, reliability and being a team player. Many companies pride themselves in hiring veterans knowing they embody these skills. However, companies don’t necessarily care about your rank, but about your overall value, and the skills and attributes that veterans have ingrained in them while serving.

2. **Tons of resume tips.** Everyone at the transition summit is going to have good advice for building your resume. The hiring fair is a great place to ask people to review your resume — everyone there wants you to succeed, it’s considered a “safe space.” Additionally, people will know and understand how resumes for the federal government are different and help you to build both.

3. **How to network.** There are already more people in your network than you may realize. Learn as much as possible about networking and LinkedIn and utilize both to their full potential. It’s not always what you know, but who you know that can land you a job — or at least a job interview.

4. **You are not your military occupational code (MOC).** Many of the workshops provided at the Transition Summit and the companies attending the hiring fair make it clear that they don’t only hire veterans with a specific MOC — some of their programs provide the necessary training to work at their company. Therefore, companies are interested in you and all service members and often spouses too. Though if you wish to continue similar work that you did while in the military, many companies will also know which MOC skills match up with the positions they are looking to fill.

5. **Transition is a family affair.** From where you decide to move, to what type of job you look for, your family is involved from day one. Families are able to attend workshops as well. In fact, there was an entire seminar dedicated to the job-search process for military spouses.

6. **Transition is a lengthy process.** There are a lot of moving parts when it comes to transitioning out of the military, but the earlier you start your preparation, the smoother it will be.

7. **Your transition is what you put into it.** HOH Transition Summits put tools and information directly into service member’s hands. As Holder put it, “The intent is to inspire and encourage each job-seeker to become the commander of their own destiny.”

Hiring Our Heroes is part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Their event schedule and more information can be found on their website: https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes.

**How to network:**

There are already more people in your network than you may realize. Learn as much as possible about networking and LinkedIn and utilize both to their full potential. It’s not always what you know, but who you know that can land you a job — or at least a job interview.

**Transition is a lengthy process:**

There are a lot of moving parts when it comes to transitioning out of the military, but the earlier you start your preparation, the smoother it will be.

**Your transition is what you put into it:**

HOH Transition Summits put tools and information directly into service member’s hands. As Holder put it, “The intent is to inspire and encourage each job-seeker to become the commander of their own destiny.”

Hiring Our Heroes is part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Their event schedule and more information can be found on their website: https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

22

23

Executive

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23

Entrepreneurship

23
VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS IMPACT

MILLION VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, AND MILITARY SPOUSES

50,000 VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS

The U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Office of Veterans Business Development is proud to announce that 50,000 service member entrepreneurs and military spouses have participated in the SBA’s Boots to Business Program since the program began in 2012. The 50,000th graduate was a service member at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kansas.

In the four years since the program began, Boots to Business has provided entrepreneurship training programs in more than 165 military installations and military communities. Graduates of the program are 53 percent more likely to start a business, and 91 percent of those new businesses remain in operation one year later. Boots to Business has launched the entrepreneurial careers of numerous service members, veterans and military spouses, such as:

- **Michael and Kelly Stack, Bold Mariner Brewing Company:** Leveraged assistance from their local VBOC to secure an SBA-backed loan to start a brewing company with his wife, Kerry.
- **Torrance Hart, Teak & Twine:** Built on the Boots to Business training, and counseling from her local VBOC to start a successful e-commerce business when she left the Air Force.
- **Tony Turin, Mt. Hood Eye Care:** Attended a Boots to Business workshop to learn the fundamentals of opening an optometry business with his wife, Kim. His business plan received a $15,000 grant from “Citi Serves,” a Citicorp bank program that supports the greater veterans community.
- **Thom Bosch, Veteran Solar Systems:** Contacted a local VBOC and attended a Reboot class to find resources for his existing solar panel business. Service members, wishing to participate in Boots to Business should contact their installation’s Transition Assistance Program (TAP) office to learn more, or visit the website at www.sba.gov/bootsbusiness.

To learn more about National Veterans Small Business Week events, courses and resources built to support your entrepreneurial success, visit www.sba.gov/ovbd.

* All data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Survey of Business Owners (SBO) - Survey Results: 2012; https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2012/econ/2012-sbo.html
* $14 trillion. 6
* Rounded from exact amounts as follows: Wholesale trade - $216,776,812; Retail trade - $222,158,370; Manufacturing - $140,718,703; Construction - $115,102,894

Produced and distributed by SBA’s Office of Veteran Business Development
**The Potential Future for Veteran Business Ownership**

If Post-9/11 veterans — approximately 3.6 million — started businesses at rates similar to those of WWII, Korean War, or Vietnam veterans, it would equate to the creation of:

- *WWII veterans:* 1.8M companies, 3.4M jobs
- *Korean War veterans:* 1.4M companies, 2.9M jobs
- *Vietnam War veterans:* 1.2M companies, 1.2M jobs

**Veterans Who Have at One Time Owned & Operated a Business**

- *WWII veterans:* 3.6M jobs
- *Korean War veterans:* 2.9M jobs
- *Vietnam War veterans:* 3.4M jobs
- *Post-9/11 veterans:* 4.5% of 3.6M

**Where Veteran-Owned Businesses Operate**

- **Home-Based:**
  - *Veteran-owned:* 57% (2012)
  - Non-veteran-owned: 43%

**Who Are These Veteran Business Owners?**

**Veteran business owners represent an aging population.**

- Age Distribution:
  - WWII veterans: 74% aged 55 or older
  - Korean War veterans: 11.7% under 45
  - Vietnam War veterans: 3.4% under 35

**Capital Startup or Acquisition**

- **Primary Function within the Business:**
  - Services/Good Production: 59.5%
  - Financial Control: 55%
  - Founded or Started: 67.9%

**How Owners Spend Their Time**

- **Primary Function within the Business:**
  - Services/Good Production: 59.5%
  - Financial Control: 55%
  - Founded or Started: 67.9%

**How They Began**

- **Veteran-owned:**
  - Founded or Started: 85.3%
  - Purchased: 10.8%
  - Invented, received as a gift, or transferred: 4.5%

**Veterans Who Have at One Time Owned & Operated a Business**

- *WWII veterans:* 49.7%
- *Korean War veterans:* 40.1%
- *Vietnam War veterans:* 33.3%
- *Post-9/11 veterans:* 4.5%

**ARE VETERANS MORE LIKELY TO BE BUSINESS OWNERS? YES.**

- Veterans: 15.2%
- Non-veterans: 35.7%

**Top Reasons For Cessation**

- Retirement: 30.0%
- Injury, illness, death: 22.0%
- Lack of capital, cash flow, sales: 14.8%
- One-time event, sold or started business: 15.1%

**Produced and distributed by SBA’s Office of Business Development**

**Veteran-owned businesses represent an aging population.**

In 2012:

- 74% aged 55 or older
- 11.7% under 45
- 3.4% under 35

**Experience**

- Of veterans previously owned a business or were self-employed: 42.4%
- Of non-veterans previously owned a business or were self-employed: 35.7%

**Women-Owned**

- Of veteran-owned businesses are owned by women: 15.2%
VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS ASSISTANCE
Starting a business doesn’t have to be overwhelming. Learn how the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) can help you launch the veteran-owned business of your dreams.

WHAT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE

Who can access support

VETERANS (all eras)
SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS
MILITARY SPOUSES
SERVICE MEMBERS

Active Duty
National Guard / Reserves
Transitioning Service Members

VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS
The entrepreneurial one-stop shop
A nationwide network offers transition assistance through Boots to Business, training and workshops, one-on-one counseling and other partner referrals.

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

VETE RS INSTITUTE FOR PROCUREMENT (VIP)
The 3-day intensive government contracting workshop
On average, VIP graduates—VOSB and SDVOSB leaders—increase their business revenue by 53% within the first year after course completion.

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

WOMEN VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (WVETP)
Entrepreneurial training for women veterans, women servicemembers, and women military spouses/partners
Offered in a variety of program formats through partnerships with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Bunker Labs, and Lift Fund.

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (SDVETP)
Entrepreneurial training for service-disabled veterans as they start or grow a business
Offered in a variety of program formats through partnerships with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Riata Center for Entrepreneurship, St. Joseph’s University and Dog Tag Inc.

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

Eligibility:

CAPITAL ACCESS FOR VETERAN BUSINESS OWNERS

Through SBA, service members, veterans and military spouses looking to start, purchase or grow a business can:

Receive free counseling, training and education
Gain access to loan guarantees, disaster relief and capital
Leverage procurement and an extensive network of resource partners

3Ms FOR #MYVETBIZ: MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE, MONEY & MARKET OPPORTUNITY

STARTUP
SUPPORT
GROW

Microloan Program
SBA’s Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan.

In 2016 alone, lenders used the SBA’s 7a and 504 loan programs to make 3,535 loans—more than $1.35 billion went to veteran-owned businesses.

MREIDL Program

7(a) and 504 Loan Programs

Service members, veterans and military spouses looking to start, purchase or grow a business can:

Over 200,000 VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS AND MILITARY SPOUSES
connect with the SBA’s small business resources each year.

Microloan Program

Over 200,000 VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS AND MILITARY SPOUSES
connect with the SBA’s small business resources each year.

Join the ranks of the next great generation of Veteran business owners today. Visit www.sba.gov/ovbd to learn more.

1 SBA’s MREIDL is available in the event where the business is unable to meet necessary operating expenses due to an essential employee being called up to active duty in his/her role as a military Reservist or National Guard missionary.


3 Veteran-owned small business (VOSB) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
A career in farming can translate into a fruitful post-service career

By Stefanie Pidgeon
U.S. Department of Agriculture

After spending 14 years in the Air Force, with a break between for school, Angela Mulder felt burnt out. She left the service and took time off from work, unsure of what to do next. When it was time to return to the workforce she didn’t want to return to a desk job.

“I knew I had skills to contribute,” said Mulder. “When I realized I could learn to farm organically it was like something clicked on for me. I now have a mission, which makes me feel like I want to be part of society again.”

Mulder, who first joined the Air Force on active duty working in contracting and then transitioned to a job as a Medical Laboratory Technician in the Air Force Reserve, now works with Vets on the Farm. This is a program with the Spokane Conservation District and one of many programs and initiatives across the country helping military veterans learn more about farming and agriculture.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a number of programs and incentives to help military veterans transition, whether it be to a career at USDA, education in agriculture or tools and support for setting up and running a farm or business.

“At USDA, we’re focused on helping veterans become farmers. Currently, more than 7.3 percent of the USDA workforce is veterans. With more than 2,100 county offices across the country, USDA has a variety of job opportunities for veterans. Currently, more than 13 percent of the USDA workforce is veterans. With more than 2,100 county offices across the country, USDA has a variety of job opportunities for veterans. Regardless of the career path veterans choose, Mulder recommends volunteering and finding ways to be engaged in your community.”

“Be willing to show up and work hard. Volunteer, take a course or look at local colleges that have degrees in landscape management, greenhouse management or horticulture — all of these are a great way to start,” Mulder said.

“USDA is here to help. Mongolia is dedicated to hiring veterans. We also hire veterans through the Pathways Program,” said Alston. “We’re always looking to expand our talent pool and see veterans be turned around and used to run a farm. It’s basic science.”

Regardless of the career path veterans choose, Mulder recommends volunteering and finding ways to be engaged in your community.

“Be willing to show up and work hard. Volunteer, take a course or look at local colleges that have degrees in landscape management, greenhouse management or horticulture — all of these are a great way to start,” Mulder said.

VETERANS IN AGRICULTURE

A career in farming can translate into a fruitful post-service career

By Stefanie Pidgeon
U.S. Department of Agriculture

After spending 14 years in the Air Force, with a break between for school, Angela Mulder felt burnt out. She left the service and took time off from work, unsure of what to do next. When it was time to return to the workforce she didn’t want to return to a desk job.

“I knew I had skills to contribute,” said Mulder. “When I realized I could learn to farm organically it was like something clicked on for me. I now have a mission, which makes me feel like I want to be part of society again.”

Mulder, who first joined the Air Force on active duty working in contracting and then transitioned to a job as a Medical Laboratory Technician in the Air Force Reserve, now works with Vets on the Farm. This is a program with the Spokane Conservation District and one of many programs and initiatives across the country helping military veterans learn more about farming and agriculture.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a number of programs and incentives to help military veterans transition, whether it be to a career at USDA, education in agriculture or tools and support for setting up and running a farm or business.

“At USDA, we’re focused on helping veterans become farmers. Currently, more than 7.3 percent of the USDA workforce is veterans. With more than 2,100 county offices across the country, USDA has a variety of job opportunities for veterans. Regardless of the career path veterans choose, Mulder recommends volunteering and finding ways to be engaged in your community.”

“Be willing to show up and work hard. Volunteer, take a course or look at local colleges that have degrees in landscape management, greenhouse management or horticulture — all of these are a great way to start,” Mulder said.

“USDA is here to help. Mongolia is dedicated to hiring veterans. We also hire veterans through the Pathways Program,” said Alston. “We’re always looking to expand our talent pool and see veterans be turned around and used to run a farm. It’s basic science.”

Regardless of the career path veterans choose, Mulder recommends volunteering and finding ways to be engaged in your community.

“Be willing to show up and work hard. Volunteer, take a course or look at local colleges that have degrees in landscape management, greenhouse management or horticulture — all of these are a great way to start,” Mulder said.

For more information on USDA’s Veterans in Agriculture program, visit www.usda.gov/veterans.
A family transitioning from the military to civilian life often contemplates many difficult questions: Where will we live? How will we pay the bills? Will we have health care if something happens? Do we qualify for any Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits?

Finding answers to these questions isn’t always easy, but addressing them head-on is your family’s first step toward living a successful, satisfying, and independent, post-service life.

With that in mind, we’ve put together a quick tutorial for you and your family to help ease the transition process.

ACTION PLAN
Transition have you stressed? Here are 9 steps to get you and your loved ones on the right track

By Peter Granato
Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration

Take full advantage of your mandatory Transition Assistance Program (TAP) VA benefits briefings. In case you miss something in your mandatory TAP briefing, hold on to your TAP VA Benefits Participant Guide and the contact information for your VA Benefits Advisor. You can also access the participant guide at http://www.benefits.va.gov/tap.

1. Make sure you leave with ALL of your military service records, including your health and service treatment records.

2. Before you leave the military, begin checking out employment and education services available to veterans online and then plan to use them as soon as you get home.
   - A. Use your GI Bill. You can apply online from your smartphone. Use the GI Bill Comparison Tool (https://www.vets.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool) to learn more about education programs and compare estimated benefits by school. Remember, if you want to transfer your benefits to eligible dependents, you need to do so while still on active duty.
   - B. If you have (or expect to have) a VA service-connected disability when exiting the military, consider applying for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, a VA employment program that can train you for a new career. You can learn more here: http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp.
   - C. In addition to the Department of Labor’s employment resources, there are also resources available if you’re interested in joining our team at the VA: https://www.vaforvets.va.gov.

3. Convert your Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance to Veterans Group Life Insurance. You can apply online from your smartphone. You, the service member becoming a veteran, may be eligible for health care from VA’s Veterans Health Administration, but make a plan for your family if they need to transition off Tricare.

4. You, the service member becoming a veteran, may be eligible for health care from VA’s Veterans Health Administration. Speaking of health care, you can’t take care of your family if you don’t take care of Number One. Seriously. If you need help (https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/gethelp.asp), get help, or go to a VA Vet Center that can help get the ball rolling on anything VA-related.

5. Did you know that it takes only a few minutes to download your VA home loan Certificate of Eligibility? Give this certificate to your bank or lender when you’re ready to buy a home. That’s right — you are closer to buying a home than you think. Under some circumstances, you won’t need to provide a down payment. For more about VA home loans, visit: http://www.benefits.va.gov/home-loans/purchase_certificate.asp.

6. Lastly, realize that the VA administers federal benefits as written into law by your elected representatives, but your home state may have its own set of separate (additional) benefits for you to take advantage of, too. Find your state veterans’ agency here: https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm.

7. If, in the unfortunate case, you are a survivor, you may be eligible for VA survivor and dependent benefits. Your military Casualty Assistance Coordinator will coordinate with a VA Casualty Assistance Coordinator who will contact you to discuss and help you apply for VA benefits.

8. You, the service member becoming a veteran, may be eligible for health care from VA’s Veterans Health Administration, but make a plan for your family if they need to transition off Tricare.

9. Need help or have questions? You can always contact a (free) Veterans Services Organization, your VA Benefits Advisor or you can chat with us on the official VBA Facebook page at www.facebook.com/VeteransBenefits.
RESOURCES

www.va.gov

GETTING TO KNOW THE VA AND YOUR VA BENEFITS

By the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Benefits Assistance Service, VA Transition Assistance Program

Whether you are an active duty service member years away from separation or transitioning tomorrow, Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and services are available to you at every stage of your military life cycle. It’s never too soon to learn more about resources you can tap into today.

VA’s mission is rooted in Abraham Lincoln’s famous words: “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan. “ VA carries out President Lincoln’s charge by providing health care and benefits to the men and women who have served the United States, and some of this support begins long before they separate from the military and throughout their transition to civilian life.

VA BENEFITS FOR ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS

Some VA resources that are useful at every stage of the military life cycle include:

- **EDUCATION:** The GI Bill® covers the cost of education and training programs, including undergraduate and graduate studies, as well as vocational and technical training. These benefits may be used while on active duty. The Post-9/11 GI Bill allows service members (officer or enlisted, active duty or Selected Reserve), to transfer unused education benefits to immediate family members (spouses and children). The service member must have at least six years of service and commit to an additional four years of service in order to transfer benefits to a spouse or child. Additional information can be found at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911TRANSFER.asp.

- **HEALTH CARE:** Active duty service members may be eligible to receive VA health care services, especially in emergent or urgent care cases. For routine care, VA may provide limited care to active duty service members in specific locations or with a valid Tricare referral. Information about transitioning from Tricare to VA health care can be found at https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/apply/active_duty.asp.

- **HOUSING:** The VA’s Home Loan Guaranty program helps active duty service members secure competitive rates on home loans with little or no down payment. Service members with a permanent or total service-connected disability may also be eligible for adapted housing grants. More information about VA home loans can be found at http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/index.asp.

- **LIFE INSURANCE:** Active duty service members can purchase up to $400,000 of life insurance through VA’s low-cost Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance program.

- **DISABILITY COMPENSATION:** Service members with disabilities who remain on active duty may be eligible for many VA benefits. You can also apply for disability compensation prior to separating from service by using VA’s pre-discharge programs located at http://www.benefits.va.gov/predischarge/index.asp.


- **BENEFITS:** Through eBenefits, you can research, access and manage all of your VA and military benefits and personal information while on active duty and a veteran. To register and explore the portal, visit www.eBenefits.va.com.

It is important to engage with VA early in your career to gain a full understanding of the available benefits and services. VA Benefits Advisors, located at installations around the world, can support you throughout your military life cycle. They can help you learn about and access the VA benefits you are earning now.

VA TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

Whether you plan to leave the military in six months, six years or 26 years, your separation is an important transition into civilian life. The first time you think about transition shouldn’t be right before you leave service, many decisions made earlier in your career can affect your post-military career success. VA is ready to guide you through transition and connect you to helpful VA resources at every step of the way. VA offers:

- **ONE-ON-ONE ASSISTANCE:** VA knows that every transition is unique, depending on a service member’s experience and interests, so VA provides tailored support. The VA Benefits Advisor on your installation available to meet with you and your spouse — at any stage of your career — to talk through various VA benefits and resources available, your eligibility and how VA can help set you up for success.

- **BENEFITS I AND II BRIEFINGS:** VA Benefits Briefings are composed of two mandatory workshops, leveraging a mix of lectures, videos and individual activities. During these interactive sessions, VA Benefits Advisors provide service members with information on VA benefits and services, walk them through the application process and explain how to connect to VA for future assistance.

- **CARERS AND EMPLOYMENT:** We can support you in all stages of your job search. We have teamed up with the Department of Labor to give you career advice, help building your resume and access to employers who want to hire veterans and military spouses through www.vets.gov.

- **WARM HANDBOVERS:** Transition can be a stressful time. In many cases, it can also mean a move across the country or to an entirely new home base. Before your transition, VA can connect you with representatives from VA and other agencies in your new hometown — including the VA Regional Office and VA Medical Center — to make sure you’re never alone as you navigate civilian life.

Whether your post-military goals include a college degree, a new home career, or service and personal activities, the VA is here to help. For more information, visit www.va.gov/ONLINE or call your local Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Manager to be connected with a VA Benefits Advisor at your installation.

By Larry Eby
Department of Veterans Affairs, Insurance Specialist

In this section we will discuss the various VA resources that are available to members on active duty and as veterans. Whether you are a new service member or have been in service for years, there are resources available to assist you with your transition from active duty to civilian life. These resources include:

1. **Benefits for Active Duty Service Members:** These benefits are available to service members who are on active duty and include:
   - **Education:** The GI Bill® provides educational benefits to service members who are on active duty.
   - **Health Care:** Active duty service members are eligible for free health care at VA medical centers and clinics.
   - **Housing:** VA provides home loan guarantees to service members who are on active duty.
   - **Life Insurance:** Service members who are on active duty can purchase life insurance through VA.
   - ** Disability Compensation:** Service members who are on active duty and have a service-connected disability may be eligible for disability compensation.

2. **Benefits for Veterans:** These benefits are available to veterans who have separated from active duty and include:
   - **Education:** Veterans who have separated from active duty can use the GI Bill® to pursue higher education.
   - **Health Care:** Veterans who have separated from active duty can receive health care at VA medical centers and clinics.
   - **Housing:** VA provides home loan guarantees to veterans who have separated from active duty.
   - **Life Insurance:** Veterans who have separated from active duty can purchase life insurance through VA.
   - ** Disability Compensation:** Veterans who have separated from active duty and have a service-connected disability may be eligible for disability compensation.

3. **Benefits for Active Duty and Veterans with Disabilities:** These benefits are available to service members who are on active duty and veterans who have disabilities and include:
   - **Education:** The GI Bill® provides educational benefits to service members who are on active duty.
   - **Health Care:** Active duty service members are eligible for free health care at VA medical centers and clinics.
   - **Housing:** VA provides home loan guarantees to service members who are on active duty.
   - **Life Insurance:** Service members who are on active duty can purchase life insurance through VA.
   - ** Disability Compensation:** Service members who are on active duty and have a service-connected disability may be eligible for disability compensation.

4. **Benefits for Veterans with Disabilities:** These benefits are available to veterans who have disabilities and include:
   - **Education:** Veterans who have disabilities can use the GI Bill® to pursue higher education.
   - **Health Care:** Veterans who have disabilities can receive health care at VA medical centers and clinics.
   - **Housing:** VA provides home loan guarantees to veterans who have disabilities.
   - **Life Insurance:** Veterans who have disabilities can purchase life insurance through VA.
   - ** Disability Compensation:** Veterans who have disabilities and have a service-connected disability may be eligible for disability compensation.

5. **Benefits for Disabled Veterans:** These benefits are available to veterans who have disabilities and include:
   - **Education:** Disabled veterans can use the GI Bill® to pursue higher education.
   - **Health Care:** Disabled veterans can receive health care at VA medical centers and clinics.
   - **Housing:** VA provides home loan guarantees to disabled veterans.
   - **Life Insurance:** Disabled veterans can purchase life insurance through VA.
   - ** Disability Compensation:** Disabled veterans who have a service-connected disability may be eligible for disability compensation.

6. **Benefits for Veterans with Severe Disabilities:** These benefits are available to veterans who have severe disabilities and include:
   - **Education:** Veterans who have severe disabilities can use the GI Bill® to pursue higher education.
   - **Health Care:** Veterans who have severe disabilities can receive health care at VA medical centers and clinics.
   - **Housing:** VA provides home loan guarantees to veterans who have severe disabilities.
   - **Life Insurance:** Veterans who have severe disabilities can purchase life insurance through VA.
   - ** Disability Compensation:** Veterans who have severe disabilities and have a service-connected disability may be eligible for disability compensation.

By Larry Eby
Support programs help wounded, ill and injured Soldiers get back on their career path

By Yolanda Mose’
Career Education and Readiness Division, Warrior Care and Transition Program

Regardless of who you are or the position you hold, transition can be tough. As a wounded, ill or injured Soldier, transitioning back to the force or to veteran status can be even harder.

Every day, wounded, ill and injured Soldiers transition from the ranks of the Army. To assist these Soldiers, the Career Education and Readiness Office, nested within the Army Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP), provides guidance and support to Soldiers as they transition back to either the force or into the civilian community.

Pfc. Vanessa Donham enrolled in the Airstreams Course while recovering at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Warrior Transition Unit. The Airstreams Course is a two-month program that is designed to prepare Soldiers for entry-level careers in wind power, the communications tower industry and other jobs in oil and natural gas.

Students graduate with 10 certificates, including Authorized Climber and Rescuer, Electrical and Electrical Metering Safety, Capstan Hoist and American Red Cross, among others.

Donham, the only female out of a class of 10 students, says that attending the Airstreams Course was part of her transition goals and that she has plans to continue her career as a Renewable Energy and Communications Tower Technician after her transition from Army active duty.

Career and Education Readiness activities are the centerpiece of effective transition from active duty for wounded, ill and injured Soldiers during their service. These programs are part of Army-wide efforts to provide enhanced vocational and career opportunities, along with the Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) and other external resources, prepares these Soldiers for a smooth transition to a post-Army employment, education or independent living.

Resilience and motivation
Soldiers are given two tracks to choose from as they embark on their transition; the separation career track or remain in the Army. For those who choose to remain in the Army, there are three options: return to duty, return to duty with a new military occupational code (MOC) or continue on active duty (COAD) or active reserve (CDAR). While many Soldiers often return to the ranks, opportunities are available to Soldiers who decide to leave active duty service. These opportunities can enhance existing skills and develop new ones through training, education and internship opportunities while recovering.

Staff Sgt. Brian Beem, a member of the Army Wounded Warrior Program (AWW) was able to take advantage of the COAD option. Beem recalls when he was injured in October 2006 and was told his leg would be amputated, “I can go back to work. I just have a broken leg. It will heal.”

Sticking to his patriotism and stubbornness upon leaving the Army before he was ready, Beem was determined to get back to the ranks and be with his platoon. Beem says that this mindset pushed his resilience and motivation to focus solely on his recovery and get back to working as a Soldier. Beem now serves as the Non Commissioned Officer in Charge of the AW2 COAD/CDAR program, assisting others who have the same level of determination he did years ago.

Refining a vision
If a wounded, ill and injured Soldier chooses to transition from the Army Warrior Transition Unit (WTU), transition coordinators work with them to identify career opportunities, such as job fairs, resume-writing workshops and other employment resources. Internship opportunities are also identified and pursued through the Army’s Career Skills Program (CSP) or the Department of Defense Operation Warrior Fellowship Program. Support is also provided from the Veteran Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services.

WTU Occupational Therapists play a critical role in helping Soldiers while they participate in transition programs. They are often cascaded off of the Soldier’s current duties and responsibilities to transition specialists. They help identify and provide reasonable accommodations, and use work simulation activities to assist Soldiers in understanding their abilities.

Pfc. Vanessa Donham enrolled in the Airstreams Course while recovering at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Warrior Transition Unit. Donham has plans to pursue a career as a Renewable Energy and Communications Tower Technician after her transition from Army active duty. Courtesy of the U.S. Army

With the help of an Army Warrior Transition Unit Occupational Therapist, Sgt. Richard Pert was able to enroll in a five-month business program with Dogtag Bakery, earning a certificate in Business Administration and putting him on the path toward owning his own company. Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Port credits the program for refining his vision and is attending college in the fall of 2017 to earn a degree in business. Looking back on his transition at the WTU, Pert offers these words of encouragement to future transitioning Soldiers. “You are deserving and don’t overlook what the WTUs have to offer,” he said. “Never take anything for granted—if it is there, take advantage of it.”

Connecting skills and careers

Spc. Claude Pullen is another successful graduate. After nine months of hospitalization and rehabilitation, Pullen took advantage of an internship opportunity at the U.S. Army Research Lab (ARL) in Adelphi, Md. His can-do spirit was not only welcomed by the employees of ARL, but was emulated throughout the organization.

ARL staff are aware of the skill sets and abilities Soldiers possess while they are serving in the ranks of the military and connect those skills with employment opportunities for wounded Soldiers and veterans. Pullen desired to learn the technologies ARL had to offer in order to be a productive member of the ARL team.

Since 2010, WTU Career and Education Readiness activities have helped countless Soldiers during their transition. Their stories inspire their peers and those who come after them. Every day worked at a Remain in the Army Work Assignment, an internship or training opportunity is a day closer to successful transition from a Warrior Transition Unit and each Soldier’s personal dream.
DO YOU GET THE CONSEP?

The Career Options and Navy Skills Evaluation Program (CONSEP) is the Navy’s new and improved 21st century initiative for first-term and mid-career Sailors. CONSEP is uniquely designed to assist Sailors preparing for the next career step; not only in terms of continued naval service, but also preparing Sailors who choose to transition into the civilian sector as well. CONSEP tackles a wide range of topics, such as cross-certiﬁcation, gaining a commission and even switching career paths after separation. The course is composed of six modules:

1. **Personal and Professional Assessment:** Understand your knowledge, skills and abilities for your future.
2. **Navy Career Options:** Enlist in career advancement, paths to a commission and educational opportunities.
3. **VA Beneﬁts:** Training and employment assistance programs, home loans and health care.
4. **Financial Planning:** Evaluate military and civilian compensation and retirement planning.
5. **Civilian Career Options:** Identify career interests and evaluate gaps between current experience and desired profession.
6. **Developing a Professional Network:** Identify ways to build a network in person and on social media, mentorship and creating your personal brand.

During the Sailor’s Military Life Cycle, Sailors in their first-term or at the midcareer point attend CONSEP to acquire tools to make informed decisions about their occupation and educational opportunities. The program is inspired by the past experiences of senior leadership such as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry Scott. Scott shared insight on how having sound guidance at a critical point within his career was valuable: “I had one tough tour in the Navy that almost made me give up, but after some great advice and counsel from a mentor, I decided to give it one more chance — that next assignment ended up being one of the best of my career!”

While Scott was at a crossroad, he chose to make the Navy a career and was extremely successful: “I had one tough tour in the Navy that almost made me give up, but after some great advice and counsel from a mentor, I decided to give it one more chance — that next assignment ended up being one of the best of my career!” While Scott was at a crossroad, he chose to make the Navy a career and was extremely successful. Scott shared insight on how having sound guidance at a critical point within his career was valuable: “I had one tough tour in the Navy that almost made me give up, but after some great advice and counsel from a mentor, I decided to give it one more chance — that next assignment ended up being one of the best of my career!” While Scott was at a crossroad, he chose to make the Navy a career and was extremely successful.

Service members who either are not ready to transition or do not meet Career Readiness Standards (CRS) receive what is called a warm handover. A warm handover is essentially a referral to a federal agency such as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or the Department of Labor (DOL), which have established partnerships with the military services in providing transition support.

Guidance on warm handovers was released by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense to the military services in providing transition support. Service members who require additional transition support get a helping hand from subject matter experts providing instruction on various tools, topics and resources that can aid in making informed career decisions that will impact both military career and marketability in the private sector at transition.

We all know when the journey begins, the FFSC will assist in guiding Sailors through the Military Life Cycle. For more information about CONSEP contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center or Command Career Counselor or visit https://cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/tranisition_assistance/consep.html.

Who needs a warm handover?

Service members who receive less than honorable discharges are more at risk for suicide and face increased challenges transitioning to civilian life.

Current DoD policy states that these service members are to receive warm handovers to the DOL, whereas the nature of their discharge would prevent them from receiving VA benefits. Service members can access resources through the DOL sponsored Career One Stops (www.careeronestop.org) and VA Vet Centers (www.vetcenter.gov). Warm handovers should be provided to any transitioning service member who requires additional assistance with employment, transportation and housing.

Service members who require additional transition support get a helping hand.

Who needs a warm handover?

Service members who require additional transition support get a helping hand.

Who needs a warm handover?

Service members who require additional transition support get a helping hand.

Who needs a warm handover?

Service members who require additional transition support get a helping hand.
WHICH PATH IS YOURS?
Transitioning service members may select one or more two-day tracks to help them pursue their post-transition goals. Find out more: Contact your local transition office or go to www.DoDTAP.mil.

ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION
Learn about achieving academic success, researching and comparing institutions, aligning education to career goals, and financing higher education.

CAREER TECHNICAL TRAINING
Learn about civilian careers requiring a license or certification, identifying schools, financial aid, VA benefits, apprenticeships and more.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Learn about the benefits and challenges of owning your own business. The jump to business ownership begins here!