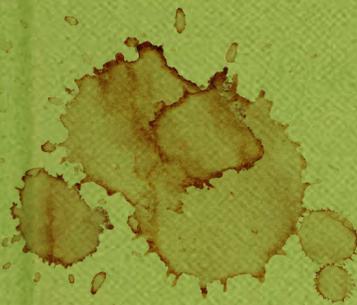




G.I. JOBS®
YOUR GUIDE TO CIVILIAN SUCCESS®



MOTHER OF ALL TRANSITION GUIDES



**TIME TO GET THE \$#@% OUT AND
HIT THE CIVILIAN WORLD WITH A BANG!**



- ✓ Buy frame for DD214
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THE MOTHER OF ALL TRANSITION GUIDES

G.I. JOBS | TAP PROGRAM

Introduction

If you are one of the **250,000 service members** transitioning out of the military in 2017 or you have already transitioned out and you are still looking for help, this guide is for you. More than 15 years ago, Victory Media's co-founders—veterans themselves— celebrated the first day working at a new company and a new mission: to create vital, civilian-produced resources for the approximately 250,000 people leaving the military each year, at no cost to service members or taxpayers. In doing so, they introduced these candidates to civilian employment, entrepreneurship and education opportunities.



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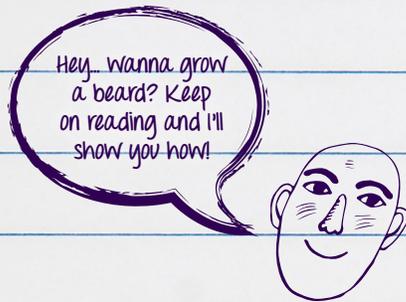
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SECTION 1:

TRANSITION PLANNING

TOP 4 THINGS TAP CLASS DIDN'T TEACH ME

WRITTEN BY BRI PHILLIS FOR GIJOBS.COM



There I was – four-year contract fulfilled, gear turned in, terminal leave submitted. All that stood between me and civilian freedom was one more round of mandatory fun – TAP class.

Sure, it lived it up to my expectations; kept me away from my unit for a couple of days, I got to wear civilian clothes, and on most days we were released by 1500. But it fell a little short on its Uncle Sam's given purpose of preparing transitioning veterans for the civilian workforce.

Résumé? Got it. Mock Interview skills? Nailed 'em. Having the stamina and brain capacity to survive a 3,846 slide powerpoint presentation, should I ever have to encounter such hell in the civilian world? Golden. But, believe it or not, there were still a few things those government bureaucrats left out when they wrote the TAP curriculum. Over the past two years of my post-military career, I've gathered a few things TAP class didn't prepare me for.

1. Vacation Days Do Not Equal Leave Days

To say the military is demanding of our time is probably the understatement of a lifetime. So surprisingly, the number one thing I had completely taken advantage of was the amount of time we actually got off. There are no "four-days" in the civilian world. There's no sick call. There's no buddy on staff duty to sign you out. Any time spent away from work is counted against you, and it adds up quickly.

2. It's Not as Easy as 1, 2, 3

TAP curriculum, like most military directive, is cut and dried. You're told to follow steps A, B, and C, and you're expected to get D as a result. Military transition isn't the fairytale TAP can paint it to be. You might have a pristine résumé and the shiniest dress shoes in interview rooms across America, but that, combined with your veteran status, does not guarantee a perfect military exit strategy. Be prepared to figure out a plan E.

3. You Need to Get Paid More Than You Think

There is a brief chapter in TAP on civilian [salary negotiation](#). PAY ATTENTION. You can easily underestimate the value of BAH, special duty pays, healthcare costs, etc. There's a good chance you'll end up in a jam because you accepted a salary that can't handle your [cost of living](#).

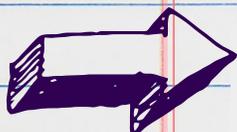
4. HOOAH!? - Not Quite

Unless you're lucky enough to find an employer who is overly passionate about the daily morale of its employees (in which case, stay put), you're not going to have the inspirational speeches, blood pumping cadences, or the in-your-face motivation you're used to. Be prepared to dig deep for your own workplace enthusiasm.

It's not a surprise civilian life is drastically different than that in the military. The government wouldn't spend millions of dollars on TAP to prepare you for the transition if it wasn't. Use the advice above, similar articles on GIjobs.com, and the valuable information TAP does teach you, and you'll be well on your way to post-military success – where there's a lot of fun, and none of it's "mandatory".

MASTER THESE 10 DETAILS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION

WRITTEN BY HUDSON SAFFELL FOR GIJOBS.COM



From fashion to conversational politeness, it's the little things that count, and will be appreciated. Here are 10 often overlooked details that will ensure your success as you make the [military-to-civilian transition](#).

1. Look the part

Let's face it, people are predominantly visual, and first impressions are clinchers. No need to take out a personal loan to dress tasteful, but spending money on well-made clothing is a great investment. Hate putting outfits together? Let professionals do it for you and get the outfits delivered right to your door. For girls, check out [Stitch Fix](#); for guys, [Trunk Club](#)'s got you covered. For a quick lesson on how colors of clothes matter, don't miss [this article on how to ramp up your wear more visually](#). I highly recommend mastering the art of business casual and you can learn more by reading: [Out of Military Uniform: What the Heck is Business Casual](#).

2. Talk the part

It's a fact that most human vocabularies are not as expansive as they once were, but no need to study a dictionary or thesaurus (unless you thought the latter was a species of dinosaur); there are a few simple ways to express yourself without sounding like average Joe or Jane. For example, when someone asks you how you are, the reply: "I am well, thanks, and you?" versus "I'm good..." sounds a whole lot better — and arguably, grammatically correct. After swapping "well" for "good," you'll notice how many other people will adopt "well" after hearing your smoother rendition. There are an onslaught of common speaking

mistakes that we make on a daily basis, and even more — often brash — dialects (say NO to Yosemite Sam) and colloquialisms. The more you can clean up your vocab, and manner of speaking (say YES to Miss Manners) the smoother you'll sound. And don't forget to [kick that military jargon to the curb!](#)

3. Ask people questions

People — not Google. For those who have been on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, you know how important elders are to local communities; why not in America? Remember to respect those that have been on this earth longer than you; they might just know a thing or two — learn from

them! Talking to people is an art in and of itself, and it's in your best interest to improve it. One of the best ways to begin a conversation is simply ask a question. You'll be surprised how much much you can learn from other humans face to face.

4. Show interest

Believe it or not, this can be as simple as listening. Everyone wants to squeeze their thoughts in a conversation, but if you fail to show interest — through active listening — and try to control the conversation, others will become disinterested in what you've got to say entirely. Find patience, listen, and show (don't tell) that you care.



5. Relax

It's contagious! You've put in application after application and have set up accounts on recruiting portals that you didn't even know existed. You're losing steam and starting to think you may never actually find a job. What are you supposed to do now? Relax and read [5 Ways to Stay Positive During Your Job Search](#).

6. Read

It's a proven fact that reading not only broadens your brainpower — and vocabulary — but also increases your chances for success. If your new line of work involves writing, it's like the poet Ezra Pound said: "To write well, read well." You've seen the lists from the Huffington Post and BuzzFeed: "20 Books to Read in Your Lifetime," "The Top 5 Books of 2015 That Will Change Your Life," etc. Well, here are the [five books every transitioning military vet should read](#).

7. Watch documentaries

Not a big reader? No big deal. Thanks to the swell of documentaries ready and waiting, you can learn just about anything you'd like. Engaging in conversations about history, history, current events and progressive thought makes for great ice-breaking in a job interview; if it veers in that direction, be ready for it.

8. Exercise

The ancient Greek philosophers were keen on exercising the mind, but a close runner-up was physical fitness. Get your gym on; or at least take walks (walking is actually the best form of exercise for "bipedalers" like us). If you did land a career and want to stay Army Strong, fitting in fitness at work can be a challenge for all of us at times, especially if you have a desk job. Here are a few amazing things you

can do for yourself and your waistline, all while increasing your personal productivity at work. Read [5 Ways to Fit Fitness in at Work](#) for exercises you can do even if you have a cubicle desk job.

9. Don't settle

This happens to people way too much, and often, once realized, it's too late. "It's never too late" or "better late than never" are not the most logical or realistic expressions. If you want to be happy and remain happy, you must first be happy with yourself — which can't happen if you settle for anything less than what makes you happy. And when it comes to choosing a career, this is a hallmark. For more advice, see how to balance your wants and needs when [choosing your career for love or money](#). We aren't here just to get you a job. Though we do have the best [career resources for veterans](#) on writing a résumé, getting an interview

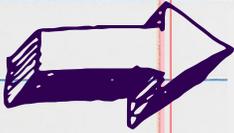
and accepting a job offer, we also cover everything you need to know about the corporate environment and progressing in your career. We got your back the whole way through.

10. Manage your time

All told, there isn't much you can accomplish if you don't learn time management. This may seem like a no-brainer to veterans, but civilian life is a creature of a different color, and time will pass you by if you don't get a handle on time. Make the most of every minute and try your best to make them regret-free, but keep in mind that life is about making choices, and often, making a decision is better than not making one at all. Even if it turns out to be the wrong choice at least you learned what not to do, versus never knowing either way, eh?

5 BOOKS YOU NEED TO READ BEFORE TRANSITIONING FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

WRITTEN BY DEBORAH RYAN FOR GIJOBS.COM



You've seen the lists from the Huffington Post and BuzzFeed: "20 Books to Read in Your Lifetime," "The Top 5 Books of 2015 That Will Change Your Life," etc. Well, here are the five books every transitioning military vet should read.

These are the five books I wish I had read before [transitioning from military to civilian life](#). These are books I reference in life, in articles, and to my friends who are getting out. You will not regret the purchase of any of these. Some of the titles speak for themselves, but don't be afraid of making them a part of your bookshelf, either digitally or as paperbacks.

1. "Military Transition to Civilian Success: The Complete Guide for Veterans and Their Families," by Caryl Krannich and Ron Krannich.

These two know their stuff from experience. They delve into what it's like to deal with PCS, insurance, benefits, jobs for veterans, healthcare, childcare, etc. It's a no-brainer. Get it now! If you find yourself looking for additional transition resources, visit our getting out of the military page for great content!

2. "76 Scholarships for the Military: Scholarships Specifically for the Military and Their Families," by Adam Lawrence.

Rather than filter through the GIANT books released annually for deep scholarship perusal, use this one. It is directly targeted at the military, and is not limited to those who have served, but to their dependents

as well! Super stuff! G.I. Jobs has a great Military Friendly Schools matchmaker tool to help you align a great school with your career when transitioning from military to civilian life.

3. "Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Families," 2012-2014; 13th edition, by Gail Ann Schlacter and R. David Weber.

I've referenced this in Scholarships for Veterans, and it is a staple in my home. Though I do not have children, I do have a few degrees, friends and loved ones, and where they are, there are educations and questions ahead.

4. "Managing Difficult People: A Survival Guide for Handling Any Employee," by Marilyn Pincus.

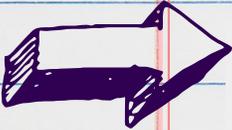
Though published in 2004, people have not changed much in the past 11 years. It's a thin, quick read, with an infinite amount of information for vets getting out and planning to manage employees in the civilian world. It filled my sails with tools for all aspects of my career. It is truly a gem, and a must-have! Read: 5 Techniques for Managing Difficult People for a sneak peek!

5. "The 5 Love Languages Military Edition: The Secret to Love that Lasts," by Gary D. Chapman, and Jocelyn Green.

Everyone seeks love and acceptance. Combat a disintegrating relationship, or boost a loving one by utilizing some or all of the tools presented in this book. Love is kindness, but it begins with communication. Learn to speak one another's 'language' by taking a little time to read the techniques explained in this wonderful, short and succinct toolbox of a book.

9 STRESS RELIEF TIPS FOR AFTER TRANSITION

WRITTEN BY DEIDRE GRIEVES FOR GIJOBS.COM



Transitioning out of the service, being back with family and trying to find a suitable career can cause stress and anxiety for any veteran.

The pressures and difficulties of everyday civilian life are completely different than those associated with military employment. This stress can be debilitating and lead to trouble sleeping, relationship conflicts and physical ailments, including body aches, difficulty breathing and nausea.

But you have the power to reduce your stress and get on living your life. Here are nine stress relief tips to help you focus and stay relaxed.

1. Plan out your day

A regimented routine is one way to avoid feeling anxious and will provide a familiar, military-like structure. Before you go to bed, make a plan for the following day. Include appointments, tasks that you need to get done and a list of goals. By putting a plan in place, you're less likely to feel on edge when you wake up and confront a new day.

2. Take a deep breath

Focusing on breathing exercises is an easy and scientifically proven method for reducing stress on the spot. According to the American Institute of Stress, deep breathing for 20-30 minutes a day increases the supply of oxygen to your brain and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps calm you down.

3. Unplug your devices

Constantly monitoring your work email, checking for Facebook updates on your iPad and watching television right before bed—all of these things can make your stress levels spike. Research from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden found that the blue light emitted from computer and television screens throws off melatonin production and has a negative impact on sleeping patterns. To unwind, unplug or turn off your devices and focus on having a meaningful conversation with your family or take some time to read a book.

4. Get a dog

Got a lot on your mind that is making you stressed? Just spend some time with your family pooch to combat the symptoms. A study from the University of Buffalo actually found that spending time with a pet significantly reduces blood pressure and provides companionship that boosts mental health.



5. Go to a comedy club

Laughter is one of the simplest and most effective ways to de-stress. Several studies have shown that laughter increases your oxygen levels, stimulates circulation and aids muscle relaxation, all of which help to reduce stress in your body. Spending a night at a comedy club with friends, or simply watching some comedy specials at home on television, is a great way to relax.

6. Get moving

Regular exercise pumps up the production of endorphins in your brain. These neurotransmitters trigger positive feelings throughout your body and help alleviate depression and anxiety. A quick walk around your neighborhood, playing some racquetball with a friend or

taking a spinning class can all have a big impact on your mood.

7. Cut back on the caffeine

If you're drinking multiple cups of coffee each day, it's time to cut back and get your stress levels in check. The caffeine in coffee increases catecholamines, your stress hormones. One study by Duke University showed that caffeine can actually amplify regular stressors throughout the day and multiply the negative impacts of stress on your body. Try limiting yourself to one cup of coffee in the morning, or slowly scale back by adding half a cup of decaf to your mug.

8. Chew a piece of gum

If you're feeling uptight, pop in a stick of Juicy Fruit and go to town. Several studies have

shown that levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, significantly dropped after participants chewed gum for approximately 10 minutes. Since gum chewing is affordable and accepted in most situations, it is a quick and effective way to de-stress.

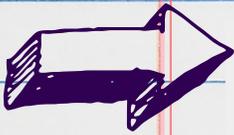
9. Write in a journal

Feelings of depression, anxiety and incompetence can easily begin to overwhelm you if you let them. But getting your thoughts down on paper will give you a new perspective and help you feel like you're in control. Try starting a journal to document your thoughts and feelings. Going back through the pages can help you identify stressors and come up with solutions for how to prevent similar situations from happening.



WHAT GEN. PETRAEUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE MILITARY

WRITTEN BY LIZ MCLEAN FOR GIJOBS.COM



I tend to mention that I am “often fascinated by people, but rarely impressed.” My expectations of others to be well-rounded motivators frequently leaves me feeling disappointed and uninspired at the end of the day.

Perhaps this is a reflection of my own internal critic, but when I look for someone who deserves my respect and admiration, my prerequisite is that the person is inspirational to others and encourages them to be better people in more than just one aspect of life. Bottom line is that it takes a great deal for me to truly respect and admire someone as a leader, but retired Gen. David Petraeus is someone whom I have held in the highest esteem for as long as I can remember. When I reached out to the general to ask if I could interview him in regard to the concepts of transition for our military service members, his response was that he was honored, further affirming my beliefs of him as an iconic and influential inspiration.

With 37 years of stellar service in the Army, Petraeus served as the commanding general for the surge in Iraq, then commanded Central Command. He served as commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan before moving on to become the director of the CIA. Petraeus proved to the men and women in the military that you could climb the ranks of success while still keeping up with the other checks and balances of life — one may have to make sacrifices, but self-respect was not one of those elements. The same applies to the civilian world.

The following are the responses from the general to nine pointed questions that I receive on a regular basis from men and women serving who are seeking advice on career transition. Here the general, who now serves as partner and chairman for Kohlberg, Kravis Roberts (KKR), provides us his opinion with candor.

1. As you grew in rank, was there a point that you started to think about the transition to civilian life? If so, when, and what were your biggest fears?

Petraeus: I did not spend much time thinking about transition to civilian life over the years. Periodically, I thought that one pursuit or another might be intellectually stimulating and rewarding; however, I did not do any serious thinking about what I might actually do in civilian life until after I left government. I then undertook a five-month process to determine what opportunities existed, to evaluate each of the opportunities, and to negotiate the specifics of those opportunities I ultimately decided to pursue. In fact, I have been very fortunate to develop a wonderful portfolio of business, academics, speaking and veterans-support endeavors, and I have enjoyed the new pursuits enormously.

2. How do you feel the military prepares members for their exit to the civilian world? If you could aid in assisting the programs, what would you change?

Petraeus: I think that the military is doing a better job of helping its members prepare for the transition to civilian life, having expanded the transition course and pursued other initiatives to ease the move to “civvy street.” Having said that, there is undoubtedly more that could be done, including getting those preparing for transition thinking farther ahead and not waiting until their final weeks to explore the opportunities that might be available to them. Just helping those in uniform take advantage of the various online sites that help make job opportunities known, that help mentor new veterans, and that offer various elements of advice would be helpful, too. Those are the initiatives I would pursue if still in uniform.



3. What words of wisdom would you give to a member to better help him/her be set up for success come transition? What would you say to lessen THEIR fears?

Petraeus: My words of wisdom are actually statements of the obvious, I'm afraid! The key, of course, is to think ahead – and also to recognize that the best opportunities will be those where it is clear the firm will invest in the education and development of the new veteran. In that regard, we veterans need to have a degree of humility about what might be needed for us to become value-add in pursuits that might be fairly technical and, at the least, very different in the expertise required from what we have done in uniform. That's OK; it is reality. And, with time, the attributes, experiences and qualities we bring from our time in uniform will make themselves felt. But development, education, mentoring and assistance will be essential if we are to succeed in many civilian endeavors.

4. What jobs or assignments prepared you best for civilian life?

Petraeus: Various positions in the military prepare us in different ways for jobs in the civilian world. Some develop or reinforce leadership skills, others provide directly transferable technical capabilities. It is likely, however, that many in uniform will perform tasks in the military (e.g. tank crewmen, machine gunner, etc.) that are not directly transferable to jobs in civilian life – though many of the tasks performed required in those fields require the ability to master various skills – and that ability will help in civilian life, too. So the idea is to develop in a general sense – and to capitalize on those general skills, attributes and abilities when pursuing what likely will be considerably different jobs in civilian life. In my view, in fact, military service provides a wonderful foundation on which to build for the rest of one's life.

5. What are your views on experience versus education? For some it is almost a badge of honor to not "need it."

Petraeus: I think both education and experience are needed. One without the other seldom is sufficient, at least if one hopes to progress in a particular field.

6. How do internal military politics differ from civilian politics?

Petraeus: I don't know that it is "politics" that are the dynamic; rather, it is all about relationships and understanding the responsibility one has to be forthright and capable of speaking truth to power in a way that is not "in your face" – i.e., that is constructive

and respectful and positive in tone, rather than confrontational, disrespectful and negative.

7. What do you think about "the grass is greener" concept of civilian life to military work life? Do you think one is necessarily easier than the other?

Petraeus: The reality is that one has to truly commit fully to succeed in uniform and also to succeed in civilian pursuits. Life is a competitive endeavor, whether that life is in uniform or in the civilian world.

8. What words would you say to employers who are questioning why they should hire military members? Why SHOULD they hire them, and what should they do to retain them?

Petraeus: Employers should hire veterans because it is the right thing to do (given what veterans have done for our country) and, as importantly, because it is the smart thing to do (in a business sense, as veterans bring a wealth of very valuable capabilities, skills, attributes and experiences).

9. Any other words you want existing members to know to motivate them in their transition out?

Petraeus: There is no greater privilege than serving a cause larger than self in uniform – and doing it with others who feel the same way. Having said that, there are innumerable pursuits in the civilian world that are incredibly rewarding, stimulating and important to our country. Indeed, our nation's economy is the foundation of our national power, and those in the civilian world obviously are the ones who construct that foundation! Veterans engaged in such efforts take great pride in thus having contributed to the security that makes our economic endeavors possible – and then contributing to the country's economic growth, especially at a time when our economic growth has been so impressive and is poised for further expansion.

The reality is that military members are given advice day-in and day-out about what they should or should not do as they ready for their transition, but rarely do they receive the advice from someone who has succeeded so well on both the military and civilian side. Gen. Petraeus has seen members come and go throughout his career and has been involved at the highest level of America's government. His tips and humble transparency are words that hopefully will instill both confidence and trajectory as they make their way forward. Gen. Petraeus' legacy of mentorship will last a lifetime.

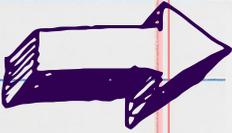


SECTION 2:

CAREER EXPLORATION

TURNING A PASSION INTO A PAYCHECK

WRITTEN BY GLEN STILSON FOR GIJOBS.COM



“Do what you love and the money will follow.”

You’ve likely heard that before, but how do you figure out what you love to do?

What if you’re passionate about more than one thing, or some of those things won’t allow you to make enough money? You can start to find the answers by looking at what you do that makes you feel more fulfilled about your life.

I’ll give you an example. When I was medically discharged from the Army, my planned career had been cut short and I didn’t know what to do. I did enjoy teaching others about self-defense and self-reliance, but didn’t know how to turn that into a paycheck. While I worked a job in construction in order to pay the bills, I also started volunteering with youth organizations and shooting schools in order to expand my horizons. Now that I have my own training organization, I have found that teaching makes me feel good about the work I do, and I can see the positive change in those who I teach. I look forward to going to work for the first time since I left the military.

So how do you find your passion? Start with what you know you enjoy doing. Whether that’s teaching, working on cars, stopping bad guys, or constructing buildings, find something that you can see yourself doing for the foreseeable future. Stay on that path, take every available opportunity to improve yourself, and allow yourself to explore every new possibility that will take you deeper into what you enjoy doing. It’s important to understand that the money may not come immediately, or may not be exactly what you need, so you may have to find supplemental means of income. But never lose focus on your mission. After all, do what you’re passionate about, and the money will follow – it’s worked for me, and it can work for you.

Here are five things to consider when you’re trying to turn your passion into a paycheck:

1. Be realistic.

Not everyone can be an astronaut. This is not meant to say that you shouldn’t go for the gold, but it is meant to say that if you set realistic expectations then you have a realistic chance of reaching them. Know yourself and what you are truly capable of.

2. Embrace failure.

Get ready to step outside of your comfort zone. Learning from your mistakes and adapting because of them is vital to mission success. In the words of Thomas Jefferson, “If you want something you’ve never had, you must be willing to do something you’ve never done before.”

3. It’s not enough to be good, you need to be different.

There are probably a lot of people who share your passion, and they all want to land that great job or start up their own business. So figure out what makes you different, not just better, and capitalize on that.

4. Appreciate the critics, the haters, and the naysayers.

Remember that those who criticize have often never laid it all out on the line, but appreciate that their notice of you means that you are doing something right. If you have no haters, then you’re not trying hard enough.

5. Don’t surrender. Ever.

I often tell my instructor team that it’s not about who wants it the most, it’s about who wants it the longest. There’s a lot to be said for persistence, so when the going gets tough, when everything seems like it’s against you, knuckle up and work harder.

MILITARY VALUES THAT TRANSLATE TO CIVILIAN JOBS

WRITTEN BY GLEN STILSON FOR GIJOBS.COM



There are a lot of jobs in the military that can be difficult to transfer into the civilian world.

While some of us may wish there were an opening for a tank crew member or an infantryman in corporate America, those specific skills are likely to be left in your past. However, those who have served developed the following military values, usually under stress, and they are very useful and highly sought after in the job market today.

Here are five military values that translate to civilian jobs.

1. Punctuality

- I will admit that this has always been and will likely always be a weak point for me, but if there's one thing that will still make you pucker up, it's the idea of being late to a formation. Being on time is simply par for the course in the military, and many civilians who have never served have never had to face serious consequences for being late to work. This can give you a real edge when it comes to the modern workplace. Remember: if you're early, you're on time.

2. Integrity

- This one may seem simple enough, but being honest and always doing what you say you'll do is something that seems to be slipping away in the modern workplace.
- In the military many of us learned about unit cohesion, and the trust that you need from and give to those you serve with is something that is beyond worldly value. If you can bring that same unit cohesion and trust to your civilian job, the bonds you'll form among your co-workers will likely only be second to the value that your boss will place on you.

3. Understanding Chain of Command

- If every sergeant went to the captain with every complaint they had, the captain wouldn't get anything done; and besides – what would the LTs do? Understanding how a true chain of command works is something I have found to be incredibly useful in civilian life, from the workplace to personal relationships and family. Figure out what the chain of command is at your job, or the job that you're going into, and use it to get things done more efficiently.

4. Teamwork

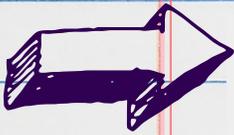
- I don't think I need to say a lot here, as being a part of a team is something that we've all experienced. We've had some good leaders and some bad leaders, but regardless of leadership, the quality of your team is what holds it all together. Learning to recognize team members' strengths and weaknesses, and helping them utilize both to maximum efficiency, is a skill that is highly valued at nearly any job. Placing the success of the team above the desire of the individual can give you a strong edge in the corporate world.

5. Strong Work Ethic

- Sometimes work sucks. You didn't sleep well last night, your dog died, it's raining, the coffee's cold, and you dropped your phone in the toilet at the office. But regardless of what is going on in your personal life, your job still needs to be performed – the mission still needs to be completed. I was told many years ago that the mark of a true professional is someone who can do their best work even when they don't feel like it.

FOR LOVE OR MONEY? CHOOSING YOUR CAREER

WRITTEN BY HUDSON SAFFELL FOR GIJOBS.COM



Ah, decisions. Don't you love them – especially ones that can spin your life in so many different directions? Breathe easy, it's all a matter of perspective.

Making a choice – even if you realize later it was the wrong one – is better than not making a choice at all. Absurd, you say. Well, maybe. But life is all about taking action, and sometimes exploring a dozen career trails is the way to go if that's what it takes to discover what matters most to you when choosing a career for love or money.

Truth is, there's no right answer. In this economy, money matters – and retirement even more. Many individuals desire a luxurious lifestyle and will sacrifice their career

choice for it. If that's what floats your boat (or yacht, I should say), then float on.

Again, I don't have the answers. But I do know that personally, through much exploration, doing what I love is far more fulfilling than any amount of money. The good news for those who are financially concerned is that many careers you love may pay less in the beginning but have a bigger payoff when you retire; you may just be lucky enough to achieve both the love of your career and enough money to retire comfortably.

Overseas – in those areas many of us came to know so well – I used to work shoulder to shoulder with civilian contractors who were making twice my salary doing the same job.

They'd brag, saying, "I'm making 120k a year" and I would reply, "Yeah, well I still have a job when I go back to the States." I was ultimately offered a job with that contractor team post-military (one of several high-paying job offers I've shunned) but turned it down. My reasoning? As much as I like adrenalin surges and austere locales, and money, I love my country and family more. Plus, guarding diamond mines in Africa just sounded like a really bad idea.

Anyhow, I guess there comes a point in anyone's life when they ought to reflect forward. The future (inasmuch as I like living day-to-day on the edge of my seat) is very important, and when you get there – to the future

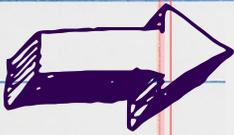
– and look back and say, "Damn, I should've done that instead," it's probably going to really dampen your spirits.

And I don't know about you, but when I'm old and gray (well, I'm already graying), I'd like to be in good spirits and satisfied with my concrete career choice. For this reason I commonly ask myself, "Self, what are you going to think – about this or that choice – when you're 80 years old?"

It's food for thought, and sometimes a not-so-perfect job is inevitable. But if you can see past the vacuum of having to make a lot of money and just go for what makes you happy – oftentimes the money will come to you, and then you can get that yacht.

HOW TO DRIVE YOUR CAREER IN THE CIVILIAN WORLD

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



If you're just getting ready to transition, or are already in the middle of it, chances are you're focused on getting a job. Maybe you're nervous enough about leaving what you've known in the military that you'll be happy to take any job that has the right salary or location. But don't forget that after you've transitioned, there's a career to think about, whether it's in one type of work until retirement, or following your passion wherever it takes you. Here's how to navigate the civilian job world to build a career you love.

Decide what's important to you and your family, if applicable. This is probably the hardest part, and honestly it's not something most transitioning veterans get around to before they leave military service. Let's face it: career is relatively simple in the military. You do what you're told and go where you're assigned, and if you don't like a particular job or station, you have at most three years to suffer before you get something else. Also, military careers usually come with certain "wickets" you need to hit — certain schools, or job assignments. Eventually, you'll get to staff NCO or field grade or warrant officer, and then retire.

There are similar career progressions in the civilian world, but they're harder to find for someone coming from a military background. And transition complicates the picture because it inserts concerns about where you are going to live, which jobs are going to be best, or whether you go to any college. So for those reasons, reflection on how you want to live your life as a civilian is usually something that occurs in the background.

Once you have fully transitioned, however, it's easier to see where you want to go. Are you happy in your current job? Is there a future in it

for you? Maybe you aim to become some kind of senior manager or technician. Or perhaps you look at your company executives and decide that, after all, you want to get a college degree. Or maybe you decide you want a total career change to get to a better place for your family. Setting your sights on goals like that help you determine the civilian "wickets" you need to hit to get there.

Figure out how to get to your goals. This is pretty straightforward. It mostly involves research and paying attention to those who are farther along than you. Sometimes, the next step forward in your company requires some education. If so, maybe it's time to leverage those benefits at the local technical college. But don't forget to tell your company your aspirations and ask if they'll invest in you by helping with tuition. Many companies have education initiatives for their employees and welcome someone with initiative and drive. Don't make the mistake, though, of treating them like a bank. Expect them to demand you still contribute to the company by working a certain amount, and make their financial support contingent on you succeeding in your studies (usually by achieving a certain grade point average).

If the next step is a certain title or position, tell the appropriate person you're interested and ask what you need to do to get there. Oftentimes you'll be given extra responsibilities, or certain performance goals to accomplish, before they'll move you up. Or, if you're in a company that doesn't have a lot of room above you (which is common in smaller companies with established workforces, or with union workers), then maybe you begin looking for a similar position





with upward mobility.

And if your chosen career requires a full college degree (graduate, undergraduate or associate), it's time to start researching benefits, colleges and starting applications.

Don't take a career step back unless it's absolutely necessary. One red flag for any recruiter is seeing someone's career backslide, say from a supervisory position to a regular employee position. Usually that indicates that you got demoted because you failed or because you made a critical mistake. Try to avoid job hopping backwards, career-wise, even if you're tempted by a better location or (as sometimes happens) better pay.

There are a few times where this is acceptable, however. If you're faced with some kind of personal need, like taking care of a family member, that requires you to go to a certain place, you can explain taking a career step back in the future. Employers

will certainly understand that, though they will likely check your references to see if that's true. Also, you can transfer from a smaller company to a larger one as long as the backslide is not significant. For example, you can go from a supervisor in a smaller company to a "lead person" in a larger one because the responsibilities are similar. That's a good career move, actually, because you're presumably pursuing more responsibility by moving to a larger company. But be careful! Moving from a supervisory position in a small company to a regular technician in a large company is a large step backwards and will raise questions of why you moved so far down the career ladder.

Maintain a presence in the job market. The obvious advantage to this is that you can monitor job openings in your area for new opportunities to build your career. But by keeping up an online presence on sites like

LinkedIn and Indeed.com and adding accomplishments to your profile as you get them, you increase your chances of receiving a cold call. Also, by looking at your contacts' profiles, you can expand your knowledge of what's possible, and how to get there. It's easy to ask a discreet question about your ambition to someone who's perhaps a little ahead of you. Just be careful – some companies don't like it if they find out you're trolling for other jobs.

Keep the career conversation open. It's normal for your goals to change as your life does. Whether your "dream career" turns out to be less than you expected and you discover something you like more, or you get married and start a family, your desired career will develop over time. So keep returning to the question of, "Where do I want to go next?" The answer, though it may change over time, will help you build a career that you love.



SECTION 3:

JOB SEARCH PLAN

5 JOB SEARCH RULES YOU SHOULD BREAK

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



Transitioning from the military can be exciting. You may dream of a steady schedule, no deployments, a break from iron discipline and strenuous activity... basically, just freedom. And if you've been following popular media, you're probably thrilled to hear so much emphasis on hiring veterans. You happen to be a desirable candidate with great experience and useful skills, so this job search is going to be a piece of cake!

Or at least you hope. The truth is that despite a growing economy and a popular push to hire veterans, it can be very hard to find the job you need, much less want. Veterans who have tested the job search markets can say that even with all the goodwill about your service, employers are often confused by your experiences and eager to hire the "safe" candidates: the ones who have done that job before.

But that's if you follow "the rules" of a job search like every other candidate. In hiring processes designed to find "safe" candidates, the deck is stacked against a veteran with meaningful experiences and unteachable skills. In many ways, your best bet is to break those rules and grab a potential employer's attention. Here's how.

1. Write a human-sounding résumé

This is hard for veterans because the military is famous for teaching robotic, dry prose. Also, the military strongly disapproves of anything that smacks of self-promotion or style — a consequence of its focus on performance. But you need to be a person to an employer. If you write a résumé and cover letter that sound like they should be read in a monotone, you can count on sending your recruiter to sleep. (Read: [Why You Should Write a Human-Sounding Résumé](#)).

2. Make your résumé a story

Preferably one that starts with you making a courageous decision to serve your country, and then building a solid base of skills and experiences that has perfectly prepared you for the job to which you're applying. It takes a little authorship, but humans — including recruiters and employers — always respond better to a story than a list.

3. Don't be afraid to use the word "I"

Trying to write about what you've done (your experiences) or what you can do (your skills/achievements) without using the word "I" results in convoluted sentences, added words which eat up space, and ultimately a supremely uninteresting résumé. Don't be afraid to write your application documents naturally. You'll come across as more engaged and more interesting.

4. Contact the hiring manager about your application

It's easy to hit "send" on the online application and think you've done your due diligence on the job search, but don't abandon your résumé to the computerized hopper of some company website. Find the hiring manager, send a paper copy of your application to his or her work address,

and then call that person directly. Tell him or her that you applied and offer a short summary of why you're a great fit for the job. It's hard to forget tangible and sensory things like a voice or a paper copy of a résumé, but it's easy to flick past a hyperlink to your online application. Make yourself hard to forget so when that hiring manager remembers he or she has to fill a spot, you will be the first one who springs to mind.

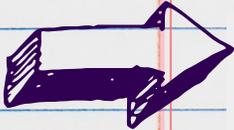
5. Don't talk about how great you are

Everyone dislikes hearing others brag, even when they're reviewing an application on which you're supposed to brag. Instead, tell how you can make the business better by identifying the need lurking in the subtext of the job posting. That means research: you have to figure out what is lacking, or not working right in their organization, based on the qualifications they require. With that, explain in your cover letter and résumé summary how you're going to fix what is broken. You don't have to be all slimy-used-car-salesman about it, either... just be friendly, helpful and respectful. That's how you offer added value instead of a boring group of boilerplate qualifications like every other candidate in the system.

Don't let computer automation and check-box-ticking human resources departments ignore your applications. Break the old job search rules designed to elicit computer responses and make yourself hard to ignore. Because once you get to talk to an employer, your veteran status, bearing, dedication and experience will carry the day.

5 WAYS TO STAY POSITIVE DURING THE JOB SEARCH

WRITTEN BY DANIEL SWANSON FOR GIJOBS.COM



You've put in application after application and have set up accounts on recruiting portals that you didn't even know existed. You're losing steam and starting to think you may never actually find a job. What are you supposed to do now?

1. Believe that something will ... Make something open up for yourself

As time continues, don't be afraid to tweak your job expectations toward what positions are available in the current job market. Simply being a bit more open-minded could be the difference between being employed or not. Maybe you can't get hired directly as a plant manager yet, but with a bit of experience on the plant floor a rung or two down from manager, you can improve your chances of landing the job you want in the near future. By being proactive in tailoring yourself to available jobs, you're going to keep a more positive outlook about your potential job prospects.

2. Go full-time

Treat the job search like your full-time job. Get up around the same time every day and set up a schedule for yourself. I knew a kid in college who did this with his schooling and brought his GPA up two whole points during his sophomore year (rough first year, you know how it goes...). It was a completely foreign concept to me, but it worked for him, and being regimented about the job search can make or break your experience.

To fill your time, keep putting in applications both in-person and online, trying to contact hiring managers and building your network of family and friends that are on the lookout for jobs in your field. Perfect your résumé down to the last "t." Knowing someone who knows something about a job is always the best way in, but the next best way in is with your spectacular résumé.

Also, don't be afraid to learn a new skill to include on your now-perfect résumé — a foreign language, HTML, copy editing, anything. Extra points for tailoring the skill you learn to the field you're looking to get into.

Just keep doing constructive things that break up the monotony of having to copy and paste your résumé into a differently formatted box. AGAIN.

3. Workout

You don't have an actual 9-5 yet, so this isn't going to kill you. You'll need the stress relief and it will be an excellent base of fitness for when you are sitting for eight hours every day in a swivel chair. And we all know that working out chemically enhances our life outlook, right? Probably more than watching Netflix does (although I have yet to read a thorough study on this).

4. Remember why you wanted that job in the first place

What interested you in your job field? Likely the same thing that still does. Don't forget that.

Every single person looking for a job goes through the stage of "Nothing's happening, what am I doing with my life?" For some people, it's a few weeks. For others, it's a year or two. If you have to get a part-time job to cover yourself until you get your dream job, so be it.

It's cliché, and I can't believe I'm saying it, but it's true: Any way you look at it, you're going to make it through and be better off once you're on the other side of the job search.

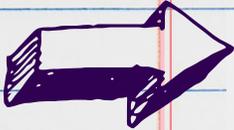
5. Relax

If you're putting your best into the job search, you're doing the best you possibly can. This kind of stuff doesn't just happen overnight, despite all of the people who keep telling you that "something will open up for you, you deserve it."

You do deserve it, and it will happen in time — so don't freak out on your aunt for telling you that every time you see her.

3 WAYS TO AVOID COMING ON TOO STRONG IN YOUR JOB INTERVIEWS

WRITTEN BY LUKE TORRANCE FOR GIJOBS.COM



It's a competitive world out there post-military, and you know that.

Getting a job isn't as simple as sending in a résumé and waiting to be called back with an offer. When you apply for a position on [our job board for veterans](#), the company that is hiring could be receiving dozens, hundreds or even thousands of applications and résumés. In a way, it's like the lottery, except you have to keep working if you win.

But it isn't a lottery because hiring isn't random. There are ways to increase your odds, such as reaching out to your could-be employer. If this is not your first job hunt, you probably know this. There are millions of articles on the Internet about [how to best write a résumé](#), who to talk to and how to conduct an interview. We recently posted an article that reads [interviewing advice for Military Veterans](#).

Those pieces make sure that you are doing enough to get noticed. In this article, I will tackle the opposite: if you are doing too much. Yes, it is possible to go over the top, so here are three pieces of interviewing advice for military veterans.

1. It's not all about you

You and the person doing the hiring are (most likely) not friends. Before an interview, to him or her you are just a name attached to a résumé. Whether networking or interviewing, you have to tell others who you are, what you can do and what you would like to accomplish, all in a limited amount of time.

But the conversation cannot be entirely self-centered; this is especially the case when networking. Ask the other person about themselves, and their careers. Networking is a professional relationship, and the best way to form a relationship of any kind is to ask about the other person and be genuinely interested. You might even pick up some free advice.

When it comes to interviews, ask about the company and the position that you are trying to fill. If you only talk about yourself, you will come across as someone who cares more about him/herself than the company.

2. Give them time

One way to make sure that your résumé isn't falling into an endless pit of paper is to reach out to the hiring manager. Sending an email or (preferably) a phone call gets your name into the mind of the person conducting the hiring, making it more likely that your résumé will be saved from the endless pit.

Some people's fear of being overbearing prevents them from calling at all: this is a mistake. You should definitely call. Ask when it would be the best time for you to call back instead of frequently calling at random hours.

3. Relax

There is plenty of advice on how to interview well, and I'm sure that you will have memorized it long before you find yourself sitting in the hallway outside the room where the interviews are conducted.

This advice is good: give a firm handshake, make eye contact and prepare answers to basic interview questions beforehand. The key is not to take this advice as a robot would. You don't need to break your interviewer's fingers during the handshake. You don't need to look into your interviewer's eyes for the entire time. Have talking points for answers, but do not memorize what you are going to say and repeat it. It isn't a play, it's an interview. If you have not yet read our article on [how to answer the salary question](#), you should because they will probably ask and you want to be prepared.

This applies to everything else on this list: don't go overboard with advice. You should talk about yourself. You should make eye contact. The key is not to stretch it to a level in which you seem like a narcissist or unable to understand boundaries. It is a competitive world, but that does not mean you should do anything to get someone's attention. If you follow our advice, an offer will come!

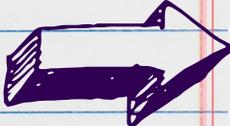


SECTION 4:

RÉSUMÉ HACKS

10 WAYS TO CIVILIANIZE YOUR RÉSUMÉ

WRITTEN BY SHANE CHRISTOPHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



Is your résumé wearing too much camouflage? Learn 10 easy ways to make sure you are effectively communicating your military skills and education.

Your military service is coming to a close and you want to find a great job in the civilian sector. You know one of the most important tools in your job search is your résumé. Creating a military to civilian résumé that will be well received and understood by civilians can be tricky. Here are 10 ways to civilianize your résumé.

1. Can You Pass the “Seven Seconds Test?”

How long should your résumé

be? As a general rule, target one page for every 10 years of service, with a two-page maximum. Regardless of the length, here is the most important question: will it pass the “Seven Seconds Test?” A civilian employer will go through hundreds of résumés to find a manageable number of qualified candidates. Your résumé must survive the culling process. Assume each résumé will get seven seconds of the reader’s attention. During those seven seconds the reader has to find the key information.

2. Think Accomplishments

Companies hire people for their experience, their potential, or a combination of both. If your military specialty has a direct civilian equivalent and you want to continue in that occupation, then highlight that information on your résumé: operating or maintaining gas turbines does not need much translation. If you are not continuing in your current specialty you are then selling your “potential” more than your experience. In either case, how well you do a job is

more important than your job description. Why? Because your accomplishments sell your potential, your experience sells your past.

3. Don’t Get Lost in Translation

Much of what you do in the military will make perfect sense to civilians, but there are some functions that have little or no civilian equivalent (e.g. ammunition handler). The significance of being assigned as your detachment’s Classified Material Systems (CMS) custodian will probably be lost on a potential civilian employer. You don’t need to eliminate these duties from your résumé. They are important positions with a significant amount of responsibility. You should translate the position into a language a civilian reader can understand. Therefore, CMS might read “selected by the Commanding Officer to be the controller of the detachment’s classified material.”

4. Throw Out the Alphabet Soup

Where would the military be without acronyms and abbreviations? Every OP

ORDER, MOVEREP, SITREP, and MUC would double in length without them. Unless you are certain that the acronym has common civilian usage, **forget it!** Spell it out or paraphrase it in civilian terms. However, one acronym you should not punt when writing a résumé is “K.I.S.S.” Loved by civilians and the military alike, “Keep It Simple, Stupid” is an excellent rule-of-thumb. Too much information will make your résumé overly long, time consuming and probably boring.

5. Save Your Ammunition, You’ll Need Bullets

Think of the information appearing on your résumé as ammunition. There is a tendency to present this information in paragraph form, but this makes the good stuff harder to find. If we consider the importance of the seven seconds test, then we have a new use for those bullets. Concise phrasing of your duties and responsibilities in terms of specific accomplishments and itemizing them as bullets on your résumé will enhance the chances of the desired impact.



6. Don't Look like a Job-Hopper

Most military personnel have multiple jobs and multiple duty stations during their contract, enlistment or career. The list gets even longer if schools and training are included. Listing every job on your résumé may make you look like a job hopper. Combine similar experiences without paying strict attention to the timeline. Perhaps the easiest way is to use an all-inclusive timeline statement at the beginning of your experience section. Show the reader that you may have had six different jobs in three different locations in the last six years, but they were all with the same employer! For example, the phrase “Machinist’s Mate, U.S. Navy (1998-2004)” is the first line in the “experience” section, followed by an outline of the actual assignments during that timeframe.

7. Be Careful with the “M” Word

Guess which word appears the most often on the typical military performance evaluation or fitness report? “Manage” and all of its forms: management, manager, manages, managing, managed. Not surprisingly, the same is true with résumés written by separating military personnel. It is a wonderful word, because it says so much. But for that same reason, it also says too

little. What do you really mean when you use that word? Be careful – civilians do not use it with the same frequency or generality that you do.

8. Move Your Rank or Rating, but Don't Hide it

You are seeking a civilian job. It is time to start thinking and looking like a civilian. You may think of yourself as “MM3 Michael S. Ortiz, USN,” but do not open with that statement. On your résumé, you are now just plain Michael S. “Mike” Ortiz. Why? Many civilians have a negative stereotype regarding military personnel when it comes to formality and rank structure. Beginning your résumé with your rank or rating will just reinforce that perception. On the other hand, there is much about your military experience that works in your favor. Some military service members are under the impression that they should completely “sanitize” their résumés, and remove all things military. Going to this extreme is a mistake. There are hundreds of civilian employers that want to hire you because of that military experience.

9. Put Your Training and Education Front and Center

One of the reasons so many civilian companies like to hire military personnel is the built-in training and education. Many service members have

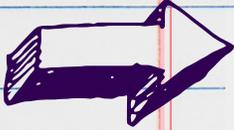
college degrees, and those that do not will often have a significant amount of technical or specialty training courtesy of Uncle Sam. Whether or not this training and education is directly relevant to the civilian sector, companies like to hire educated people, especially those who have done well in that environment. Accordingly, put this information on your résumé where they can easily find it. Remember the seven seconds test!

10. Make Yourself Easy to Find

Your résumé must include your contact information. Assuming the résumé does its job, a potential employer will contact you to obtain further information and set up an interview. When it comes to finding you, many military personnel are at a disadvantage. Where are you stationed? CONUS? Overseas? Deployed? On a ship? Under the ocean? Not allowed to say? Unless the answer is CONUS, you are probably at either a geographic or a time zone disadvantage. If you are permitted to do so, make sure your cell phone number, work phone number and e-mail address are on your résumé. If not, perhaps there is a reliable person with access to your personal phone number and/or e-mail account who can act as a relay for you.

4 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR MILITARY TO CIVILIAN COVER LETTER IRRESISTIBLE

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



If you haven't done it in a while (or ever), job hunting in the civilian world is confusing and overwhelming.

There are corporate buzzwords to learn, military experiences to translate into “civilianese,” and even strict but unwritten formatting rules for your Military to Civilian résumé.

To top it all off, there's the fact that your résumé is only one of hundreds or even thousands floating around the Internet ... so how do you even make sure it's read? The answer is your cover letter. These four tips will help you craft a Military to civilian cover letter that ensures hiring managers and employers will read your résumé (and probably give you a call).

1. Make the cover letter personal

The purpose of a cover letter (besides introducing yourself and your résumé) is to get the interest of the employer so that he/she actually reads your résumé in the first place. And the best way to seize someone's interest is to address them personally.

Although good résumés are specific to a particular job posting, they are also fairly impersonal. Even the catchy paragraph at the top of the résumé where you establish your personal brand is impersonal. It doesn't engage the reader by talking to him/her directly ... so no matter how interesting you make it, you may not convince anyone to read it.

The easiest way to make your Military to Civilian cover letter personal is to address the hiring manager by name, if you can find it. And make sure to express interest in something business-related the company has done, such as a recent product launch or acquisition, to establish that you care enough about the company to have done some research. It's surprisingly easy to do this via the Internet and social media. If you can't find the name of the hiring manager, then you can at least still express interest in the company: “Congratulations on winning XYZ award” or “I saw that you acquired ABC company — you must be very excited to utilize such-and-such capability.”

2. Sympathize with the company's issue(s)

Because so much of a job search involves you talking about yourself, it's easy to forget that most people don't like listening all that much. The fact that you're supposed to talk about your experiences, your talents and your achievements in résumés, interviews and (yes) cover letters does not make that kind of conversation any more palatable to a hiring manager or employer. You try listening to a bunch of people talk about themselves for an entire work day, and see how you like it.

Being personal while talking about yourself, as if you and your needs are the most interesting thing in the world, makes you come off like a used-car salesman. That's not appealing. You want to come off as knowledgeable and likeable instead, and a slam-dunk way to accomplish that is to sympathize with the company and its needs. Specifically, you want to address the need hiding behind their job posting.

This takes a little guesswork on your part. But if you look closely at the job requirements, you can make out the outline of a hole or gap in their organization. If they're looking for someone with a lot of work experience, for example, maybe they're struggling with the technical or administrative side of a particular function. If they're looking for someone with a specific skill set, you can bet they lack that very skill set.

Once you have identified their need (at least generally), sympathize with it in your cover letter! Something like “I imagine the increased growth of XYZ product has really taxed your customer service team” (probably their production and distribution teams as well) or “I know that integrating new people and skill sets presents unique challenges” shows that you understand a vital company issue. For many hiring managers, just that indication that you are familiar with their issues is enough for a call-back.



3. Offer yourself as a solution

The natural conclusion to this Military to Civilian cover letter is to offer yourself as a solution to the company's issues. This is the easiest part of the cover letter to write: simply tell a story where you solved a problem similar to the one faced by your prospective employer. With a little imagination, you can imagine any military problem that you've faced matching up to civilian problems: how to deal with increased task loads (such as patrols or intelligence reports); how to develop new capabilities (perhaps in response to a mission change); how to get stuff safely and quickly from one point to another.

Remember to tell this part as a story, however. Stories resonate with people much more than facts, and your cover letter is the place to connect personally, so leave the bullet points in your résumé. As a general rule, only include enough facts to demonstrate your success: "After my maintenance unit arrived in Afghanistan, our vehicle pool doubled in size. It was a major challenge, but I helped start a third shift of workers and standardized the category of maintenance assigned to each shift. Ultimately, we increased our finished maintenance actions by 175% and never failed to provide vehicles for patrols and convoys."

At this point, most hiring managers or employers will be very eager to talk to you. Your cover letter will have introduced you as a person who understands what your role will be, and demonstrated that you will be successful. There's just one more thing you need to do to make sure your irresistible cover letter is read.

4. Send a paper copy of your cover letter (with résumé) directly to the hiring manager

All your work, making your cover letter perfect, is wasted if it disappears into an online hiring portal. Even today there is something so compelling about a piece of paper — it's tangible and harder to forget than text on a computer screen. So even when you see a job online, and apply to a job online, go the extra mile and send it in an envelope too. That way you're much less likely to be screened by a junior recruiter monitoring a website. And there's just something irresistible about receiving a personal letter, even for a hiring manager.

YOUR RÉSUMÉ: WHAT A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER SEES

WRITTEN BY GLEN STILSON FOR GIJOBS.COM



Looking for Military To Civilian Résumé Tips? We Got You!

Over the years, I've looked at plenty of résumés while in management or supervisory positions. Some of them were humorous, filled with misspelled words, obnoxious fonts, unorganized information, even ridiculous accomplishments (high score in a video game – really?)

Some of them were plain, and thus passed over, with boring descriptions of educational and work history, or an objective such as “I wish to obtain a job that has potential for the future.” Then there were the ones that really grabbed my attention – they looked sharp with to-the-point, well-written descriptions, nicely laid out without too much information, no grammar or spelling errors, and easy-to-find contact information. It was these résumés that got someone in the door to an interview.

I'm not going to write a list of “[Résumé Do's and Don'ts](#)” – there are plenty of those available with a quick Google search. I'm also going to assume that you understand that even the most basic job application (read: Blockbuster Video clerk) should always be accompanied by a résumé . . . always. What I'm going to do here is go over what a potential employer actually sees when they're reading your résumé. Of course, this is all based on my own experiences, being on both sides of this situation, as well as the experiences of business associates of mine, so take this all for what it's worth. That is, I want to help you get a good job so follow these military to civilian résumé tips.

1. First impressions are everything

First impressions also typically happen in the first eight seconds, so résumés with any kind of obvious visual flaws, such as a water stain, a small rip, a weird font, a small font, or cluttered info, are not likely to get looked at. Sloppy résumé = sloppy person = someone who isn't going to get hired.

2. Grammar Nazi

I am happy to admit that I am a spelling and grammar Nazi. One common spelling error? I'll overlook it if the rest of the résumé is solid. More than one error, or something that the average person should have caught in a proofread? Hello garbage can. If someone doesn't care enough to proofread their résumé, I don't care enough to read it at all.

3. One size does not fit all

When I'm hiring someone new, their future and their loyalty are of particular interest to me, so if they don't know much about what we do around here or what they'd like to do around here, they're probably not the right person for the job. I can spot a “blanket résumé” within the first few seconds, and that means that the writer probably isn't that interested in working with a specific company.

4. It's not a novel

A potential employer does not want to read a novel about your life. [A single page résumé](#) is enough for the majority of people out there. If I pick up a résumé that looks like an application for a security clearance, it's a no-go.

5. A place for everything, everything in its place

If I can't figure out if this line goes with this section or that one, I'm losing interest. Organization is important in every job I've ever hired people for, and your résumé is the first place to show that you can put things where they ought to be. Like your name at the top, for instance. I personally like résumés with bullet points and some extra lines or “white space” between sections that help me stay dialed in to where I was, since I may be going back and forth from your résumé to your application, or to you during an interview.

6. Boring descriptions

“Platoon Sergeant for 3rd BCT, 82nd ABN.” That doesn't sound cool to everyone; in fact, it sounds boring, and I'm not interested in boring. “Worked directly with a commanding officer from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division to maintain a high level of training standards, unit cohesion, and operational efficiency for a group of 40 people.” Now that's better – lots of good keywords in there that show me that you have some real experience leading people and maintaining goals.

Remember: your résumé shouldn't be written to get you the job, [but rather to get you in the door for an interview](#), and that's where you can really shine. What a potential employer sees at an interview, however, is a whole other article. Bear in mind, first impressions are everything.

WHY YOU SHOULD WRITE A HUMAN-SOUNDING MILITARY TO CIVILIAN RESUME

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



As a [transitioning veteran](#), you may be in the position of having to write a Military to Civilian résumé for the first time. And although you may have a lot of help — [Military TAP class](#), [Military Veteran career websites](#), the discarded résumés of friends and family that have been offered up for you to use as templates — you may fall into the trap of including so many keywords and snazzy phrases that you sound like a résumé template yourself instead of a dynamic potential employee with meaningful military experience. Here’s why this happens, and how to avoid it.

You’re right! My résumé does sound, uh, robotic and boring. How did this happen? Well, it’s partially the advice you received, and partially the computers that run companies’ job searches.

Let’s focus on the advice first. Your TAP class instructors, career counselors and even the odd (ahem) online article tells you to focus on key words and to make sure you incorporate the requirements of the job posting so that you appear to match up exactly to the job. This is good advice, as far as it goes, and you should follow it ... except, remember that you’re supposed to incorporate the job requirements into your story and your experiences, not trim your experiences to fit the job requirements. More on that in a bit.

As for the computers, well, they’re designed to look for certain key words and phrases. Just like online publishers try to jam popular, oft-searched words and phrases into their articles so that search engines direct traffic to their websites, so do job-seekers cram their résumés full of the most popular corporate buzz words and job requirement key words so that résumé-searching engines return their résumés to company searches more often. This element of the modern job-search is why you get the advice you do about key words and job descriptions in the first place.

However, if you only focus on the mechanics of a good résumé (or [military to civilian cover letter](#), or interview), you will look exactly the same as every other candidate to a recruiter. The bullet

point about military service? It’s probably written in jargon indecipherable to a civilian recruiter, and lost amid the repetitive adjectives of corporate lingo. You might need the key words to show up on a search, but you need to sound like a person to grab a recruiter’s attention.

Is “sounding human” another way to say “bragging?” No. But in an effort to avoid bragging, many veterans purposefully cut out anything human in their application documents. They restrict themselves to bare facts, trusting that the results of their service will speak for themselves. That’s often how it is in the military, which has rigid metrics for success (passing a PT test, for example, or completing a class), and there’s a military culture that disapproves of bragging as a consequence of putting the team before the individual. But while you won’t often find those virtues in the civilian world, you will find the same distaste for bragging.

Creating a human-sounding résumé is really about presenting yourself as someone who is valuable and likeable, especially as a member of a team. It’s showing that you came from somewhere, that you have the ability to contribute (beyond corporate-speak like “results-driven” and “oriented on the bottom line”), and that you can connect with others. It’s about crafting a narrative, telling a story through your experiences that gives the person considering your application an idea of you as a person rather than a bundle of accomplishments and adjectives.

I have to write a story? That doesn’t sound like very good résumé advice. To put it baldly, the trick is to tell a story through your experiences, within the framework of a résumé. The idea is that you want to use all the right key words and job requirements to prove that you’re a fit for the job, but also that you appeal to the recruiter personally because he or she will begin to like, admire and become interested in you. You want to make them say, “This veteran is qualified, and I’d like to meet him or her!” As long as your qualifications are up to par, the level of interest you spark in your application is what will separate you from the rest of the candidates.



This is starting to sound very complicated. I'm supposed to be all "human" and "tell a story," but I still have to use keywords and job requirements? There's an easy way to put this together, actually. It takes a little time, however, and it's something you'll have to repeat for each job you really want when you apply. But it comes down to a couple of steps. Here are a few Military to Civilian résumé examples you can use to land that job!

1. Make a list of your previous jobs. It's easiest to do this on the computer.
2. Look at the job for which you're applying, and see what they want from their applicants. This is where you focus on the "job requirements" part of the job posting.
3. Under each of your previous jobs, list accomplishments and experiences that directly relate to the job requirements. Make sure you frame achievements as times when you overcame challenges and succeeded, and write about experiences as times when you developed knowledge about a subject or a specific trait important to the job.
4. When you are finished, review your list of jobs and résumé bullets and make sure there is narrative continuity. Basically, your earliest job should read as starting you on a path of constant growth and successive achievement that naturally culminates in the job for which you're applying.
5. Write your introduction paragraph as a summary of that story you developed. Make sure you include the most important (usually the most common) keywords and phrases.
6. Rinse and repeat for other job applications.

Wow! That seems so manipulative! It's not manipulative as long as you don't tell any lies. If you get the job, then your past experience will have helped you succeed exactly as you wrote it in your résumé. Another way of looking at it is that you're focusing your past experience on the job you plan to do, and explain what that specific experience actually is.

Ultimately, you're taking your experience and telling it as a story. That story has a protagonist that is more than a jumble of keywords and corporate lingo: YOU. The narrative element and your role as a human actor will make it easy for a recruiter to sympathize with you and to see your qualifications as human traits rather than job-search boilerplate. That, combined with the fact that this story ends with the success of the company to which you're applying, means there is a very happy ending for a recruiter ... which makes you a very easy hire!

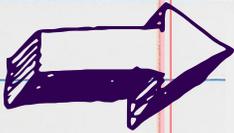


SECTION 5:

FEDERAL RESUMÉS AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A FEDERAL JOB

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



Many service members in the midst of transition are nervous about entering the civilian job market. The uncertainty of whether or not you'll get a job combined with a complete departure from military culture makes transition pretty scary. But an often overlooked source of jobs, as well as a possible intermediary between military life and going full civilian, is the federal service. Here's why you should look at federal jobs and how to get started.

Federal jobs are everywhere. If you've discounted federal jobs because you don't want to live/work in Washington, D.C., prepare to take another look. More than 80 percent of federal jobs are located outside of the national capital, and they exist in all 50 states. The odds are you can find federal jobs wherever you want to live.

Federal jobs have competitive pay and benefits. The [salaries](#) of federal jobs are often a little better than your total take-home pay, including military allowances for housing, subsistence and special duty. In fact, federal pay and [benefits](#) are competitive with the private sector in order to draw good people to federal service. Also, if you already have a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account, you can take advantage of federal matching and boost your retirement plan!

Federal jobs are available. Whatever your politics or opinions, the fact is that the current administration has expanded the federal government. Also, up to 25 percent of current federal employees are eligible for retirement and will exit federal service over the next several years. They will need to be replaced – and if you get in the game early, you might have an opportunity to

rise quickly as positions at/near the top of federal organizations go empty.

Federal jobs offer veterans preference. There's not much to be said about this fact. It's an actual advantage you have over civilian applicants. Take advantage of it!

Federal jobs are easy to find. It's daunting to start a civilian job search if you're used to the restricted options of a military career. But federal agencies are required to post all their job openings on [USAjobs.gov](#), which is searchable by location, desired salary, profession and more. But while you can apply through the USAJobs website, federal agencies also post the jobs on their own websites, so if you find one that's interesting follow it to the source as best you can. Also, speaking of websites, you can check out the resources of the [Partnership for Public Service](#) and find out what it's like working for a particular agency, or get [specialized advice](#) on how to apply to a particular federal job.

You can network into federal jobs. There is a well-worn path from the military into public service. This is, in part, because the kinds of people who join the military are service-minded, so they're more likely to consider entering the public service. The result of this is that many public servants are veterans, and that makes many federal agencies very military-friendly (beyond even the legal requirement to offer veterans preference). If you're interested in one federal job or another, ask your military friends and colleagues if they know anyone currently in the federal service that you can meet. Also, [build a LinkedIn profile](#), and you'll find many contacts in the federal service through your military network.



If you're nervous about asking for "help" or "charity," remember there's nothing wrong with the question, "So what's it like working in X agency? How would I try to get a job there?" A message via LinkedIn can accomplish the same thing, [especially if you write it professionally and respectfully](#). A question like that invites the other person to talk about him or herself, which people in general love to do. And you know how much military personnel and veterans love mentoring. Finally, always take the chance of calling in after submitting a job application in case you can strike up a bond with a recruiter.

Federal "lingo" is closer to [military jargon](#) than civilian-speak. There's no question that the military is separated from the civilian sector by its particular language. But there's some crossover into the federal service, so the culture shock won't be as severe. However, you still want to [de-militarize your résumé](#) and make sure you [tailor each application you](#)

[submit to the job posting](#). Federal services may not be military, but each agency has its own "lingo" and you want to apply in its own language.

Finally, applying to federal service requires patience. Federal agencies are legally required to post their jobs for a certain period of time and the hiring bureaucracy must parse all the applications. So there's a big lag between your submission and any calls coming your way. Federal agencies strive for 80 days; their average in 2014 was 105 days. For those of you counting, that's two to three months. So be patient when you apply.

The federal service may not be the first thing that comes up on a transitioning veteran's radar. It is, however, a viable civilian job opportunity which provides some major advantages to veterans – preference, similar benefits and a more familiar culture than many civilian jobs. Take a look and see what's out there! You may be pleasantly surprised.

HOW TO FEDERALIZE YOUR RÉSUMÉ

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH KALAFATAS-MCDONALD FOR GIJOBS.COM



Résumés are the first impression a potential employer has of you. They are extremely important, but they can be challenging and time-consuming. “List your best attributes”, “be detailed but don’t make it too long”, “tailor your résumé and cover letter for each job”...the process feels never ending. Applying for federal careers makes it even more complex with the inclusion of military status, citizenship, security clearance, etc. The most important thing to remember when aiming to federalize your résumé is to clearly demonstrate your skills, training, and education and how they match the employer’s needs.

As with any other résumé, make it clean, simple and avoid improper grammar and word misspellings. The style and format of the résumé are more of a personal touch. Just remember to keep your margins set between ½” – 1”, use a standard font such as Arial or Times New Roman and keep font size between 10-12 points. Another thing to remember, minimize as best you can the use of military jargon and acronyms. Instead, translate it for the hiring manager.

Here are some tips on what to include in your own résumé for federal positions.

Personal Information

This is the section that will list your full name, mailing address, phone number and email address. When federalizing your résumé, according to The Federal Résumé Guide, you also want to add the last four digits of your social security number, country of citizenship, veteran’s preference points and your security clearance level.

Objective Statement

This section is a helpful but optional addition to your résumé. If included, you’ll want to briefly state what you are looking for in a position, what you offer that position and also how you can assist the agency with accomplishing its mission.

Education

List the schools you attended. Include the school’s location, your degree title and graduation dates and your GPA. If you did not receive a degree, you want to list the number of credits you received.

Work Experience

List relevant work experience with the employers name and address, your supervisor’s name and phone number and your job title. Also, the dates of your employment, salary earned and hours worked per week.

Awards and Accolades

This is the section where you list special accomplishments such as awards, honors or certificates. Also list if you are a member of any professional or honor societies and organizations and any training courses completed that pertain to the job. You may also list skills and special accomplishments.

Remember to use the Transition Assistance Center prior to departing the service. Their counselors can help with the résumé writing process as well as offer some very helpful tips in the application process. Also use your “Verification of Military Experience and Training” (DD Form 2586) as a helpful tool. It lists your military work experience as well as your training history, making it an excellent tool to fill up your experience and awards sections.

HOW MORE EDUCATION MEANS MORE FEDERAL PAY

WRITTEN BY ROBERT STEVENS FOR GIJOBS.COM



Pay schedules for federal jobs

are determined primarily by education and experience. Experience must be verified, and each job has a set of proficiency requirements that applicants are required to confirm they possess during the application process.

Here's how more education means more federal pay.

Education is cut and dry: you either have it or you don't. Government pay scales indicate how far you can progress based on your current educational credentials, as well as what is required for the next pay grade. There are many pay scales throughout the federal government used to set pay. The three most common are:

- Federal Wage System (FWS), which is used for the trades – either skilled or unskilled labor

positions, or blue-collar jobs.

- General Schedule (GS) is used for positions classified as clerical, the administrative and technical categories, or white-collar jobs.
- Senior Executive Service (SES), which covers managerial, supervisor and policy-makers that do not require U.S. Senate confirmation.

The most familiar of these three scales is the GS, or general schedule, which we will examine here. The GS scale comprises 15 grade levels, each with progressively higher educational and experience requirements. The table below illustrates just how each grade level follows this progression:

Grade Level	General Experience	Specialized Experience	Education
GS-1	None	None	None
GS-2	3 Months	None	High School Graduation or equivalent
GS-3	6 Months	None	High School Graduation or equivalent
GS-4	1 Year	6 Months	1 Year above High School
GS-5	2 Years	1 Year equivalent to at a GS-4	2 Years above High School
GS-6	None	1 Year equivalent to at a GS-5	1 full year of Graduate Education

Requirements for GS-7 and above are as follows:

Grade Level	Specialized Experience	Education
GS-7	1 Year equivalent to at a GS-5	1 year of graduate-level education or superior academic achievement
GS-9	1 year equivalent to at least GS-7	2 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a master's degree or master's or equivalent graduate degree
GS-11	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9	3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a Ph.D. degree or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree
GS-12	1 year equivalent to at least GS-11	3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a Ph.D. degree or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree

Every federal job has specific educational and experience requirements depending on the type of position and the nature of the job. Other pay schedules follow this same pattern, but as you can see, higher education leads to higher earning potential with each higher grade level. Promotions from one grade to another are strictly at the discretion of each federal agency, but the educational requirements for each grade level still apply.



SECTION 6:

INTERVIEW HACKS THAT GET YOU HIRED

5 MUST-KNOW INTERVIEW TIPS THAT WILL GET YOU HIRED!

WRITTEN BY K.P. KULSKI FOR GIJOBS.COM



The interview process can feel stacked in favor of the employer, but that isn't necessarily the case if you come prepared with interview questions and answers. I encourage veterans to realize that their time is as valuable as a potential employer and to enter the interview process with that understanding.

I'm not advocating that veterans approach the experience with arrogance but with a sense of confidence about what they offer and how to communicate their expectations. We see a lot of typical job interview questions that seem to be standard protocol, the goal is preparation!

The interview process is a two-way street that should give both you and the potential employer a sense of what the other can offer. Master the 5 things to do to prepare for a job interview to increase your chances of getting hired and WIN the dreaded interview process.

1. Research

Research is one of the first things you do when preparing for a job interview. Either before or as soon as a company has scheduled an interview with you, look up the company and do some in-depth research. You want to establish a couple of things:

Credibility – on a very basic level, is this a company you can verify as relevant and trustworthy?

Company history – what are the origins of the company and in what direction does it look like it is headed?

Work they have accomplished – what kind of work have they produced, who did they partner with in order to get it done? Are these affiliates you'd like to partner with or consider any possible conflicts of interest.

This can give you a few advantages. First, before you even head out in the car you can evaluate the likelihood of candidacy they will have for YOU. Think of this a way of scanning their résumé. Second, you arrive to the interview further prepared and knowledgeable.

2. Have Questions Ready

What type of questions do you ask on an interview? That all depends. You can accomplish this, as the

title suggests, by seeing your interview as a way of interviewing the potential employer. List your questions ahead of time. Be sure to include questions on topics that are important to you as a person as well as an employee. These can be typical questions concerning work-life balance, health care needs, telecommuting and education benefits. Additionally, you may want to pose questions that help you get a feeling for the things like workplace culture: What do you consider to be this company's strongest asset? Read [8 Common Interview Questions](#).

3. Take Notes

This can show a potential employer that you are serious and thorough, but it can also help later when you sit down to consider competing offers. This can also serve as a good jumping off point for conversation as you reference the questions that you brought with you.

4. Articulate Your Expectations of the Job

While it is good to prepare your salary expectations, there is a lot more to job satisfaction than only compensation. What are your expectations of this position? For example, are you willing to travel locally but not nationally? Be ready to communicate these stipulations in clear and respectful tones.

5. Your Time and Experience Are Valuable

At any point that you are heeding the above suggestions, you may find yourself questioning if this a position even worth considering. There is nothing wrong with this, especially if you are conducting a search on limited time and multiple interviews. If you realize the job or company is not right for you, contact the interviewer and politely and appreciatively cancel. Be sure to cite your reason and mention what kind of position you would consider from them if it ever became available.

On the other hand, if you do get to the interview room, realize that not every position or company will be a good fit for you, or you for them. Be realistic and be ready to evaluate these things. Just as a potential employer has the right to pass on choosing you, you have the right to pass on an employer for something that is a better fit for you, your family and career.

HOW TO MASTER THE PHONE INTERVIEW

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



A common part of the hiring process is a phone interview, which usually comes after résumé submission but before an invitation to meet with a hiring representative.

The purpose of phone interviews is to further screen the qualified applicants – the ones whose applications, cover letters or résumés stood out – usually with a goal of getting down to a certain number for regular interviews.

Also, if you’re applying to a job at your home area while still in the military (and therefore stationed somewhere else) companies may conduct a phone interview in lieu of a face-to-face. This is especially common in industries that seek veterans, such as federal agencies or law enforcement.

It’s easier to make a good impression face to face than it is over the phone. So remember these seven things to master the phone interview:

1. Don’t act entitled

This goes without saying, of course, but between rumors that companies are desperate for veteran hires and the veteran’s natural pride in service, former military applicants often imply they are intrinsically more qualified for a job than any civilian could be. Sometimes

this is talking about combat experience, or reminiscing about feelings of brotherhood, or implying that anything civilian-related is easier than what happened in the military.

Remember that you’re not being interviewed for your stories. Also, while your military experience might be impressive, it doesn’t guarantee that you’ll do well in the civilian world. Let your past speak for itself, when the interviewer comes around to it. In the meantime, focus on what you can offer the company.

2. Don’t monopolize the conversation

The point of the phone interview may be to find out about you and your qualifications, but if you ramble or talk constantly (maybe in an effort to list every single experience or qualification you have) then your interviewer will have a hard time getting the information he/she needs and will probably lose interest.

You have a limited amount of time on the phone, so leave the interviewer room in the conversation to ask questions and explain things, especially questions that spring naturally out of dialogue. Those questions may not be related to hard qualifications, but will certainly delve into the intangibles of

your character, which is where veteran candidates usually excel.

Besides, if you are considerate over the phone, you will come off as more likeable – which certainly helps make a good impression.

3. Don’t speak in military lingo

Just as you “demilitarize” your résumé by removing acronyms and trying to find “plain-English” ways to explain your past jobs, make sure you speak in concise, plain English when you are talking about yourself.

As a technique, rehearse your explanations of job responsibilities so you can deliver them clearly, plainly, and in few words. This will present you as accessible and a good communicator, and will keep you from talking too much.

4. Refer to the job posting

Job postings provide detail about what the hiring company considers ideal in a candidate. You should absolutely make sure the experience you talk about matches the “experience required” section of the posting (also something you can rehearse), but you should additionally bring up the job requirements in your interview.

A phrase like, “I noticed you’re looking for a candidate



with mechanical experience. Although I don't have direct mechanical training, I performed the PMs – preventative maintenance – on all the vehicles in our unit” will immediately perk an interviewer's interest, because it shows you researched the job, that you're genuinely interested and that you put some thought into whether you'd like the job and/or do it well. Further, even if you don't meet ALL the interviewer's requirements, he/she still has a reason to list you as qualified.

5. Be professional

This covers a lot of things. First, a phone interview will likely be set up via email or a phone call. So have a professional email address (e.g. first-initial-last-name or firstname-dot-lastname at website) and a professional voicemail greeting (“You've reached XYZ. I'm not available, but leave a message and I'll return your call”) to nail that first impression. An email like “usmcbadboy19” or a voicemail greeting like “Yo! I'll hit you later!” will make the interviewer laugh at your expense ... and may make them pass for someone who seems more mature.

6. Protect your public image

Any interviewer worth his/her salt will mine social media for information on you.

Scandalous, crude or aggressively political postings, especially photographs, will make you look immature and unprofessional, and will make your interviewer wonder whether you'd be a liability to the company.

The easiest way to protect yourself online is to jack up your privacy settings so that nobody can see you, but it doesn't help you get hired. You can use your private page as a “social résumé” by removing the questionable stuff and letting the page display deployment pictures, family pictures and interests.

Those things will help the interviewer feel like he/she knows you better and put a face to the voice on the phone, both of which will make you an easier choice because you seem familiar.

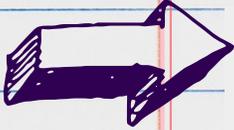
7. Be on time

And make sure you contact your interviewer, if necessary, via phone or email. Don't text unless they text you first. And if they miss their call, be tactful when reminding them.

The phone interview may be just a stage in the hiring process, or it may be your only interview for a position. Either way, you want to make sure you present yourself as qualified, articulate and friendly. That way an interviewer will feel like you meet his/her checklist effortlessly, and pass you along.

9 IMPRESSIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN INTERVIEW

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



That application you submitted resulted in an interview, and now you're ready to land the job. You've researched the company, you've practiced [your interview answers](#) and [set out your suit and tie](#). But is there anything else you can do to get an edge, to further impress your interviewer? As it happens, there is: Nearly every interview ends with an opportunity to ask questions, and asking the right ones will put you ahead of the pack.

Because the purpose of a job interview is to figure out whether [you're a good fit for the job](#), the interviewer will probably ask you scenario-based and some personal questions to confirm your qualifications and assess your attitude. However, there's a subconscious element too: If your interviewer likes you and responds well to you, he or she is likely to give you a much better score or recommendation than otherwise.

Interviewers tend to follow a script – asking the same questions helps make the process fair to all applicants – so there are limited opportunities for you to shine. But when the interviewer asks, “Do you have any questions for me?” then you have an opportunity to shine. Use it to show yourself as engaged, eager and a good (potential) co-worker. Failing to ask any questions makes you look uninterested and uninteresting (not to mention even lazy and/or entitled).

Also, asking thoughtful, interesting questions will lead the interviewer to invest in you by providing answers, and maybe even confide in you a little bit, which helps the relationship between you and your interviewer feel like, well, a relationship. The interviewer will subconsciously remember that positive connection with you when crafting his/her recommendations to the higher-ups. Here are 10 impressive questions to ask in an interview:

1. “How long have you worked here? What do you like most about it?”

Obviously, if the interviewer has introduced him/herself and already told you how long they've worked with the company, skip that part. But the second part of the question lets the interviewer

talk about him or herself (and who doesn't enjoy that?) and lets you know whether employees enjoy working there.

2. “Where else have you worked in the company?”

The word “else” is in this question because most interviewers will tell you their current job as a way to introduce themselves. Obviously, if they haven't told you where they work, just ask them. The answer can provide some insight into the broader culture of the company and provoke good follow-up questions like, “Which job was your favorite?” Ultimately, this question will give you a good sense of the company while letting the interviewer connect with you by talking about him or herself, building more rapport between you and maybe a more positive impression.

3. “How do you respond when an employee comes up with a good idea?”

It's important to ask this question innocently, because if you're not careful it will come off like a challenge. But it's an invitation to the interviewer to explain a bit of the company culture, namely how it values and responds to employees, and makes you seem like you're ready to start improving things right off the bat.

4. “Is there much opportunity for overtime?” or “Do you keep things running during weekends?”

Tailor this question to the type of job in question. “Overtime” applies to workers who earn an hourly wage, weekend work to salaried employees. It will make a big difference in your quality of life, so it falls in the category of things important to you. But this is the question of someone interested in the job.

5. “What are my advancement opportunities in the long-term?”

You probably want to add the “in the long-term” part because otherwise this question could be taken to mean you're not satisfied with the job at



stake in the interview (you may not be, of course, but don't tell the interviewer that!). But this is another question that shows you're thinking of committing to the job, because you're thinking about an extended future with the company.

6. "Is there a chance I'll be relocated?"

This is another question that shows interest in the company as a long-term career, and it's good to know if you just completed your final PCS.

7. "Am I replacing someone? What happened to them? What did you like best about their work?"

These questions will provide some free mentoring upfront, along with an idea of the actual expectations of the job (as contrasted with the on-paper expectations of the job posting). Of course, you might get, "I'm not comfortable talking about that," which usually means the former job occupant was fired, or they were promoted, which allows you to follow up with a question about advancement. Either way, good information to have, and good searching questions from someone

serious about succeeding in the job.

8. "What are common mistakes people have made in this position?"

If you're serious about the job, make sure you note the answers by writing them down. This is another way to get some upfront mentoring, and will impress the interviewer by showing you take your performance seriously.

9. "What do you find most exciting about this company?"

A fun, feel-good question that gives the interviewer an opportunity to talk, and which will give you a practical look at daily life working there and/or an idea of the practical goals of the company.

Bonus: Questions to avoid in an interview

Just as the right questions create a favorable impression of your eagerness and investment in the job, so also the wrong questions can sour an interviewer on you. If that happens, they can find any pretext to push other candidates ahead.

Avoid asking questions (or using a tone) that imply you

aren't impressed with the company, like "Do you have any community service initiatives?" or "Do you use [insert specialized software or system] at this company?"

Don't ask about benefits, because it makes you seem entitled. Don't mention your minimum required salary. When they offer you the job, then is the time to talk compensation and benefits.

Don't ask if they've employed a lot of veterans – you don't want to create the impression that you're looking for a former-military environment, because they want someone to integrate into their culture, not impose another.

Just remember that you need this interview to result in a job offer, and that largely depends on the [impression of the interviewer](#). What will distinguish you in his or her mind from other seemingly qualified candidates is whether you seem like a good fit. The game here is to make them like and respect you while feeling comfortable that you'd be a good addition. You have a lot more leverage for negotiation when they finally offer you the job.

3 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER ASK IN AN INTERVIEW

WRITTEN BY DEIDRE GRIEVES FOR GIJOBS.COM



The interview process is a two-way street. The interviewer wants to find out about you and whether you will be a good fit for the position, but as a candidate up for the role, you should also be prepared to ask questions to figure out if the company is somewhere you want to work.

Prepping in advance and coming into the interview prepared to ask some essential questions is encouraged and expected by most companies, there are a few things you should steer clear of asking altogether.

Here are three questions you should never ask in an interview:

1. “What does your company do?”

If you want the employer to kick you to the curb and disqualify you from the hiring process, this is the question that will do it. Companies expect applicants to do basic research about the company and come in with a general understanding of what the company does.

If you do research in advance of the interview, it shows that you’re willing to take initiative. It also proves that you’re interested the position and the company rather than just getting a job anywhere.

2. “Will you check my Facebook page?”

If you’re worried about whether or not a potential employer is going to see your social media

accounts, you’re probably already at a disadvantage. Chances are, the interviewer will check your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts prior to meeting you or shortly after the interview. By asking whether or not the company will check social media accounts, you’re already admitting to some kind of incriminating behavior.

If you are searching for a job, make sure to comb your social media pages in advance and remove photos, posts, or interactions that may be detrimental to your job search. If you don’t want to delete items or accounts, set your privacy settings so that you have control over who sees what.

3. “What’s the salary?”

Although the salary associated with a specific position is one of the most important things to consider when deciding whether to accept a new job, it is never a good idea to bring up money during a first interview. You want to avoid sounding greedy.

Most companies will ask you for salary requirements with your application. If you get a call back for an interview, the job likely fits within your range. Find out about the company first, make the interviewer aware of your credentials and what you would bring to the table, and save the salary discussion for the second or final interview.



SECTION 7:

POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A JOB OFFER LETTER

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



When you're offered a job, you usually receive a "job offer letter" which spells out the job, the compensation and any benefits. This is a courtesy from the hiring company so that you can make an informed decision.

Veterans often take a military attitude toward civilian job offers, accepting the first one without question because in the military, you take your orders and execute. Besides, the salary and benefits are pretty much the same in the military, no matter what the duty station. In the civilian world, compensation can vary widely, so consider these elements of the offer letter well, because they'll have a big impact on your civilian life.

Salary, bonuses and other forms of compensation. If you're like most applicants, the first thing you look for in an offer letter is the salary. How much money will you make? However, be prepared to see a lower salary than you're expecting (in some cases). Many companies make bonuses part of their compensation package as a way to ensure full effort from their employees. Or, they expect you to work a certain amount of overtime, which "makes up" what you were expecting. Some companies provide stocks as part of compensation, usually reserved for you and transferred

to your name on a schedule (so you have to remain with the company for a certain period of time to get their full benefit).

In any case, before you get upset or crack the champagne, make sure you understand the entirety of the offer. Then you have to consider if you're still interested.

Time investment. Military veterans very often fail to consider the work hour expectation of a civilian job, usually because they have worked long hours during deployments, training exercises and busy periods in their military service. There's also a general perception that military sacrifices are much worse than anything in the civilian world. Unfortunately, that's not always true. And recruiters often target veterans for jobs that are military-like in terms of time sacrifices and field work.

Some jobs require being on call and traveling a lot. Others require (or expect) a great deal of overtime. The military actually offers a fairly generous holiday package (days off on every federal holiday? Absolutely unheard-of in the civilian world, outside grade schools) and four weeks of vacation a year, which lessen the sting of long hours, overnights and time away from home.

Civilian jobs offer nowhere near the benefits, and without the esprit de corps of a military unit, those sacrifices may seem like a huge burden and make you very unhappy.

Don't accept a job without figuring how much of your own time you'll have to invest. And augment the expectations spelled out in the job description and offer letter with a bit of research on sites like Glass Door, which posts reviews of jobs from current and former employees. The commitment may be worth the money, of course, but you'll want to make that decision yourself before saying yes.

Health Care. The recently passed Affordable Care Act mandates that you have health insurance. The offer letter should tell you whether your company provides it, and if so, what your options are. Generally you'll have to pick between a high-premium, low-deductible option and a low-premium, high-deductible option (if not others as well). The decision on which one you'll use depends on how often you think you'll need health care: usually, you'll pay out-of-pocket all costs up to your deductible limit with certain exceptions (like checkups). So if you will be going to the doctor's office



often, choose a low deductible and suck up the high premium.

Also, keep in mind that you may have access to [TriCare Reserve Select](#) if you remain in the reserves. Often that's a better plan and less expensive than what a company can offer.

Relocation expenses. If you're going to have to move to take this job, will the company help out? How much will you pay out-of-pocket? You can use your final PCS for a relocation, but only if you have the job lined up several weeks before you EAS. It's a good reason to get started early on that transition.

Considered less often is the commute implications of the job offer. Many veterans are so excited to get a job they sign on immediately, thinking nothing of an hour's commute. But all that time in the car can come at a cost to health and family life. If the offer is more than an hour away from your current house, considering asking for a relocation package from the company. Or, consider whether you need to invest in newer, or more fuel-efficient, transportation.

Vacation and personal days. Trendy tech companies like to provide creative benefits like "personal days" and generous vacation packages. Old-school companies often make you "earn" your benefits by working for a year. But if you've got plans over the summer, or an annual trip that you take with you family, or you just want to have time to hunt in the fall, you should consider whether your new job will allow it, and under what conditions. It may or may not

be a deal-breaker, but don't allow yourself to be unpleasantly surprised after you take the job.

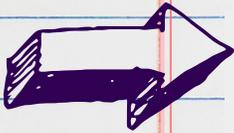
Retirement. Military veterans often have a lot to learn about retirement. Of course, by exiting the military, veterans no longer have access to the 20-year fixed-benefit retirement. And many veterans, exiting the military young, think they have time to "figure it out." But because most civilian retirement plans rely on investment, it's vital to start putting in money immediately.

The "gold standard" of retirement plans is a company-matching 401(k). The identifier "401(k)" refers to the paragraph and subparagraph of the federal law that establishes such accounts and authorizes the tax structure. [Visit this article to learn more about these accounts and how they match up with the TSP.](#) Your offer letter should specify exactly how much the company will contribute to your retirement account, if at all, and you should consider that when figuring if you intend to use their plan, or find something else.

Now it's time to decide. Realistically, you may not be in a position to simply refuse a job if you don't like the salary structure, benefits or work schedule. The job market can be tough. But knowing what to expect, and planning for it, can make the difference between a good life and a miserable one. What job you take may influence where you live, what your spouse does or at least how you plan your finances. So pay attention to the offer letter and accept it — or refuse it — with open eyes.

5 RULES EVERY TRANSITIONING VET NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT HOW TO NEGOTIATE A JOB OFFER

WRITTEN BY MELANIE BRASSFIELD FOR GIJOBS.COM



Let's be candid. You may have negotiated a hostage release, brokered a major agreement between organizations, and mediated a dispute between workmates. But chances are you have NEVER negotiated your own salary. It's time to learn how to negotiate a job offer!

The military very conveniently offers a fixed-price salary. No performance-based pay, no overtime – you need a promotion to garner a pay raise. Are you starting to get excited? Your post-military job will pay you what you are worth and proactively reward you for your progress, achievements and accomplishments. Or will it?

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of companies will not deliberately set out to lowball you on a salary offer. But this doesn't mean the offer they give you is THE MOST they are willing to pay. Are you willing to miss out on thousands each year just because you didn't feel comfortable asking for more?

There is a lot of research you need to do before talking salary with your potential employer. You should understand the market, your professional worth and the scope of the position on offer. Once you are ready to go, it is crucial that you keep these five rules in mind.

1. Your new employer couldn't care less how much the military paid you

That's right. The salary you earn this year probably won't factor into an employer's offer. While [military compensation calculators](#) are valuable tools that help you understand what you earn, it is important to recognize that your military salary compensates you for your military job. Your future employer will base your salary offer on three factors: the scope of the new position, the relevant value and experience you bring, and your market value in the local area.

2. Timing is everything

The ideal time to discuss salary is when you have a job offer in hand. If you start talking salary

prior to an offer, you can price yourself out of consideration. Perhaps worse, you may reveal that you are willing to work for less than the company was planning on offering.

3. He who mentions money first loses

Salary negotiations strategies are just like poker, salary negotiation rarely favors the candidate who plays their cards first. If you are the first to mention a number, it is unlikely you will receive more than that. If the employer provides you with their monetary offer first, you can probably negotiate an increase.

4. It is a business negotiation

Don't get personal, even if you feel offended by the offer. Remember that the people you are speaking with are part of the team you will be working with next week. Don't get emotional, make sure you justify your requests, and be prepared to give a little and not just take.

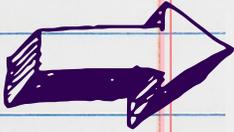
5. Money isn't everything

Perhaps the company doesn't have room to move on the salary. Perhaps they know their offer is slightly below market average, but they have a world-class professional development program. Factor in the benefit package when considering the salary offer. If the company can't meet your salary request, you may be able to negotiate added extras such as additional leave, a hiring bonus, flexible work arrangements, or a course that you want to take.

Learning how to negotiate a job offer can be a daunting process for transitioning veterans, but rest assured, it will feel more comfortable each time you do it. As added motivation to start the conversation, imagine how you will feel six months from now if you learn that most people in your position started on a higher salary. Study the rules, watch out for our upcoming article on asking the question, and get ready to negotiate.

5 GOOD ANSWERS TO 'WHAT'S YOUR DESIRED SALARY?'

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW KLOBUCHER FOR GIJOBS.COM



You applied to your dream job, received a call-back for an interview, and the company offered you the job. Congratulations!

Now they've asked you what you want to make – and you don't want to either jeopardize the job offer or undersell yourself. To find out exactly how much money you need to make as a civilian go to the [military to civilian pay calculator page](#).

Here are five good interview questions and answers you can give:

1. "I'm asking for [amount] a year"

This is the most straightforward answer, and it may be the most difficult thing to say in a discussion about a job offer. There's a little art to the number you throw out first and the conversation that follows, but remember this isn't a negotiation to buy a used car. Of course you are going to try to get the highest salary you can, but being unrealistic, pushy or acting entitled will contribute to your reputation. As a general rule, start about 10 to 15 percent above your desired number to give yourself some room.

A question about salary should never take you by surprise. Once you get called for

an interview, you should begin considering your minimum requirements for working at the company that called you. After your interview, [calculate your required salary](#), which should be based on your military salary, the cost of living (including rent, which was previously covered by BAH), civilian expenses like healthcare, and any adjustments for paying taxes on your whole income rather than a salary or additional responsibilities. That way you have a number in mind if someone offers you the job – and when you tell them your number, you can explain how you got there so you don't look like you're asking for the moon.

2. "I'm looking for [amount] an hour"

Many jobs in manufacturing, service, and industry pay their employees hourly. The advantage of this payment method – for both employer and employee – is that it compensates for the amount of work. Also, you get extra money if you're working overtime, which you won't get with a salary.

Before you accept a wage, however, you need to make sure it's enough. Full-time employment is technically 36 or more hours a week, though in the vast majority of cases it's 40 hours. Make sure that you know

what the full-time schedule is, so you can calculate what your wage should be. A good rule of thumb is to count on working 2000 hours a year (50 weeks at 40 hours a week), which gives a little cushion of about 80 hours for those days you won't be able to make it to work – and therefore won't get paid – due to sickness, various appointments, car trouble or weather.

Also, ask whether overtime is available. Some companies award overtime to good employees – they get the chance to make more money. Other companies plan to work 15-30 hours of overtime a month. If there's steady overtime available, you may factor that into your calculations of the minimum wage you plan to accept – but be careful that you don't assume more than half the overtime the company promises you. Overtime is a higher expense for the company, so they try to avoid it.

3. "I'm looking for [specific benefits]"

Most veterans think only in terms of money when they transition: will my job provide as much money as the military did? But the military provides a lot more than salary – in fact, the actual salary portion of military pay is quite low. It's the allowances and benefits that make military



compensation so competitive (and it certainly is compared to equivalent civilian positions!).

Remember that your military compensation included free or low-cost healthcare, with no premiums; it provided a cost-of-living-adjusted tax-free allowance for housing; it granted a positively European four-plus weeks of vacation. Companies may allow benefits like these as bargaining chips to keep their labor costs down. If they do offer sponsored healthcare and lots of vacation or generous holidays, or something like childcare, then you may be willing to accept less money than you originally thought. But don't assume that company healthcare is free! Even company plans come with premiums you have to pay, so be sure to ask what the costs are of those benefits and factor that into the discussion.

4. "I can't accept less than [amount]"

Many veterans are nervous about negotiating salary because they're used to the "take it or leave it" attitude of the military, and maybe they're afraid that if they try to negotiate, they'll seem ungrateful and cause the company to rescind the job offer. Nothing could be farther from the truth! A company does not offer a job lightly, and the worst that will happen is they'll give you a "hard ceiling" at the most they can (or are willing) to pay you. But they will look out for their bottom line, too – if they can convince you to work for less money, they will.

It's arguably worse to end up in a job that doesn't pay as much as you need than it is to be unemployed for a few more weeks, chiefly because it's much harder to search for a job when

you already have one. So at least be ready to tell whoever's offering the job your "hard floor," the minimum you're willing to accept.

5. "I think [amount] is a fair salary"

Sometimes the job you're being offered is a step above what you've done before. In fact, the easiest way to get a raise is often to change companies – if they think you can make a difference, employers are willing to pay a premium to lure you away from your previous job. Contrast that to the company that already employs you, which is fighting the temptation to continue to get good work without paying any more. An answer like this only works, however, if you know you'd be difficult to replace.

Some of your leverage in this type of salary discussion is lost if you're coming straight from the military, which has a fixed pay scale. Companies in this case don't need to lure you out, you're transitioning already. But you can point out that the job you're being offered is the equivalent of a rank up from what you had, and that you deserve more money than you received in the military. You can also note that the military relocated you for free, and that the company saved that cost and therefore can afford a higher salary (or at least a signing bonus). Just be prepared to "split the difference" with the company as far as savings – they have a skin in this game too. Why would they take a chance on you in an important position if they could pay someone who's already done it successfully? Because you're less money, of course! So remember that you might get more in that situation, but you won't get as much as someone more qualified or with more experience than you.

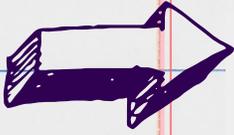


SECTION 8:

SHOULD I GO BACK TO SCHOOL?

APPLYING TO COLLEGE AFTER THE MILITARY

WRITTEN BY CORY ANDERSON FOR G.I. JOBS



Applying to college after the military can be daunting, and I wish I had known about the GIJobs.com [School Matchmaker Tool](#) when I first started my search for the perfect school.

Instead, I began with the most logical thing I could think of: combing university websites and requesting information. I should have avoided this, because I, like most people I know, do not appreciate a full inbox all the time. I was bombarded and continue to be bombarded with emails, brochures and webinar invites.

It's nice to be wanted, at least.

What the process did teach me is that universities want veterans. Veterans bring a unique perspective to the table and broaden the greater student body experience.

Universities also know veterans are well-funded candidates (thank you [GI Bill](#)) and have a high likelihood of sticking out an entire degree program because veterans are trained to see things through to the finish.

Truthfully, the hardest part about [going back to school after the military](#) was figuring out a degree program that set me up to pursue my ambitions.

Take it from me: Not knowing what you want to do is a bad thing.

Figure that out first so you don't end up taking a bunch of unnecessary tests. I took the LSAT and the GRE and then decided to attend business school. I probably did that backwards and don't recommend it to anyone, but it's a pretty common theme in the military.

See, most of us join the service at age 18, are told what to do and when to do it for years, and are kept so busy we rarely think about life after the uniform. You must make time to think about your future because at some point, whether retiring or separating after the minimum obligated service, we are all asked to hang up the uniform. Life goes on, and must.

As I assessed where to apply to business school, I focused on those programs that fit my geographic needs and work timeline. Wanting to stay in the Bay Area, I looked at UC Berkeley, Stanford and the University of San Francisco (USF).

I learned that each school offers an executive degree program tailored for people with work experience who also desire to continue working

through school. At first, I was intimidated by the prospect of Stanford and USF because they are private schools and the tuition exceeds [GI Bill](#) allowances.

Then a friend told me about the [Yellow Ribbon Program](#) and my fears dissolved – I no longer felt the need to narrow my search to UC Berkeley and other state schools (visit [militaryfriendly.com](#) to learn more).

In order to refine my school search even more, I contacted the veteran program at each school's registrar office. With San Francisco holding the dubious title of "most expensive city" in the country, I really wanted to know about the scope of their [Yellow Ribbon Program](#) and make sure I would not be paying any tuition out of pocket. They were incredibly helpful, and explained the application and tuition process in an efficient and clear manner. They were also eager to explain that San Francisco commands the most generous housing allowance based on the affluent ZIP code.

With my financial concerns relieved, I focused on the best fit for my cultural desires and career intentions.

CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE. These five words were the first thing I noticed on USF's website, and they continue to resonate with me. I think they resonate with every veteran on some level, because whether we know it or not, we signed up to effect positive and noticeable change on the world. The idea of continuing that mission as a civilian appealed to me, so I signed up for a business school information session and met with the program director. She had me attend a morning of classes to see if there was a culture fit. In class I was surrounded by hard-chargers – business leaders who understood success is directly proportional to constant learning. I applied, was accepted, and I'm proud to say I'll be attending the University of San Francisco this fall.

The [GI Bill](#) just might be the most comprehensive and lucrative education benefit offered by any company. If used wisely, it can be your blank check to a better future. So figure out what you want to be when you grow up. Consider what education requirements you need to get there. Research what school is best for you. Take the necessary steps to get accepted. Then go change the world.

HOW TO TRANSLATE YOUR MILITARY TRAINING INTO COLLEGE CREDITS

WRITTEN BY MARTY LEVINE FOR G.I. JOBS



Many veterans heading to school can get college credit for their military training and experience, including leadership development courses. Coupled with classes they may have completed during active duty, this could give some student veterans a big head start on their post-military education. We'll outline how you can translate your military training into college credits.

Credit transfer policies vary widely by state and institution, so it is critical that service members planning to attend college when they separate start the process early. Transitioners must understand the credit transfer policy at the schools they are considering and should ask the schools to review their transcripts.

Three organizations offer assistance to service members pursuing a degree during and after their service:

1. [The American Council on Education \(ACE\)](#) evaluates how much and what kind of credit to award for

2. [Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges consortium \(SOC\)](#) awards credits for military training and academic testing.
3. [Defense Activities for Non-traditional Education Support \(DANTES\)](#) manages the work of the SOC and offers several specialty education programs.

“One of the biggest challenges is for the service member to understand credit transfer policies at an institution,” says Michele S. Spires, ACE’s director of military programs and an Air Force spouse. “It’s a whole different language.” Spires is the lead member of an ACE team that evaluates military courses and occupations for a match in civilian higher education.

Take a current service member whose MOS is in the engineering field, Spires says. Given this experience, he may want to add an engineering degree to his resume. Some institutions of higher

education will carefully evaluate the Soldier’s specific military training and MOS and find the matching credits in their engineering curriculum. Others may not allow any ACE credit recommendations to count toward an engineering degree. Instead, the institution may sweep them into the general education category.

Thus, while this service member may believe he is eligible for a certain number of engineering credits – turning his military experience into completed courses in his major – some universities may not allow that to happen. See the “ACE Checklist” to make certain the credit transfer process is clear from its earliest stages.

ACE helps veterans and current service members by creating easily accessible web transcripts of their military training. “That transcript also helps the service member articulate their experience in civilian language,” Spires said.

ACE also publishes A Transfer Guide:

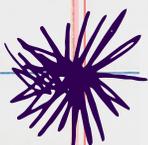
Understanding Your Military Transcripts and ACE Credit Recommendations .

Spires notes that university officials can counsel and advise service members to determine where their transcript will take them – how to leverage their existing MOS and credits.

It’s uncertain how many veterans fail to take advantage of their ACE credit recommendations. In talks with service members, Spires’ ACE team found that some were able to apply their ACE credits successfully; others could not, but were not seeking a degree that related directly to their MOS; and yet others felt that their university or other higher education institution didn’t do a good job of matching service to college.

In the end, making sure credit is awarded properly will always be up to the individual student. “There still is a need to communicate to veterans and service members the value of their military transcripts,” Spires says.





Ace Checklist

What's the best way to make certain you get the educational credits you deserve? The American Council on Education offers this handy checklist:

- **Do your research:** Make sure the school you choose to attend gives you the maximum credit for nontraditional learning methods.
- **Every school is different:** Learn how they handle credit transfers before you ask them to handle yours.
- **Check your military transcript:** early and often online.
- **Ask your school to review your official transcripts** (including those from other schools) as early as possible.
- **Avoid unnecessary classes** by consulting with an academic adviser early on. Be sure to have a copy of your transcripts and your DD-214.
- **Take charge:** follow up with all the academic departments handling your credit transfers.

Save Time and Money

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) offer standardized tests that allow service members and veterans to receive college credit for what they already know. The tests, which are available in 33 areas such as math, science, English, foreign language and history, can save time and money.

5 Steps to CLEP®

1. Find out if your college accepts CLEP. Use the [CLEP college search](#) and talk to your admissions office, test center or academic advisor.
2. Read descriptions of all 33 exams. Decide and which one to take.
3. Register to take your exam(s). contact a CLEP test center and making an appointment.
4. Start studying. Get a college textbook and review sample questions.
5. Take your test! For information on tests administered by DANTES, visit dantes.doded.mil.

POST-9/11 G.I. BILL BENEFITS

WRITTEN BY MIKE ASPER FOR G.I. JOBS



If you have at least 90 days of aggregate active duty service after Sept. 10, 2001, and are still on active duty, or if you are an honorably discharged Veteran or were discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days, you may be eligible for Post-9/11 GI Bill, a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' administered program, according to www.benefits.va.gov.

But do you really understand your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits?

Do you know what type of degree and non-degree education is covered?

Do you realize what financial support is available for you and your family?

As you're beginning your separation from the military and head to school, we're sure you have questions and we have answers.

Here's an updated version of what you need to understand about your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

1.56 MILLION

Number of veterans and dependents who have used the Post-9/11 GI Bill since Aug. 1, 2009



\$61.6 BILLION

Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits paid by VA since Aug. 1, 2009

REMEMBER:

You must have received an **honorable discharge** to be eligible.



WHO'S ELIGIBLE?

- Those with 90 days of aggregate service after Sept. 10, 2001
- Those who have been discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days
- National Guard members mobilized on Title 32 on or after Sept. 11, 2001

WHAT'S COVERED?

- Undergraduate and graduate degrees
- Vocational/technical training
- On-the-job training
- Flight training
- Correspondence training
- Licensing and national testing programs
- Entrepreneurship training
- Tutorial assistance





WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Benefit levels range from 40 percent to 100 percent and are payable for 15 years following your release from active duty.

IS THE MHA AVAILABLE WHILE ON ACTIVE DUTY?

No.



WHO GETS THE 100 PERCENT?

Those who have served at least 36 months on active duty since Sept. 10, 2001.



HOW MUCH IS AVAILABLE FOR BOOKS/SUPPLIES?

The VA will pay an annual books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000 directly to full-time students, including active duty service members.



IS THERE ANY BENEFIT FOR RELOCATION TO GO TO SCHOOL?

A one-time payment of \$500 may be payable to certain individuals relocating from highly rural areas.



MIND THE CAP

If you are attending a private or foreign school, tuition and fees are capped at \$21,970.46 per academic year. However, if you are attending a private institution in AZ, MI, NH, NY, PA, SC or TX, you may be eligible for a higher tuition reimbursement rate.

HOW IS IT PAID?

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) makes tuition payments directly to the school.



ARE DEPENDENTS ELIGIBLE?

The Post-9/11 GI Bill does offer some service members the opportunity to transfer their GI Bill to dependents.

MONTHLY HOUSING ALLOWANCE (MHA)?

- If you're a full-time student, you can receive a monthly stipend for living expenses equal to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) of an E-5 with dependents in the same ZIP code as your school.
- The prorated MHA is based on the students' percentage of training time, rounded up to the nearest tenth.
- For those enrolled solely in distance learning, the housing allowance payable is equal to one-half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents.
- For those attending foreign schools (schools without a main campus in the U.S.), the MHA rate is fixed for each academic year.
- The academic year begins on Aug. 1.
- The MHA is not paid when school is not in session.



WHERE CAN YOU APPLY FOR YOUR BENEFITS?

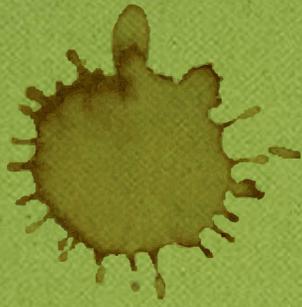
Applications are available through the VA at gibill.va.gov.



Ready to use your G.I. Bill? Check out our School Matchmaker to find the school that will help you land your dream career.
<http://www.gijobs.com/schools-for-veterans/>

We sincerely hope you enjoyed the MOAT as much as we did putting this beast together. More importantly, we hope that you picked up some golden nuggets of intel that you can use to help advance your civilian career! We've got a pretty awesome team of veterans and civilians working hard every day to provide YOU—our service members and veterans—the tools and resources you need. Join us and gain immediate access to an arsenal of training, tools and other kick-@\$ info, including our magazine.





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