Why I am in coding school

I started the University of Utah Full-Flex Coding Bootcamp in September of 2020. You see, I have a lot of experience and education. Around here where I live though, it is not good enough. The fact that I spent my last 2 years in the Army on the Army Staff as the Senior Enlisted Operations Sergeant (the same as a Project and Program Manager) for all 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia National Guard isn’t grasped here. I was the Senior Enlisted guy that was over the planning, individual and collective training, strength management, and thee planning and mobilization for contingency operations both domestically and internationally for over 365,000 Soldiers. Nor does it register with potential employers that I have been in project or program management for the last fifteen to twenty years in the Army. Here is an example. I was the senior planner for the development and implementation for two Special Operations Courses that are still being used today more than 20 years after I helped stand them up.

One course provides medical recertification for all Navy SEAL Corpsmen and Special Forces Medical Sergeants. They must attend a course every two years. The other course prepares initial entry candidates who enlisted for Special Forces for the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) and the Small Unit Tactics portion of the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC). What that took to stand up simply does not click with most civilian employers. There were timelines to meet, people to task and monitor, milestones that had to be hit, a rather significant budget where every cent had to be accounted for, there was building acquisitions to be made, beds, lockers, linen, classroom furniture, washer and dryers,. That is just on the student living facilities. There was land that had to be acquired and surveyed for training, vehicles and ATV purchases, communication equipment purchases, tactical gear, weapons, ammunition and pyrotechnics, and the list goes on.   
  
Imagine my surprise after all the experience and knowledge I possessed from 26 years in the Army (I even managed to get a Master’s Degree in Security Management with a concentration in Terrorism Studies with a 4.0 GPA) that during job interviews the deciding factor came down to three questions:

1. Do you have an MBA?
2. Do you have Project Management Certification?
3. Do you have experience in whatever they were making (construction, software, or concrete and steel?

It is unique that around here most companies wanting a project manager focus on one of three fields: Construction, Concrete and Steel, or software development. I have no experience in those areas, but I am great at managing projects. So, I went back to school and got my MBA with Project Manager Certification. You would think I would now be able to get most any job in Project Management here in Utah Valley. Nope the third question still isn’t checked off. But nonetheless, when you look at the job experience required in the job description, there it is…software development experience required. So I decided to learn how to code. When I am finished then I can say ‘Yes’ I have experience in software and coding. I am spending six months enhancing my tool kit because employers here do not understand the value a trained and experienced Project Manger brings to the table.  
  
So I will get a job in software Project Management when I get done. Will I write code there? Probably not. Will I trouble shoot code? Nope. But what I will do is manage projects, form teams, break down requirements in to work packages, assign the work packages, and monitor the progress. That’s what I do and I do it well.