

Veteran (Veterati) Transition Basics

Exit Physical.

- *This is all-important, there is nothing more critical to your transition, bar none.
- **Get the VA to review the DoD exit physical or perform a separate VA physical.
- **Get a third party - Green Beret Foundation/Disabled American Veterans,(DAV), to review everything for discrepancies and oversights.
- *Have your spouse/someone you trust, look at the paperwork for the same.
- *Compare your “entrance physical” to your “exit physical” in great detail.
- *The best time to get things right with the VA is when you separate, not later.
- *Ask around the community for techniques, tactics, procedures, (TTP), on your exit physical and VA disability ratings.

Education.

- *Smart to use GI Bill to secure degrees, but “measure twice and cut once”. Don't jump into a degree program in the first year after active duty unless you are 100% sure of both the degree functional area and the institution.
- **How will pursuing a degree immediately after transition affect my: finances, work, family, 2nd career, stress level?
- *Will my employer support my degree pursuit with a flexible schedule and financial support?
- *No time limit to use GI Bill benefits.
- *GI bill is transferable to spouse or children.
- *Future employers, (professional companies), should support your degree/certificate pursuit with a flexible work schedule and perhaps financial support. They will expect something in return - usually time-in-service. Your company doesn't support, (and reward), your degree pursuit? - Find a company that does.

Transition programs.

- *For Green Berets: -The community's “Commit Foundation” has a very good reputation.
- * <https://greenberetfoundation.org/transition-support/>
- Sam Havelock, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/samhavelock/>, has a great newsletter (SOFX).
- *Everyone: Take advantage of SkillBridge Program, compensation negotiating class, mock interviews, resume/digital profile assistance, etc., to get the most out of it.
- * “Civilianize” your resume and digital profiles.
- * <https://www.uso.org/programs/uso-pathfinder-transition-program>

Networking.

- *Most jobs aren't publicly advertised.
- **Most jobs, advertised or not, are filled by networking of some kind; applicants known to current employees, applicants known to someone the employee knows, (and trusts), or recruiters. Few jobs are filled by blindly interviewing random resumes that survived the artificial intelligence, (AI),-powered algorithm “keyword” screening.
- *If there is a company you want to work for, network with their current employees via LinkedIn. Don't ask for a job, just begin a conversation.
- *Most, (all), large companies will have a dedicated "Veteran Relations" executive responsible for recruiting veterans as their primary or alternate duty. Most small companies will have a veteran or two on the roster - reach out to them on LinkedIn.
- *All your digital profiles should have a “summary paragraph” at the top of the profile that includes your “thesis statement” of who you are and what you want - functional area,

geographic location, public or private sector, etc. If you don't know, neither will prospective employers. As important - what you don't want.

****Networking Center of Gravity for:** international relations, intelligence, Foreign Area Officers, security clearance holders, folks moving to the DC area, government contracting, and general "situational awareness" is:

Graham Plaster, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/grahamplaster/>, and his organization TheIntelligenceCommunity.com, which holds weekly virtual/in-person events focused on the above areas. See also: <https://www.natsecgirlsquad.com/> (as appropriate).

Mentorship.

*Cultivate a diverse mentor team: 360 degrees of observation = no surprises.

*Find mentors that are in your functional area and with similar life experiences.

*Find mentors that are not in your functional area and have different life experiences.

Security Clearance.

*The TS-SCI clearance is a license to print money in your basement.

****Create your digital profile on ClearanceJobs.com;** mirror your LinkedIn profile including the summary. Add the recruiters to your LinkedIn Network. If you have a security clearance, and want to use it in your 2nd career, creating a ClearanceJobs.com profile is literally the most important task to complete.

*TS-SCI clearances with a polygraph are the most valuable by far; supply/demand.

*Secret clearances are less valuable than TS clearances, but do have 2nd career value.

*Do everything possible to have your clearance reinvestigated prior to separation.

*Consider all the "alphabet agencies", regional intelligence centers, Unified Combatant Commands, and military bases - and the myriad of companies that feed in that ecosystem.

Entrepreneurs/Small Business Owners. (see also - <https://bunkerlabs.org>)

*Protect yourself with a Limited Liability Corporation,(LLC).

*Research, or hire a tax advisor for LLC tax benefits and LLC "do's and don'ts".

Job Market.

*In 2022, the "baby boomer" generation is leaving the workforce in large numbers, (private sector and especially government sector). This represents a once-in-a-generational opportunity for a post-military, 2nd career.

*<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/great-retirement-exodus-baby-boomers-from-workforce-shannon-henry>

*Know the difference between a "job" and a "career", and how it applies to your situation.

*<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/career-vs-a-job>

Compensation Negotiation.

****Whoever mentions money first - loses.**

*Compensation is more than salary: health care, time off, matching funds for education and retirement, (401k matching), work location, (home/office), maternity leave, etc.

*Your military compensation was much more than your salary - VHA, BAS, hazard pay, language pay, health care, etc. Recruiters/employers will ask this "salary" question.

*Never accept the first offer; counter offer with at least a 10% increase - the hiring manager has a salary range and did not start at the top of that range.

*Negotiate the health care premium savings to the employer that VA/Tricare healthcare represents.