

## Civilian life is not military life

**Darren:** When I got out and retired, it's a lot of apprehension because you're leaving a life that is so structured, it's so routine and you know what kind of policies you have to follow, what kind of uniforms you have to wear, and a whole different speak. And, so, when you get out after 20 years of doing that and you get into the society where they may not have the work ethic or the work values that you are accustomed to, it can be very frustrating.

As well as being an Armor Officer, there's not many tanks out in the real world, I was like well, what the heck am I going to do? My skills are with armored tanks and that type of thing. I wasn't really sure what I was going to do, especially moving back to Minnesota in the area that we live right now has a very small military bases, anything like that, so it's not like I can really go to work at a Fort-something and go to work as a contractor. I had a lot of apprehensions when I got out of what I was going to do, where I would fit in, what kind of job I would get. What I found out is that the skills that you bring out of the military, the leadership skills that, the organizational skills, the commitment, the work ethic and all of that is highly valuable in the civilian life but you have to also realize that civilian life is not military life. And so, when you come in there and try to just go gang busters on something, it doesn't always fly. That was kind of hard getting used to at first, but as long as you can incorporate that, you'll be alright.

I remember some days where my guys would be working 24, 36, 48 hours straight when we were out in the fields, and if a tank went down, they worked until they fixed it. If it was 30 below zero, they were out there working and doing it. If it was 120 degrees, I was stationed in Fort Irwin, California for three years, those guys were still out there working on the tanks, doing what they had to do to get the job done. And when you get into the civilian life, you're kind of punching a clock in a lot of areas. Now, there are some jobs, of course, where you have that work ethic and the timelines and the suspense's and that you have to get them done no matter what. But for the majority of the civilian life you come in at eight and you leave at 4:30 and most of the people are leaving and I find that probably a lot of the military people are sitting there by themselves in their office finishing whatever needed to be done that day. So, I did find that there was kind of sometimes, in some professions, a work ethic that it was punch the clock, nine to five and you were gone.

You have to kind of ease into that and to tell you the truth, the first couple years, I was a workaholic, and especially working in the Pentagon where you're working you know 12, 13 hours a day, six, seven days a week, to come back and only work eight hours a day was different, to say the least. When I was going home at four thirty, I'm like geez, shouldn't I be working another two or three hours? It takes some getting used to. You could almost over-extend yourself I think when you first get out and you have that commitment to the job that maybe not every body else has.



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