

# A SOLDIER FOR LIFE!



# SFL INSIGHTS

ONCE A SOLDIER. ALWAYS A SOLDIER. A SOLDIER FOR LIFE!

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

*By Colonel David Grant, Director, U.S. Army Soldier For Life*

What an amazing time to be a Soldier For Life! In the Army, there are more opportunities for professional and personal development than ever before. Throughout the country, businesses and organizations are taking steps to support, train, and hire transitioning Soldiers, veterans, and military families. Thousands of nonprofit organizations exist with the primary purpose of supporting those who have served. This "Sea of Goodwill" plays an essential role in providing assistance in numerous areas, including health and wellness, education, and employment. It's critical that the military community understands that resources are available AND how to access them. This will make a difference in the lives of those in the military community. **(Cont. Page 2)**



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## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK (CONT.)

### Communication is Key

Communicating the existence of the myriad of available resources to the military community is one of the biggest challenges. If our Soldiers, veterans, and family members are not aware of the support, training, or employment programs that are available, then what good are they to them?

The Soldier For Life team is taking deliberate steps to help ensure that our military community is better aware of the numerous opportunities and programs that are available, including:

- Providing information at company commander and first sergeant pre-command courses at Army installations throughout the country;
- Briefing at unit meetings/training sessions;
- Taking steps towards having Soldier For Life information available during Professional Military Education Courses;
- Utilizing Soldier For Life social media channels and the HRC S1 Net to disseminate information;
- Sharing the Soldier For Life message in communities across the country.

Without a doubt, effective and strategic communication with Soldiers, veterans, and military families is paramount to awareness.

### Military Community Support

Throughout my time as the Director of Soldier For Life, I've had the honor of meeting leaders from numerous organizations that provide support to the military community. During each encounter, I always feel extremely appreciative for the overwhelming amount of support for our military community.

In support of Soldiers who are preparing to leave the military, the Soldier For Life team has collaborated with the ETS-Sponsorship Program, a nonprofit or-

ganization that assigns U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs curriculum trained and certified sponsors to transitioning military personnel and their families. These sponsors provide support in areas such as health and wellness, education, and employment in order to ensure a smooth transition for the Soldier and their family into their new civilian community.



*U.S. Army Photo by Specialist Lilliana Fraser*

Amazingly enough, there is likely a veteran or military support organization available to assist in the achievement of any goal or to meet any need. Employment-wise, if one has an interest in working in the financial sector, trucking sector, or even the cyber sector, there are organizations waiting to assist.

### The Way Forward

Soldier For Life is determined to help ensure that the military community is aware of as many of the wonderful opportunities and support services that are out there as possible.

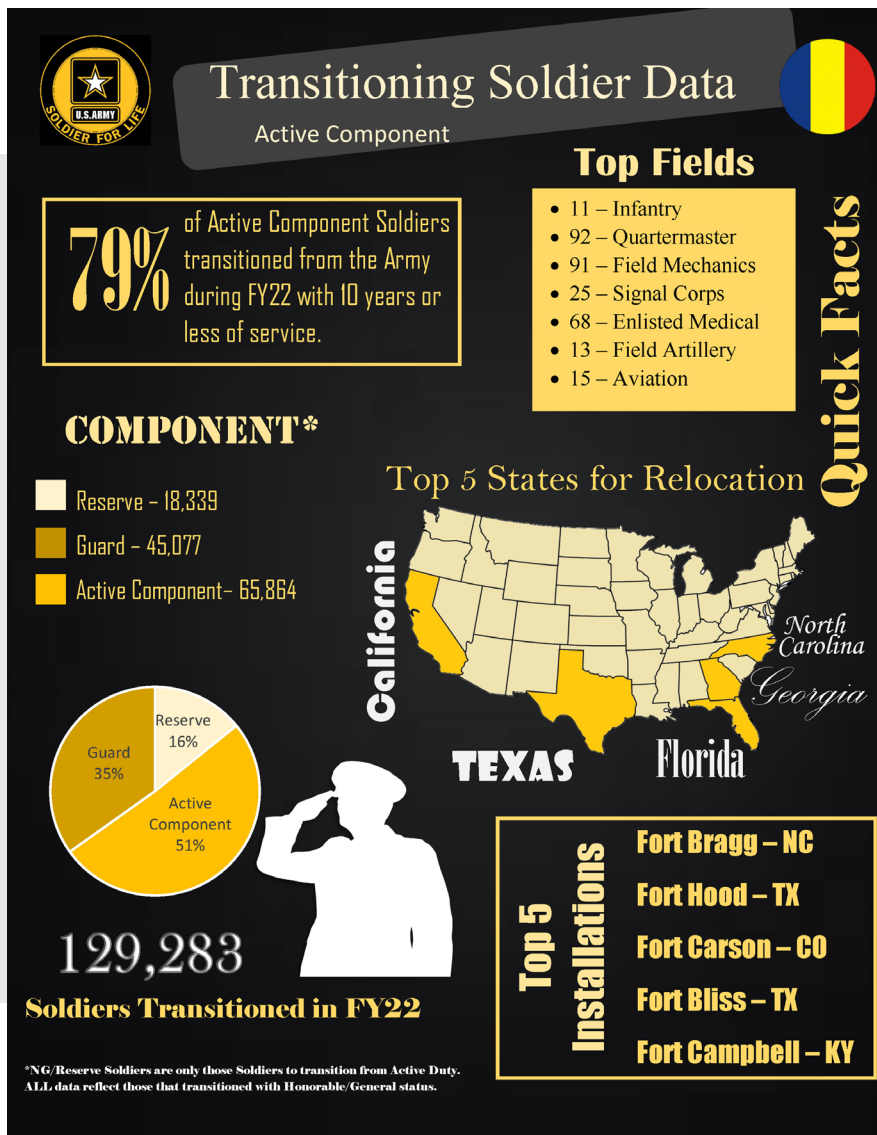
Throughout 2023, the Soldier For Life team looks forward to engaging and connecting with communities across the country in support of Soldiers, veterans, and families. We also look forward to sharing the Soldier For Life message within the Army at the various installations. We'll see you soon!

# ANALYTICS ALLEY: DATA YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TRANSITIONING SOLDIERS

Every year, roughly 65,000 active duty Soldiers transition out of the U.S. Army. In FY22, more than 129,000 Soldiers transitioned across all three components.

In order to better understand and serve our Soldiers who have made the journey back to civilian life, the Soldier For Life Analytics and Research team conducts annual analyses of these transitioned Soldiers to provide a visual of the transitioned population that can be used to provide more employment opportunities to veterans.

We will be highlighting this information in upcoming editions of *SFL Insights* to give our readers more in-depth knowledge about our transitioning and transitioned Soldiers. In the meantime, you can access our most recent and past research data on our [Transitioned Soldier Analytics page](#) on the SFL website.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

DURING FY22, 7,725 SOLDIERS SERVING IN THE ACTIVE COMPONENT TRANSITIONED INTO A ROLE WITHIN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OR ARMY RESERVE. THIS NUMBER ACCOUNTS FOR ROUGHLY 12% OF THE ACTIVE COMPONENT SOLDIERS WHO TRANSITIONED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR.

# ARMY PAYS: MAKING PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUR SUCCESS

By Antonio Johnson, Program Manager, U.S. Army Partnership for Your Success Program

Since moving to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command in late 2019, the U.S. Army Partnership for Your Success (PaYS) program has experienced a myriad of changes. Some of those changes included business processes, personnel realignment, and new management. And like most organizations that undergo such a robust transformation, a rebranding of PaYS was inevitable.

**New Name:** In June 2022, the Partnership for Youth Success program became the Partnership for Your Success program. The program has been a part of the Army for over 22 years and is commonly called the “PaYS” program. Changing “youth” to “your” represents the expansion of the program while keeping the same acronym, as mid-term Soldiers and retirees will soon be able to take advantage of the incentive.

**New Logo:** The new logo has evolved from a combination of previous logos and incorporates the elements of partnership and transition. The new logo also includes the program’s tagline, “Connecting America with Its Army.”

**New Ceremonial Product:** The old wood PaYS plaque and paper certificate have been upgraded to a more modern product. The new acrylic plaque



incorporates the PaYS Certificate of Participation and includes the new name, the Army star logo, and the new PaYS logo. The new ceremonial product is more modern and something that PaYS partners can proudly display in their organizations.

These changes are the first in a series surrounding the new identity of PaYS. A new app is in development that will allow all Soldiers and Army veterans to create an account and apply for vacancies offered by PaYS partners in real time. Additionally, the PaYS database is being redesigned so that Soldiers select their partners at the end of their enlistment obligation rather than at the beginning, allowing more certainty for Soldiers and a faster return on investment for partners.

This is an exciting time for PaYS, as this transformation supports the vision of creating a more efficient, successful, and respected program for the Army, our Soldiers, and our partners.

Stay connected with PaYS. For more information, visit the [PaYS website](#).



# JUMP-START YOUR FUTURE WITH CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE

By Sophia Sweeney, Program Manager, U.S. Army Credentialing Assistance Program and Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line

The U.S. Army Credentialing Assistance (CA) Program can prepare you for meaningful employment upon transition. Eligible Soldiers of all ranks and components can request CA funds to pursue credentials. Even if you can no longer use Tuition Assistance because you've completed your master's degree, you may still be eligible to use CA.

Soldiers can use up to \$4,000 per fiscal year towards CA. Soldiers can also request CA funds for training, fees, books, and materials that will lead to credentialing, and can also pay for the exam and/or recertification.

Soldiers can pursue any of the 1,700+ credentials listed on [Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line \(Army COOL\)](#). To use CA, the credential does not have to align with a Soldier's MOS/AOC. For example, if you are an 11A and want to pursue the Accredited Fi-

nancial Counselor credential, you can. Perhaps you want to earn the Lean Six Sigma Green or Black Belt certification? What about the Senior Professional in Human Resources certification? Both are possible, with many more choices to match your interests. Army COOL also lists Manager and Common Core-type credentials that will enhance Soldier skills.

Search for hot and trending career opportunities on the Army COOL home page, where you will find links for medical career positions, commercial truck driving license, and information technology opportunities.

To take advantage of these great benefits, visit the [Army COOL CA page](#), download the "Soldier CA Process Guide," or contact your servicing education center. Then go to [ArmyIgnitED](#) to submit your request.



## TOP FIVE COOL CREDENTIALS

- o CompTIA Security+
- o Certified Personal Trainer
- o Project Management Professional
- o CompTIA Network+
- o CompTIA A+

# NOTES FROM THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

By Sergeant Major Jeff Cereghino, Military Senior Fellow, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [Veterans Benefits Administration](#) (VBA) provides veterans with the benefits they have earned in a manner that honors their service.

## SkillBridge/Career Skills Program Opportunities

VBA is hiring transitioning service members through the Warrior Training Advancement Course (WARTAC) program. This is a great career opportunity. Two career tracks are available: Veteran Service Representative and Rating Veteran Service Representative. These positions allow a phenomenal promotion path in the federal government and an opportunity to continue to support and serve your fellow brothers and sisters in arms. Classes are available in-person and virtually, allowing service members to participate anywhere they are located. More information is available on the [WARTAC website](#).

## Transition Assistance Program Participation

I highly encourage leaders at their level of influence to have their service members attend the VA portion of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) no later than 180 days prior to separation; otherwise, service members may not be aware of critical and time sensitive deadlines. Application for service-connected injuries and illnesses through the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program must be filed with the VA between 180-90 days prior to their separation date. Information about this critical step and timeline will be covered in the VA portion of TAP. Those who attend training with less than 180 days of separation will most likely not meet the suspense. Transition is stressful, and it takes on average 136 days to process non-fully developed claims. BDD is significant because it allows time for the claim to process while on active duty and opens the full arsenal of benefits that are commensurate with your service member's

service at the point of separation. Those who do not meet this critical timeline will have to wait months for benefits when they could use them the most. Not only is education key, but the timing of that education is just as important. Make a difference by sending your service members to TAP early.



## VA Health Care

Reserve/National Guard eligibility for VA Health Care can be confusing. The law requires a service member to serve 24 continuous months on active duty or the full period for which you were called to active duty under federal orders. It is the lesser of the two criteria; service members may automatically disqualify themselves by not reading the second half of the sentence. There have been a lot of improvements to VA Health Care in recent years and it's a valuable benefit for those who serve their country. Recent studies show that 90.1 percent of veterans trust their VA Health Care. It's always good to explore your options. More information about VA Health Care is available on the VA's [About VA Health Benefits website](#).

# MAKING STRESS WORK FOR YOU

By Major Bryan Spear, Deputy, Secretary of the General Staff, Office of the Surgeon General

Stress is part of life. It's an instinctual reaction to pressure and many scholars agree that short-term, low-intensity stress can actually be a good thing.

Temporary stress (like that caused by a well-planned transition out of the military), can help boost brainpower and increase resilience. But because stress can affect many aspects of our lives, it is best to avoid prolonged, high-intensity stress that can have negative physical, mental, and emotional implications.

So how do you make your stress work for you, rather than inhibit you?



## 1 | KNOW YOUR STRESSORS

An important aspect of managing stress is identifying the possible causes and addressing them proactively. For veterans and military spouses, this includes recognizing the stressors specifically associated with military service.

A [2017 study](#) highlighted unique stressors for transitioning service members as sadness over fallen comrades, loss of military identity, nostalgia for the order and purpose that characterized their service experience, and confusion about military-civilian differences.

It's important to identify your unique stressors before they become overwhelming.

It's also important to remember that stress not only affects you, but your family and loved ones as well. Some of the warning signs of too much stress include insomnia, dramatic weight change, and increased irritability.

## 2 | MANAGE YOUR STRESS

There are multiple ways to deal with the negative effects of stress or even reduce the amount of stress you feel altogether. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recommends several techniques.

**Remain Active.** It's no secret that exercise is good for physical health, but it can also help manage stress and mental health. Maintain the active culture that the military provided for you, even after you are no longer required to do so.

**Relax.** When you're really stressed, you probably feel like there's no time to take a break. But you can't be productive without allowing yourself to decompress sometimes. Find something simple and healthy that relaxes you, and make it a priority.

**Express Yourself.** Don't keep your stress bottled up inside. Make it a habit to talk to family, friends, or a professional about the stressors in your life. Work together to find ways to manage those stressors.

**Stay Positive.** It is important to remain positive regarding your objectives after transitioning from service. Whether you're pursuing school or employment, an optimistic attitude will help. Make a plan, execute it one step at a time, and celebrate meeting small goals.

# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ADVANCING YOUR EDUCATION

By Liz Green, Executive Director, Online Student Success, Syracuse University

Attending college for free may have been the driving force behind why you joined the military. A recent survey by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University showed that educational benefits are the top motivator for joining the armed services. If you haven't used your education benefits, what's stopping you?

## **Barrier #1: I can't see myself in a classroom.**

We see the value in you and we want you in our classrooms. While the thought of going back to school may make you nervous, you will be welcome in all of our classrooms – either in person or online. Your military training infused your adaptability, self-discipline, leadership skills, work ethic, teamwork, and professionalism. You can make our classrooms more dynamic by bringing real world experience and a global perspective. In fact, most service members and veterans typically outperform their non-veteran peers. They are more likely to persist and ultimately graduate at a higher rate than their civilian counterparts. In short, we see the value in you.

## **Barrier #2: I don't know what my benefits are or how to use them.**

We will show you how to maximize your benefits. During and after your time in the armed forces, you have access to a variety of education benefits. With so many options, we understand that it can be confusing to know where to start. Our dedicated team at Syracuse University will help you identify and apply your educational benefits so you can make the most of them.



Are you Active Duty, Reserves, or National Guard? When you enroll in a part-time online undergraduate degree or certificate program through the College of Professional Studies, military tuition assistance covers 100 percent of tuition.

## **Barrier #3: It will take too long to earn my degree.**

You can get college credit for military experience. Hundreds of occupations across each branch of the armed forces have already been evaluated for credit toward a Syracuse University online undergraduate degree. Odds are, you already have professional military education that can translate into college credit and count towards degree requirements, allowing you to earn your degree in a shorter amount of time. We'll work with you to identify potential credits you've earned at other accredited academic institutions (including community colleges), military training and experience on your Joint Services Transcript, or Community College of the Air Force records.

**(Cont. Page 9)**



# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ADVANCING YOUR EDUCATION (CONT.)

## **Barrier #4: Life is too hectic to take classes.**

We have classes that fit your schedule. Finding time to fit classes into your busy schedule can be one of the biggest challenges when earning your degree. That's why we offer a flexible way to attend online classes. With only one live meeting session per week, you can complete most coursework on your own schedule, allowing you to complete your degree while serving, living abroad, traveling, or managing other responsibilities.

## **Barrier #5: I don't know where to start.**

We will support and guide you now and along the way. The idea of applying, enrolling, and succeeding in college can seem overwhelming, but you don't have to go through it alone. Our Office of Online

Student Success is designed to ensure you feel supported as a member of the Syracuse University community from the moment you reach out to us. Your assigned Student Success Advisor will work with you to find the resources and strategies that empower you to succeed both academically and personally.

## **Barrier #6: I'm not sure I'll fit in.**

Syracuse University has established a rich history of supporting military-connected students and has consistently been ranked a top "Best for Vets College." From recognizing the unique experiences that service members and veterans bring to the classroom to providing high-quality resources, Syracuse University values its commitment to offering a supportive and rewarding academic experience to veterans and military-connected students.

## VETERANS BENEFITS NUMBERS TO KNOW



- **National Call Center (Benefits Assistance)**  
1-800-827-1000
- **Education Services**  
1-888-GIBILL1  
(1-888-442-4551)
- **Home Loans**  
1-877-827-3702
- **Homelessness**  
1-877-424-3838
- **VA Health Care**  
1-877-222-VETS  
(1-877-222-8387)
- **VA Solid Start Hotline**  
1-800-827-0611
- **Veterans Crisis Line (24/7)**  
Dial 988 and press 1



## DOL VETS SPOTLIGHT: HIRING MILITARY SPOUSES. . .

*By Sergeant Major Jeremiah Fassler, Sergeant Major of the Army Senior Fellow, U.S. Department of Labor*

Military spouses face barriers to employment related to their mobile military lifestyle, including frequent relocations and extended periods of family separation due to deployments. In 2017, the military spouse unemployment rate was 16 percent, over four times the 2017 rate for all adult women.

The Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) was created to address these unique challenges. MSEP, which is part of the U.S. Department of Defense's Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program, connects military spouses with employers seeking 21st-century job skills. Companies post jobs ranging from entry-level to executive management/leadership using the [MSEP Partner Portal](#). MSEP partners can also find spouse talent directly through a search of spouse candidates. To date, the MSEP has facilitated more than 175,000 spouse hires.

## . . .AND THE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Apprenticeships and other on-the-job training programs represent a valuable investment in the skills of employees and can provide veterans with opportunities to learn specific work-based skills. By becoming "Approved for GI Bill," an organization's registered apprenticeship program can assist current and future veteran apprentices to apply the benefits they've earned. Approved employers can use this benefit as a recruiting tool.

There are many benefits to a company having a registered apprenticeship program with the U.S. Department of Labor to include consulting services, having a level of credibility, having a nationally-rec-

ognized credential that can be a recruiting tool, attracting veterans and those transitioning, as well as increased employee retention reducing turnover costs.

Companies may also be eligible to participate in the Career Skills Program/SkillBridge Program, where the military pays the transitioning service member's salary while in a pre-apprenticeship training program.

For more information, visit the Department of Labor's [Apprenticeship Overview for Employers](#).

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICE ON THE [DOL VETS WEBSITE](#).**

## EMPLOYMENT DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Lieutenant Colonel Ismael Ortizrivera, Employment Director, U.S. Army Soldier For Life

The Soldier For Life employment program engages with and connects the U.S. Army to organizations that support Soldiers, veterans, and their families.

We develop a comprehensive network of resources to help every Soldier, veteran, and family member through all the phases of the Soldier Life Cycle, from initial enlistment to well beyond their time in uniform.

We aim to create an environment where Soldiers, veterans, and families embrace their positive Army experience and return to their communities as Army ambassadors, leaders of character, commitment, service, and an inspiration to the next generation to serve.

Soldier For Life is not about transition but your life as a Soldier. Once you finish Combat Basic Training (CBT), you become a Soldier For Life.

Each day that passes in your military career, you get closer to your transition process. However, because we are different human beings, every Soldier's transition process is unique.

Soldiers in the Army have a particular goal they want to pursue once they join the military. Some Soldiers are determined to make a military career of more than 18 years. Others are determined to complete their contract, go to college, or build a career or trade. Others may transition because of medical reasons. Regardless

of your goal, you must know that once you finish your CBT, you enter a transition process that brings you closer to that goal.

The Army wants you to have the best educational opportunities to pursue a professional career and obtain the certifications and credentials necessary for career progression. At the same time, your education will be of great use to you once you make the transition from service.

Finally, our purpose in the Soldier For Life employment program is to ensure that you know and understand all of the resources that are available to you and to prepare you to reach your highest potential during and after your change of mission.

## WELCOME TO SFL INSIGHTS!

Welcome to the first edition of the all new *SFL Insights* Newsletter! We have a broad mission here at SFL. We conduct community outreach to help engage with and connect the Army and organizations across the country that help our Soldiers, veterans, and Army families. We help shape policies that benefit our military and veteran families. We promote the Soldier For Life mindset. And we share information and resources on education, employment, health and wellness, and other important topics. *SFL Insights* is one more way (along with our SFL Podcast, SFL Live, social media channels, and outreach efforts!) to get you the information that you need to make life easier for your Army family!



US ARMY SOLDIER FOR LIFE HOSTS

# *The 2nd Virtual* **MILITARY SPOUSE HIRING EVENT**

**THURSDAY, MAY 11 @1100-1500 EST**



## **REGISTER TODAY!**

This hiring event will be a great opportunity for all military spouses to engage with dozens of military-friendly organizations that understand their worth.

**CONNECT & NETWORK  
WITH EMPLOYERS  
READY TO HIRE YOU.**

*Organizations like:*

DAV  
GENERAL DYNAMICS  
JOHNS DEERE  
LEIDOS  
PARSONS  
SONAPAR USA  
WELLS FARGO  
UBS FINANCIAL SERVICES  
USAA  
IRS  
IEM  
HCA HEALTHCARE

*are some of those who are interested in you.*



PHOTO BY SGT TRACY R. MYERS  
14TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

<https://rmvets.com/3QaYEzz>

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: USARMYSOLDIERFORLIFE@ARMY.MIL

# SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT



Photo by SFC Benjamin Crane  
Kentucky National Guard PAO

This event occurs during Military Spouse Week as we honor the service and dedication of our spouses. As part of this event series, MSEP, SECO and RecruitMilitary will provide professional development, resources and event platform coaching prior to the event. This is an opportunity to equip you with the tools and knowledge to network and effectively navigate the event.

**RECRUIT MILITARY**



## Virtual Event

This event is completely virtual with the support, coordination and logistics being managed by RecruitMilitary. RecruitMilitary is the contracted employment service provider partner to the United States Army. They provide cost-free military-to-civilian employment service provider, connecting America's

military community with organizations that want to hire and retain **YOU**. This is the third year Soldier for Life (SFL) has had the pleasure of partnering with RecruitMilitary to deliver this no-cost career fair exclusively for military spouses.

## Find Your Next Opportunity Here

This hiring event offers a place for military spouses to connect with multiple military-friendly organizations looking exclusively to hire them. Opportunities span nationwide, OCONUS, and remotely. As an attendee, you can connect and speak with company representatives, build your network, and explore the industries that are hiring. Before the event, we offer professional development and resources at no cost that will help you craft your elevator pitch and enhance your resume. Also, you will have the opportunity to virtually tour the platform. We understand first-hand the challenges our military spouses face when navigating your job search. Therefore, we encourage you to participate in this professional coaching series to prepare you for a successful hiring event.

## TIME LINE AND LINKS

You have two available options for professional development and platform coaching. Remember to register for the session you choose! It is entirely free.

**April 25:** Eventbrite Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/529666224937>

**May 2:** Eventbrite Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/529676485627>



**SFL LIVE** is a live stream program from Soldier for Life and will transmit the below episodes at 1000 EST.

Subscribe to watch **ALL** the episodes quickly right here!

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/USArmySFL>

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/USArmySFL>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@USArmySFL>

**February 28: Livestream Podcast** – RecruitMilitary and Soldier for Life (SFL), Topic: Military Spouse Career Fair Tools for Success. Featuring Veronica Sarantes, Program Manager for RecruitMilitary.

**May 4: Livestream Podcast** – Topic: Prepare For Your Next Job. We will address topics related on how to be prepare for your interview, resume tips, elevator pitch and others.

<https://rmvets.com/3QaYEzz>

# TEAM SOLDIER FOR LIFE

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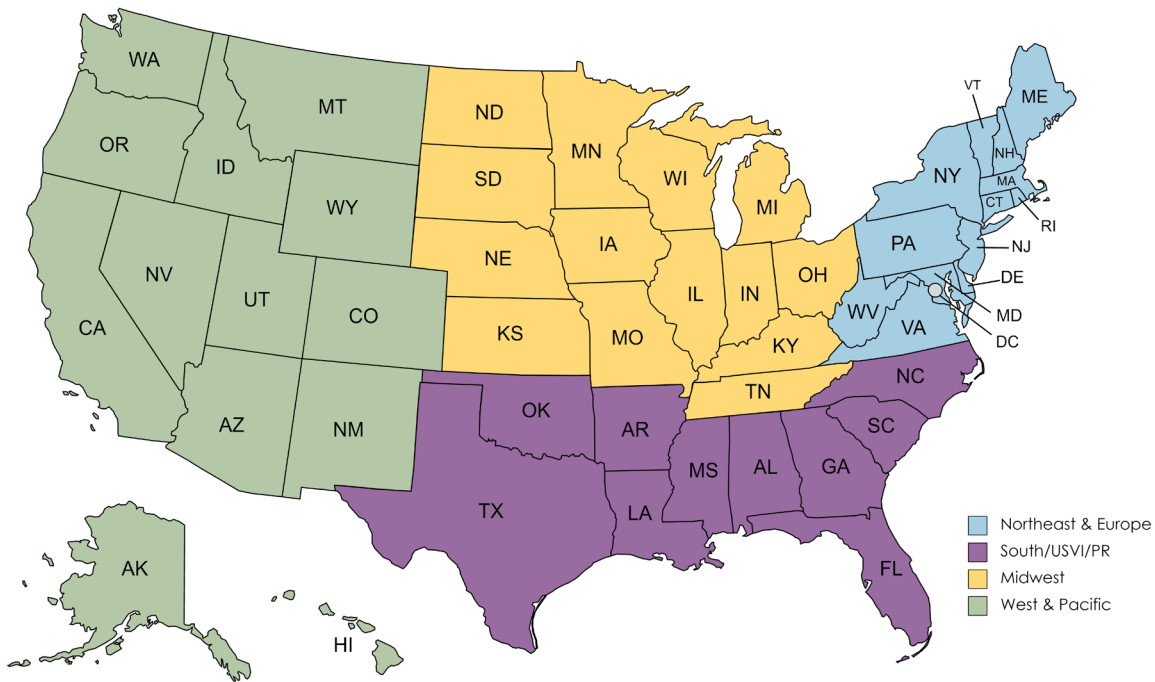
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