**Northcentral University**

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**Interview No. 130619\_002**

**Army Leadership and the Disproportionate**

 **Transitional Failure of Former Enlisted Military Personnel**

**Interview of Male, Army Military Veteran**

Moderator: My name is Lethon Jordan. I am a doctoral student at Northcentral University. I am conducting a research on Army leadership as a factor in disproportionate transitional failure among former enlisted military personnel. The name of my research study is, Army Organizational Leadership as a Factor in Disproportionate Transition Failure Among Former Enlisted Military Personnel. I am seeking your consent to participate in this study?

Male: [IBS, oh?].

Moderator: Alright, thank you sir. My first question is, what duties did you perform as an enlisted soldier in the Army?

Male: (laughter) Oh, oh, oh wow. Uh, so my MOS is 88-Mike, Motor Transport Operator, but I also worked in the Orderly Room as the Orderly Room NCOIC and, as well as, I worked in s3.

Moderator: Okay, alright. How did the discharge process prepare you for a civilian employment?

Male: You say how?

Moderator: Yes sir.

Male: Um, there was, I think there was a class um, there was a…let me see. I remember back in Hawaii, we had, I believe it was a like a couple of hour… I think it was a 2-day class and um, someone come in and talk about resumes, somebody come in and talk about job searching. Um, and I forgot what the other ones were.

Moderator: Okay.

Male: But, I mean, and I don’t know if it was all that helpful, you know, two-days or whatever.

Moderator: Got you. Okay. Describe your job-readiness preparation during the discharge process.

Male: Oh man! Um, searching for jobs honestly, I mean I was full-tilt looking for work um, coming up to getting out. I’m trying to actually, when I knew I was getting out that was, gosh it must have been around September because, you know, I’m trying to figure out which direction; am I going, to college, what I’m gonna do, actually where am I going to live, because I had got out the military in Hawaii, but I was originally from Virginia. So, trying to figure it out where am I going to live, where am I going to work and it was an every-day process, um, a 24-hour process it felt like, so.

Moderator: (short laugh) Okay. Did the discharge process help you develop job skills that you have been able to transfer to civilian employment?

Male: Ohhhh! Not quite, because what I learned later was a lot of civilian places, my military stuff didn’t translate just saying what I did… (cross talk)

Moderator: Right.

Male: …you know, um, and I only took a course at a time, you know, now that I have been to college and all that, now looking back I know how to translate what I did in the military into language that works in the civilian sector, but at the time that I got out, heck no. There was no, nobody there to kind of help me translate that language at that time.

Moderator: Did the discharge process provide you with computer literacy training necessary to aid your employment searches?

Male: Uh, again that 2-day class, they had some stuff up there looking like we were sitting at the computers, but you know, there was some papers that uh, we could take home and re-reference some of the stuff. But if you know anything about any class that you’ve been in, by the time you go home and you don’t have that person right there, trying to read off of what to do, it’s a, it’s a disconnect.

Moderator: Alright. Did the discharge process teach you any pro-social skills, communication skills, or people skills to help you navigate civilian life?

Male: Again, that 2-day class, um, I mean and we are talking years ago, but the 2-day class had a little bit in there. I think I’m fortunate that I’ve had communication skills my whole life, I’m just a talkative person so (short laugh) I didn’t have to have that part. But um, some of my peers I think um, definitely could use that, because it, speaking and just being in that class it wasn’t there to say; hey, here’s how you can, you know you get out and you communicate, because the communication in the military and versus in the civilian world are two different um, just based on life, you know, it’s so different.

Moderator: Uh huh, okay, alright. Did the discharge process match you with employers looking for your specific skills?

Male: No.

Moderator: Alright. Did the discharge process utilize a personalized approach to employment training so that it considered or solicited your employment interests?

Male: Uh no, not that I remember.

Moderator: Okay. Without identifying names of specific leaders, what were your perceptions of Army leadership and administration during and within the discharge process?

Male: (short laugh) I had, all my leadership sucked, except one person. Uh, I don’t feel like they helped me, or gave me the space and room that I needed to prepare. It felt like uh, a lot of people were punishing me for choosing to get out. And actually it was a [merit boarder?], you know, even though I accepted it and I wanted, I was ready to get out at that time, um, this was the military decision. But, I feel like yeah, a lot of my leaders, man higher up, you know, not my squad leader, but you know, my uh, let’s see. Well too, my platoon leader he was cool and very helpful, but First Sergeant, Commander, those jokers, nah they were not helpful at all.

Moderator: Got you. How would you describe Army leadership and administration’s conduct or treatment of you during the discharge process relative to prepare you to make the transition to civilian employment and self-reliance in civilian life?

Male: Say that one, one more time?

Moderator: Okay. How would you describe Army leadership and administration’s conduct or treatment of you during the discharge process relative to prepare you to make transitions to civilian employment and self-reliance in civilian life?

Male: Oh yeah, I kind of mentioned it in the last question. I felt like I was being punished for deciding, I need to get out and take care of my family, whereas, they were mission first, and once you’re not about the mission then it’s like I’ll forget you and, you know, we’ll make your life crappy while you’re here.

Moderator: Okay. Now, once you got out of the Army, was there any time that you were unemployed?

Male: Uhh, yeah, I mean anytime, yes.

Moderator: Okay. So my next question would be, without identifying the names of specific leaders, how did Army leadership and administration factor into your unemployment?

Male: Oh, I mean, I don’t take it [dead?] at that time, you know… (cross talk)

Moderator: Okay.

Male: …you know, cause when I got out, I met a gentleman and he was looking for a truck driver and so I basically had a, I found me a job through a connection, but the stuff later in life, nah.

Moderator: Okay. What employment challenges did you face after exiting the Army?

Male: What employment challenges?

Moderator: Yes sir.

Male: Uh, one employment challenge was understanding PACT. Because I left the factory with my BAH and my um, what did I get back then; food allowance, BAH, clothing allowance, what my actual pay was that I needed to live to make. Um, and any other challenges outside of that, no I don’t think.

Moderator: Huh. That’s funny that you mentioned that because it goes to my next question. As an employee in civilian life did you obtain the same livable wage that allowed you to maintain the same standard of living that you had as an enlisted soldier?

Male: No.

Moderator: Alright. Have you ever been fired from a job, and why?

Male: Uh, alright now let’s see. I wasn’t really fired from there, I mean they did let me go, I guess, I mean that’s depending on how you, the language. But um, one was because the company actually couldn’t make payroll so, they had to let me go, fired me.

Uh, another one was due to COVID um, shrinking up the work that we were planning to do, um, and so they had to let me go, but that one was weird, because they made up excuses instead of just coming out and saying that, so.

Moderator: Okay. After exiting the Army did you become justice-involved, did you get locked up or incarcerated or put on probation?

Male: No. I had kids and a family and I refused to um, refused to do anything that could jeopardize me spending that time with them; but I did struggle financially.

Moderator: Got you. Alright. So 16 kind of piggybacks off of 15, so I’m gonna go to number 17.

Male: Okay.

Moderator: What additional factors prevent you from obtaining or sustaining gainful employment, when you became unemployed at the time?

Male: Uh, what were the… Say that one more time?

Moderator: What additional factors prevent you from obtaining or sustaining gainful employment?

Male: What additional factors? Um, well at the time getting out is education, you know, having a, either a higher education, uh, because when I was in the military I was taking classes but, it wasn’t, it was, all chains of command didn’t always approve it, or it depended on when they would approve it to allow you to take it, so it was, you know, take a class here and there. So definitely the education I think, sort of held me back.

As well as, I think training for certain jobs um, a lot of them out there, you know, you’re in the military for so many years and you build up skills, but it don’t translate to the civilian world. And they do want to hire Veterans, but you don’t meet some of the qualifications education-wise or training-wise.

Moderator: During the discharge process would you have preferred an opportunity to design your own transitional trajectory based upon your ideas, interests, skills and talents?

Male: Uh, looking back, yeah definitely. Um, at the time I ain’t know what was what so it was like this is what it is, okay, I guess.

Moderator: Alright. Did the structure of the discharge process prevent you from designing your own transitional trajectory?

Male: Did the structure of my discharge process do what?

Moderator: Prevent you from designing your own transitional trajectory?

Male: Um, I mean, I won’t say one hundred percent yes or no, I mean it was what it was, so it wasn’t like I thought I could do something otherwise. You know, um, I was able to take that 2-day class so, but if there was something else I wanted to do, I don’t know if I could have done that or there was a way to do it, so.

Moderator: Okay. Would you have preferred to receive entrepreneurship training during the discharge process rather than…? (cross talk)

Male: Yes.

Moderator: I gotcha you. (short laugh)

Male: …because I always wanted to own my own business, but, and I’m just now doing that, so that would have been nice to have, knowing a lot of that stuff.

Moderator: Okay. What informational training did the discharge process lack that would have better prepared you for civilian employment?

Male: Oh, the last question, entrepreneur training, um, I think better assistance with um, resources, you know, whether it’s how to write a resume or resume assistance or uh, even job fairs. I don’t think there was a job fair at the military base when I was getting out, at all, yeah.

Moderator: Alright, and this is my last question. What recommendations do you have to improve or reconceptualize the discharge process to increase job readiness, competencies, employability or self-employability?

Male: Oh, wow! I definitely say that linking that to they class to making it, I don’t know a week, you getting out anyway. Like, your unit don’t need you, because you getting out. (short laugh) Um, so leasing that 2-day class, it might be longer now. But when I was getting out it was only like 2 days. And uh, increase the information in there, you know. Provide entrepreneur, and all that stuff we just said.

Entrepreneurial training would have been amazing. Um, better resources, job fairs. People are getting out of the military all the time and it would be nice if they could do job fairs on the base, or them in partnership with the local community wherever the base is, and uh, get in on some of those job fairs to help, you know smooth this transition out.

They do a great job of getting soldiers in; I see military at job fairs like crazy. My son, who never went and signed up for the military or talked to any recruiter, got a bunch of letters from recruiters.

But why don’t they do the same for the soldiers getting out, and invest that same amount of money and resources into putting nice programs together and saying thank you for your time, just make sure that uh, you can have a good wholesome life.

Moderator: Okay. Alright that’s it.

End of Interview…