# Leading Change

I have never been a person who is satisfied with the status quo. I always look around at current policies and trends in the environment and I consider new ideas and innovative approaches to problems. I often find myself in situations where I bring a different perspective and I have to rally people around a common vision – promoting change, even when I am not in a clearly-defined leadership position.

For example, in 2013, I was selected to support the National Guard Bureau in the Office of the Judge Advocate General. I had worked my way up through the ranks to become a non-commissioned officer after serving on overseas deployments in two combat zones and I had completed my education by taking advantage of a variety of military benefits. So, the natural career progression for me was to pursue a direct commission as an officer. However, I was HIV+. Although I had no duty limitations, the U.S. Army still had a discriminatory policy in place that prevented servicemembers living with HIV from receiving a commission – even if they were already serving in the military.

In the private sector, HIV+ personnel can work in health care or food service industries. There are also no restrictions on taking federal law enforcement, foreign service, or DOD civilian / contractor positions. Even the U.S. Navy recently opened up overseas and large ship platform assignments. So, the military had been getting tough questions from Congress and the White House for years. In the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014, the Secretary of Defense had even been directed to submit a report describing the military's policies regarding servicemembers living with HIV. However, the U.S. Department of Defense responded to Congress only with a perfunctory report making an unsupported assertion that current policies were "evidence-based, medically accurate, reflect standard of care medical practices" and the U.S. Army had abruptly shelved its review of its regulations governing HIV+ personnel.

Initially, when I started putting together my application for a direct commission, I crafted a request for a narrow exception to policy – arguing that HIV should not be a bar to someone who was already in the service, who had served long enough to fulfill his statutory obligation, and who wished to receive a direct commission into a specialty support branch for which he was well qualified, to serve out the remainder of his military career. Although I had never hidden my status, I was not a public figure and I really had no desire to become one. However, as my packet slowly made its way up through the ranks, it gradually became evident that I would have to take a more public position.

When my request was finally denied in 2015, I remained optimistic and persistent. I had carefully gone up through every step of the process – securing a "fully qualified, but for" determination at each level. Now, I started reaching out to the military legislative aides of every Congressman on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. I ultimately met with staff members from 30 – 40 different offices. My efforts resulted in Congress incorporating language into the National Defense Authorization Act of 2018 – pointedly calling upon the Secretary of Defense to justify the military's policies regarding personnel living with HIV.

I also assembled a broad coalition of advocacy groups which included the Human Rights Campaign, the National Urban League, AIDS United, Lambda Legal, the National Minority AIDS Council, the Modern Military Association of America (f/k/a Outserve-SLDN and AMPA), the Hepatitis B Foundation, and the Center for HIV Law and Policy. I had to convince them to buy-in to my vision and I had to develop a strategy aligned with all of their objectives and priorities. They endorsed my efforts and supported a federal court case challenging the policy. As the principal named plaintiff, I became the public face of the cause – appearing at various events in Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington DC and giving press interviews to a variety


of media outlets including *Bloomberg, Vice, Rolling Stone,* and *the New York Times*. As a result of this media attention, the U.S. Department of Defense backed away from its attempt to kick out 1,823 HIV+ servicemembers under the "Deploy or Get Out" policy.

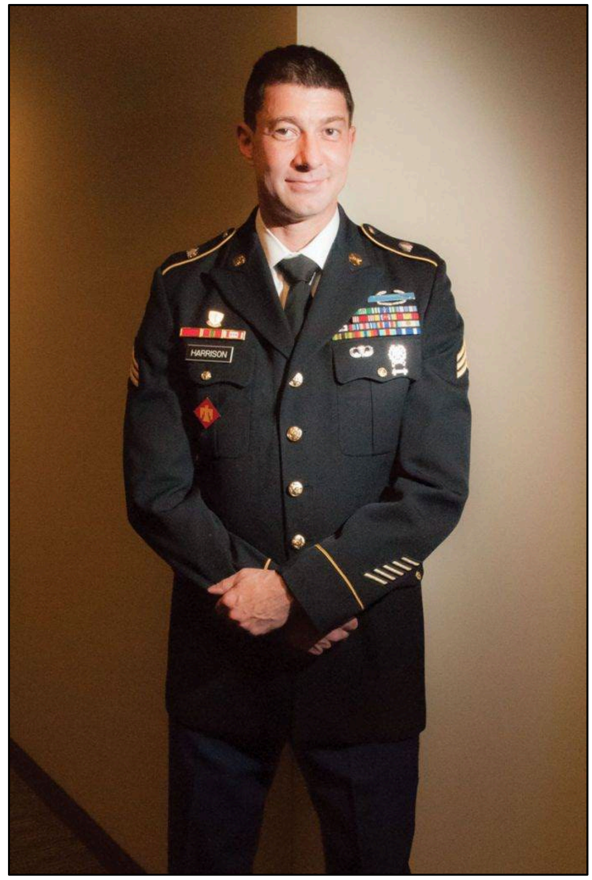
In April 2022, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia finally struck down the military's discriminatory HIV policies in a landmark decision – ruling that there was no rational basis for the military's ban and applying the equal protection clause to people living with HIV for the first time in history.

Later, when I was brought on as a program manager at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, I was tasked with setting up the infrastructure to support the Office of Small Business Programs. However, the Defense Contract Management Agency had just completed a performance management review and I was also soon directed to put together a Plan of Action and Milestones to address all of the deficiencies within the Contracting Division over the next twelve months.

In 2013 and 2015, the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Defense Contract Management Agency conducted extensive reviews of the agency's procurement activities. Both of them concluded that there were significant deficiencies in the Contracting Division – some of which related to the agency's small business programs. Shortly after I arrived, the Defense Contract Management Agency conducted another review which resulted in an abysmal report with 30 repeat findings. The Agency Director asked them to come back in one year to conduct another review. Then, he directed the Contracting Division to put together an action plan within 30 days. Three weeks passed and it quickly became apparent that they were going to miss the deadline. So, the Component Acquisition Executive handed the project off to me and I was asked to put something together in three days.

I immediately met with the analysts in Contract Policy. After I performed an assessment of their basic approach, I began bucketing their potential solutions into categories – training / workforce development, quality control, resources / process improvement, and management / succession planning. Then, I began putting together a work breakdown statement. I started with the major issues that needed to be addressed, gradually filling in more detailed tasks and subtasks. However, I purposefully left the specific approaches undefined – to afford flexibility for the other stakeholders to come up with their own creative approaches. I also incorporated a series of practice inspections using the crawl, walk, and run method to monitor progress. I also used reverse planning process to establish a timeline and prepare a Gantt Chart. Finally, I presented it to the agency's stakeholders for their feedback and I developed a white paper and a powerpoint presentation summarizing the plan for the Agency Director.

The Agency Director approved the plan that I developed. The Contracting Division made significant




improvements in its procurement processes and it was well positioned to pass its next performance management review. My office received an additional $1.5 million in funding over the next three years. Two additional government employees and two additional support contractors were also assigned to the office. The agency met all but one of its small business goals for the year and it embarked upon an aggressive outreach plan to develop collaborative relationships with small businesses, government entities, chambers of commerce, business associations, educational institutions, and other community organizations – particularly women-owned small businesses.

# Leading People

From an early age, I have been motivated by a sense of civic duty. I can remember reading about the Constitution and the Founding Fathers in elementary school and deciding that I wanted to pursue a career in public service. So, it was no surprise to most people when I ran for the Legislature at the age of twenty-one as the youngest candidate in my state. Later, I would continue that dream when I enlisted in the military – working my way up through the ranks and taking on progressively increasing levels of responsibility. I was put in command of many diverse groups of people – charged with resolving conflicts, building effective teams, and facilitating growth and development often in stressful environments.

Within days of arriving in a combat theatre in 2006, I was put in charge of my base's brigade tactical operations center – tasked with exercising command and control over several dozen embedded teams overseeing the training and mentoring the Afghan National Army. These teams operated independently, scattered hundreds of miles apart in mountainous terrain across several provinces in the eastern part of the country next to the Pakistan border.

I had never served in a combat theatre previously. I had no training or experience running a command post. The unit that we were relieving left us no guides or manuals. Only a few weeks earlier, I had been focused on law school – going into my second semester ranked #1 in my class. So, it was quite a transition. I also was being tapped over more senior servicemembers to serve in a duty position normally filled by a non-commissioned officer three grades higher. So, I would have to interact with several field grade officers that I would normally never even talk to and I would have to train and supervise several non-commissioned officers who outranked me – setting me up for a number of challenges and difficulties that I would have to resolve by developing exceptional interpersonal skills and conflict management techniques.

I immediately started putting 10 – 12 hours each day in the tactical operations center. I had to google resources and materials online. Then, I slowly started to book together an operating handbook – which included a map of the room's layout, the procedures for maintaining the radios and logging significant event, and the roles and responsibilities for each of the personnel assigned to the team. After that document was completed, I started training up the personnel in my unit, teaching the soldiers and non-commissioned officers how everything worked as they gradually rotated through the duty roster. As I started exploring a Master of Business Administration program online, I also took the opportunity to encourage many of them to take online classes – to use their time on this deployment to grow personally and professionally. Finally, I proceeded to make changes to improve the processes – creating a convoy request form and a security checkpoint ticket, holding intelligence briefings for convoy commanders leaving the base, and developing a new battle tracking system with graphics which showed where all of the brigade's personnel were deployed downrange.

The processes that I put in place were instrumental in ensuring my unit's success. We were able to respond effectively to coordinated attacks and roadside bombs – calling in medical evacuations and reinforcements when our troops came under fire. During my deployment, there were no casualties in my unit. The processes I developed were eventually standardized in the command posts of forward operating bases which were later set up. I was the only lower enlisted soldier in my unit who was tapped to lead a security forces team in the eastern part of the country next to the Pakistan border – conducting several combat patrols, including a nighttime reconnaissance mission while the base was under rocket / mortar fire and a building-to-building search in a village where a convoy had just taken enemy fire. I ultimately received an Army Commendation Medal for my work.

Then, during the American withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, I was assigned as the Headquarters Platoon Sergeant for a cavalry unit charged with providing convoy security as the United States moved its troops and equipment out of theatre. I oversaw the unit's

command post and I supervised the training, operations, human resources, and administration sections. I was also assigned to put together a transition assistance program for the battalion.

At the time, the unemployment rate was nearly 30% for Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans – compared to the national rate of 8.2%. Although the National Guard / Reserves made up 28% of those deployed, the military did not provide the Transition Assistance Program to those servicemembers. Furthermore, even if it did, there was widespread agreement that the current program was not very effective and it was being revamped by a task force composed of representatives from the Departments of Defense, Education, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. Thus, in order to take care of my soldiers, I had to devise a system to address their training, operations, human resources, and administration needs while they were deployed. I also had to develop an entire curriculum on writing resumes and cover letters, doing professional networking, finding a job, setting personal career goals, applying for college, starting a small business, and utilizing education / health care benefits.

I started by creating a form that my soldiers filled out when they had an issue and I put together a spreadsheet to track whether it had been resolved. Next, I put together a survey that asked soldiers what their plans were after the deployment. I set up individual one-on-one counseling sessions to get a better picture of the soldier's needs. Armed with this information, I began researching the open source materials that were available online for the Transition

Assistance Program. However, there were relatively few of those. So, I had to fall back on the resources that I had been provided when I went through the career placement programs at the University of Oklahoma. I collaborated with other to develop a curriculum and I presented a series of classes – with specific career paths for those who wanted to use benefits, apply for college, or search for jobs. I also worked very closely with the Education Center on our base – setting up meetings with the counselors for my soldiers, convincing the supervisors in my unit to give soldiers time off for continuing education activities, and personally walking them over to the computer lab to apply for college and enroll in online classes.

The system seemed to work well. All of the soldiers' issues were addressed prior to the end of the deployment and many of them started educational programs that they continued to pursue when they returned from the deployment. All of the personnel in my section received Army Commendation Medals for their work and I received an overseas PPG promotion to Staff Sergeant (E-6). When I returned, the military was rolled out the revamped Transition GPS Program. I was selected as a Presidential Management Fellow and tapped by the U.S. Small Business Administration to help develop the entrepreneurial training track. Many of the solutions I came up with overseas were integrated into the Boots to Business Initiative.


# Results Driven

I have a lot of experience analyzing problems and coming up with solutions. Having taken a number of classes through Stanford University's Advanced Project Management Program and having earned my Project Management Professional Certification, I am familiar with the principles of managing and administering a complicated project with conflicting priorities and tight deadlines. So, when approaching a situation, I immediately establish a relationship with all of the major internal and external stakeholders, I perform a comprehensive assessment their needs, and I develop an overall approach which considers their ultimate goals and objectives – establishing benchmarks and milestones to measure progress.

While attending the University of Oklahoma as a Juris Doctor / Master of Business Administration student, I was tapped by the Office of Technology Development with commercializing a chemical engineering research breakthough. I had to take a proof of concept at the laboratory bench level and scale it up – setting up a full-scale production line processing over 2,000 tons of material each day.

The technology that was developed at the University of Oklahoma was safer and more efficient process of extracting vegetable oil from food seeds. Under the existing commercial extraction process, a chemical solvent was used that rendered the residual seed meal unsuitable for human consumption. However, the new process used a surfactant to separate the oil and the residual seed meal – potentially providing a cheap, clean, renewable bio-fuel without reducing the food supply. So, I had to develop a plan for introducing this technology into the industrial marketplace, explaining the science well enough to potential investors to secure the necessary funds for a full-scale production line.

Assembling a multi-disciplinary team which included business, engineering, and law students, I met with the researchers to determine the nature of their breakthrough. Then, working together with the rest of the group, I broke the project into phases and established individual tasks, action items, and milestones to hold everyone accountable and measure our progress. I spent a lot of time figuring out the technical details so that I could explain the technology in layman's terms and make well-informed, effective, and timely decisions about the business approach. I also assessed the capital needs which would be required. Then, I ran the valuation and I put together a business plan.

I started conducting an environmental analysis to ascertain the macro-economic forces that would affect the commercialization of this technology. During my initial assessment, I discovered that much of the food processing industry was consolidated around large conglomerates. So, I began looking for new opportunities to partner with other entities. I set up a meeting with a local producers' cooperative that ran a large oil mill and the team set up a tour of the new facility they would be moving into – a vacant 1.3 million square foot factory on the south side of Oklahoma City. Then, I worked closely with the researchers to determine how much capital would be required to scale up the process for large-scale production – including the producers' cooperative as a partner for the pilot project.

I identified several issues that needed to be worked on before the technology was ready to be implemented and the University of Oklahoma continued to work with the producers' cooperative that I had paired them with. The team was recognized for its work in the Graduate Division of the Donald W. Reynolds Governor's Cup Competition and it received a $5,000 cash award. That year, I was named by the Oklahoma Business Roundtable as the graduate student most exemplifying the state's entrepreneurial spirit and I was awarded a $5,000 scholarship. I was also selected for an inaugural fellowship with the Entrepreneurial Leadership Program – going on to give several press interviews for the Innovation to Enterprise Program, before being paired with Avansic Digital Forensics, a start-up company in Tulsa which specializes in electronic discovery.

Later, as a Senior Consultant at the U.S. Department of Defense, I was initially hired to review acquisition strategies for major weapons systems to identify opportunities for small businesses. However, when my supervisor was transferred, I was tapped to manage and administer the Mentor-Protégé Program – a

$25 million program spanning eight service components and defense agencies which was responsible for adding 5,000 jobs and $2.6 billion to the economy over five years.

Other departments and agencies throughout the federal government had initially created their own mentor-protégé programs and the U.S. Small Business Administration had recently consolidated all of those other initiatives under one expansive government-wide program. The U.S. Department of Defense had been given special dispensation to continue to operate its own separate entity, but Congress had started asking why the military needed its own independent version and the Government Accountability Office had launched a review.

I started by reading up on the legislative history of the program – looking up the remarks made on the floor in the Senate when the program was added as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, securing pictures of President George H.W. Bush signing the bill while on a visit to Texas during the First Gulf War, and gradually building the case for its existence as an independent program to grow the defense industrial base. I interviewed service components and defense agencies who administered the program, as well as the mentor firms and the protégé firms who participated in the program – in order to get a complete picture of the needs of the program's internal and external customers.

After studying the joint explanatory report published by the Armed Services Committees, I started drafting policy to address Congress's concerns, rewriting the

portion of the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement which governed the program and tailoring a set of performance metrics that fed into a quad chart that could be presented to Congress to show the program's return on investment. I worked with the Defense Contract Management Agency to ensure that these metrics could be measured. Then, I presented my proposed approach to senior executives at the U.S. Department of Defense and I prepared written testimony and briefing materials to be used when they addressed lawmakers about the program later in the year. Finally, I worked with a contracted conference planning team to set up a large outreach conference in Atlanta, GA for the program – inviting small businesses, government contracting officers, program managers, business associations, educational institutions, and other community organizations.

The large outreach conference was a highly successful event. Representatives from 8 service components and defense agencies gathered to celebrate the program's twenty-fifth anniversary and over 400 people attended the four-day event – which featured distinguished speakers, informative training sessions, business matchmatching activities, and networking opportunities. The momentum helped get the program reauthorized for another three years in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015 and Congress added another $8.5 million to the program in 2018.

# Business Acumen

Being raised by a single mother on public assistance, I was the first in my family to earn a college degree. I went on to earn a graduate / professional degree at a top-tier public institution – developing a solid educational foundation in the principles of accounting and finance, business law, management, and business information systems. Over time, I have developed even more familiarity with these concepts as a successful small business owner and non-profit board member.

After leaving government service in 2014, I decided to establish my own practice as an attorney and consultant in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. In a region with one of the highest concentrations of these professions in the nation, I had to find a way to distinguish myself from my competitors and establish a viable business model – while maintaining enough initial cash flow to stay in business and support myself.

I had missed out on the job opportunities that usually come during the on-campus interview process when I initially graduated from law school because I was deployed to Kuwait with the Oklahoma National Guard. Then, when I came back and took the bar exam in Oklahoma, I ended up taking a job as a Presidential Management Fellow. So, upon relocating, I had to reapply for admission to the local bar association in Washington DC.

While I waited on my application to go through, I focused on various opportunities I had developed as a student journalist during my final semester of law school – working on several matters involving open records. I earned recognition in the national press for representing a student journalist in *Joey Stipek v. the University of Oklahoma* and I was selected for the Ben Blackstock Award in 2012 by FOI Oklahoma for commitment to freedom of information. I had also scored high enough on the Multi-State Bar Exam to be eventually admitted to the Washington DC Bar on a motion without having to retake the exam. So, having identified a need in the local area, I started working on document review projects, facilitating construction permits, and putting together bids / proposals for small businesses – leveraging my online presence to build a base of clients.

In 2016, I decided to expand nationwide by founding the Fidelis Law Group – a firm specializing in complex litigation and product liability class action torts. I secured adequate start-up capital through a group of investors in Florida and I added greater technical expertise by partnering with a subject matter expert in New York. Working with these associates, I developed a marketing strategy to grow and expand our network of clients. I conducted an environmental analysis to identify the internal and external forces that would affect our firm, I identified market segments that the firm should target, and I helped decide how the firm should strategically position itself. The Fidelis Law Group's portfolio grew to over 300 cases and I attained an impressive litigation record – handling 76 cases over the past three years and recovering over $8.2 million for clients.

Shortly after moving to the city, I also started participating in Stonewall Kickball – an LGBT sports league with about 700 players that serves the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. After being involved for a few seasons, I was elected by my peers as Treasurer and I was asked to sit on the Board of Directors and help sort out the organization's $110,000 annual budget, establishing some basic accounting systems and putting various checks and controls in place to ensure solvency.

When I took over, there were very few records. The previous treasurer had become overwhelmed and the other officers had to eventually ask him to resign. Our fiscal sponsor, the DC Center, approached me and told me that there was a balance of $20,000 in our account, but that we owed them fees from the past two years. So, the league essentially had a balance of $0. The league had been operating for six years, but there was no cash reserve and the Commissioner was having to

beg the DC Department of Parks and Recreation to allow us to make a payment after we received our registration fees for the season so that we could keep our field permits. Finally, about six months into my term, the manager of one of our major sponsor bars was accused of making racially insensitive remarks.

I immediately reached out to several of the league's other sponsors to ascertain whether they would be willing to come in at a higher sponsorship level. After explaining the situation to them, many offered to help us get through this period. The Commissioner spoke with the bar manager and then he scheduled a team captains' meeting to discuss the situation. It quickly became evident that the team captains wanted to terminate our agreement with the bar. Although the league would face a $5,000 shortfall, I had positioned the league to make up part of this loss.

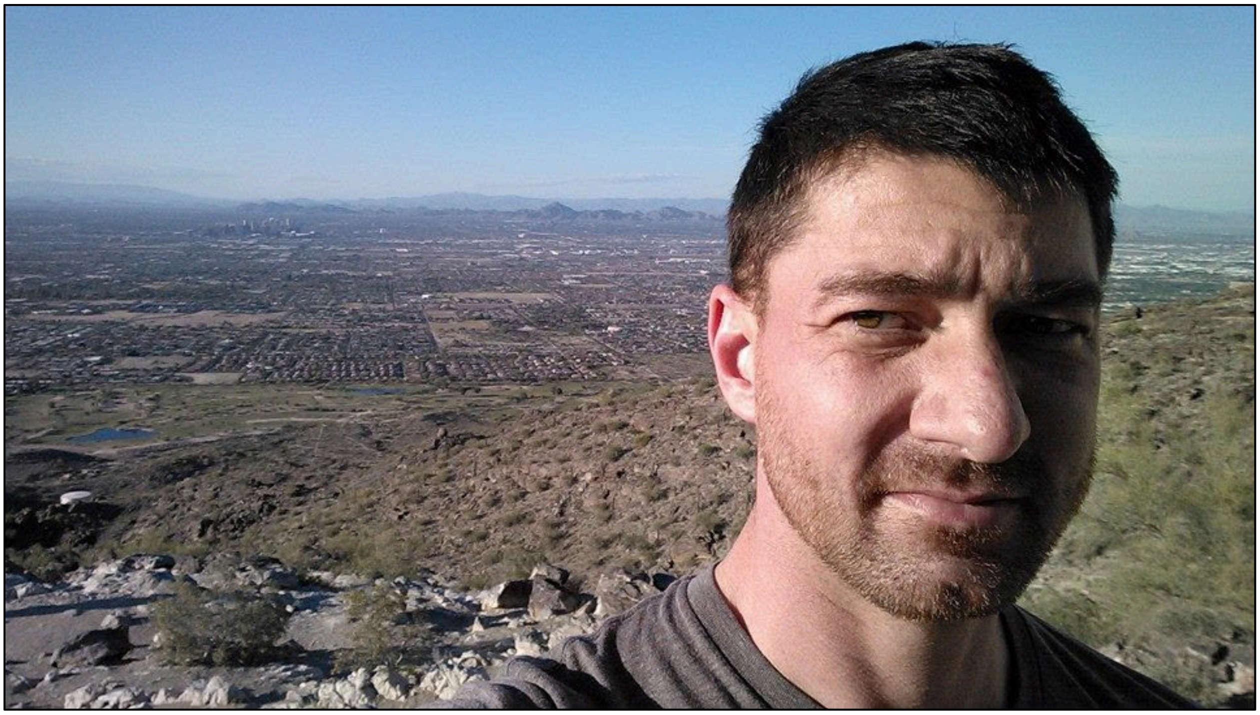
Over the next few months, I instituted a variety of checks and controls. No expenditures were made unless receipts or invoices were provided. Petty cash was no longer taken out for events and everything was carefully budgeted. I also drafted a new set of sponsorship contracts and I set up our invoicing and payment systems. I also worked with the Commissioner and the Events Director to begin reaching out to other potential sponsors in the Washington DC area so that we were not dependent upon any single source of revenue.

Finally, over the long term, I started investigating potential changes to our league's corporate structure.

I developed and presented a decision briefing to the Commissioner, the other members of the Board of Directors, and the Team Captains which described our potential courses of actions and discussed the costs and benefits of incorporating as a separate entity, switching fiscal sponsors, retaining an independent accounting firm, and securing sports liability insurance. After a lengthy process where we interviewed sports leagues in other cities and considered the goals and objectives of our internal and external stakeholders, we ultimately decided to switch our fiscal sponsor and go in with other sports leagues to retain an accounting firm to handle our bookkeeping and tax preparation functions.

Over three years, I managed to put the league on firm financial footing – amassing a budget reserve of $60,000. I increased the diversity of our sponsorship base by moving from two bars operated by the same owner to eleven different establishments operated by different owners. I also shifted 8% of our expenditures from operating activities and administrative costs to more programming and philanthropy activities. These changes were instrumental in the league's growth – affording us with the resources to adding 10 more teams and another 100 players. 80% of the players return the following season and, even amongst those players who chose not to return, there was an 80% satisfaction level with the league. The reforms I instituted were also instrumental in getting the league through the COVID-19 pandemic.

When I concluded my term, I joined the Board of Directors for the DC Center, the LGBT community center for the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. I also started taking additional finance and accounting courses – gradually working toward a Certified Public Accountant Certification.



# Building Coalitions

During my time working in the small business community, I have had to call upon my personal relationships and networks to create coalitions even more often. I have had to work with other departments and agencies at the federal, state, and local level and I have also had to engage with non-profit business associations, educational institutions, and other community organizations – forging strategic alliances while working toward a common goal.

As a Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Small Business Administration, I had to roll out the Boots to Business Initiative, a nationwide entrepreneurial training program for servicemembers leading the military. Initially with no dedicated funding, I had to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Defense, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and 55 district offices to facilitate the delivery of classes to over 6,000 participants at 150 military bases.

The system in place when I was brought onboard was very haphazard. The district offices would e-mail headquarters when they needed to request course materials and I would have to call the Institute for Veterans and Military Families to get them to mail the core curriculum. Then, I would have to print out a variety of supplemental materials that would then be mailed separately to the same location. Orders were occasionally getting lost. Materials were arriving late. There was no inventory tracking, and everything fell apart anytime anyone went on leave.

In the short term, I immediately set up a shared e-mail to ensure redundancy and continuity in the class scheduling, materials requests, and class reporting processes and I created an electronic filing system to organize all existing documents. I worked with others in Information Technology, Entrepreneurial Development, and Field Operations to facilitate the automation of the Boots to Business Initiatives class scheduling, materials requests, and class reporting processes. I coordinated with the Department of Defense, the JKO Development Team, and others in Field Operations and the Office of Veterans Business Development to review the content and functionality of the online version of the Boots to Business Initiative's two-day foundations class.

In the long term, I worked closely with Legislative Affairs to put together white papers and budget justifications for a permanent source of dedicated funding – noting that 1.7 million veterans who had served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn had already left the military. I worked closely with the American Legion and with other veterans service organizations to make the case to Congress. I also drafted grant announcements to reimburse local Small Business Development Centers, SCORE Chapters, Women's Business Centers, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers for their support once dedicated funding was in place. Finally, I conducted a nationwide series of focus groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the program – setting up sensing sessions with SBA District Office personnel and representatives from local Small Business Development Centers, SCORE Chapters, Women's Business Centers, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers across the nation and producing a 40-page report detailing various opportunities for improvement.

In 2014, Congress appropriated $7.5 million based largely upon the materials that I had produced and the U.S. Small Business Administration brought on contractors to support the program. It began reimbursing the local Small Business Development Centers, SCORE Chapters, Women's Business Centers, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers for the costs they incurred using the templates I put together. It also expanded the program – offering Boots to Business: Reboot in an effort to serve those who had left the military prior to the rollout of the revamped program. The feedback that I collected from focus groups was used to guide the program's evolution and development over the next few years and, as of 2017, the U.S. Small Business Administration reported that the program had served over 60,000 transitioning veterans.

After working with various veterans small business groups while serving as a Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center asked me to serve on the Board of Directors for that nonprofit

organization. Although I was based in Washington DC, I would be responsible for overseeing the management and finances and for shaping the vision and goals for an organization dedicated to serving aspiring veteran entrepreneurs in California and Nevada.

The Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center was a volunteer-based organization in Perris, CA – part of the Inland Empire Region. It is about midway between Los Angeles and San Diego on the east side of the Santa Ana Mountains. The area had a strong military presence when March Air Force Base fell under the Strategic Air Command. After the Cold War, the base was cut by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission and the region had become somewhat economically depressed. The organization enjoyed the support of a successful veteran small business owner who specialized in video production and website development and who served on the U.S. Small Business Administration's Advisory Committee on Veteran's Business Affairs. However, it was still looking at breaking out of Southern California and

become a more prominent regional business resource center.

Working with my contacts in the small business professional community in Washington DC, I kept the organization apprised of policy issues affecting government contracting opportunities at the national level. I helped them develop a strategic plan to go after other entrepreneurial training grants and I helped them forge partnerships with government executives at the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and at the U.S. Small Business Administration – securing subject matter experts as speakers for various events. I also worked with them to plan an annual veteran and small business summit involving small businesses, government contracting officers, program managers, business associations, educational institutions, and other community organizations. I lined up several distinguished speakers from the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs in Washington DC. I also flew into the event and I personally oversaw the matchmaking event.

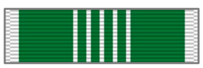
The annual veteran and small business summit was an outstanding success. It was held in Oceanside, CA and it attracted almost 900 registered participants from the Los Angeles / San Diego Metropolitan Areas. One of the government buyers who attended the event said that he had spoken with over 100 potential suppliers and that nearly seventy percent of them were procurement ready. Moving into the coming year, the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center continues to grow. Its online community has over six thousand members in 52 U.S. states and territories and the District of Columbia, as well as in Canada, Germany, Honduras, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. It has also hosted over 130 events in the Greater Southern California Area and it has produced almost 50 episodes for its VETS online entrepreneurial training series.

# Military Awards

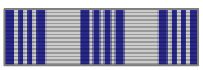
Combat Infantryman Badge

Parachutist Badge


Expert Marksman Badge

 Army Commendation Medal

 Army Achievement Medal

 Air Force Achievement Medal

 Army Good Conduct Medal

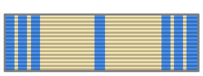
 Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal

 National Defense Service Medal

 Afghanistan Campaign Medal

 Global War On Terrorism Expeditionary Medal

 Global War On Terrorism Service Medal

 Armed Forces Reserve Medal

 Army NCO Professional Development Ribbon

 Army Service Ribbon

 Army Overseas Service Ribbon

 NATO Medal