

SALUTE TO SUIT

VIEWPOINT

Veterans take the lead in business

Members of the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association agree that there's no doubt that their experience in the military – and particularly in the Vietnam War – provided them with skills and attributes that have led to successful professional careers.

Bryan Tate is the founder, chairman and CEO for Digitel Corp., a Georgia-based IT solutions company which he started in 1983. He is an Army veteran and was an airborne combat infantryman in Vietnam, leading a rifle platoon with the 1st Infantry Division. He lists five key traits gained through military service which carry over into the business world: discipline, work ethic, confidence, leadership and organization. The military teaches a person “to manage people, assets, work and time,” Tate says. And one of the most important lessons learned is the importance of focusing on the mission and finding a way to get the job done. “Anyone coming out of the military is sure to be resourceful, adaptable and flexible,” according to Tate.

Joe Bruckner retired from BellSouth as vice president and associate general counsel. He served in Vietnam with the U.S. Army as part of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Agreeing with Tate and others, he lists leadership as one of the important skills acquired by veterans. Bruckner says during his tenure with BellSouth, “It was uncanny how most vets had developed those skills by the time they started with the company to a much greater degree than non-vets.” Bruckner also lists discipline, communications skills and endurance as important factors learned via military experience and valuable in the business world. “Virtually every vet during his or her career not only received leadership training but was required to exercise leadership skills in some form regardless of rank, occupational specialty or length of service.”

“I learned to be a strong individual but at the same time how to become part of the team that functioning together could get most anything done,” said Henly Shelton, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and Purple Heart recipient. “The biggest takeaway I had from what the Marines taught me was to never give up. If you don't quit, at least you don't lose the ground you've gained.”

In 1967 Jay Pryor was a senior at The University of Georgia. One year later he was off the coast of Vietnam on a destroyer, a division officer responsible for 26 men. Pryor says that the thing he quickly learned in the military was responsibility. “When you are in the military, regardless of the branch, you are likely to be thrown into the deep end right off the bat. You learn quickly to deal with things, and many of those things are not taught in basic training or at officer candidate school.”

AVVBA is a partner with Hire Heroes



John Douglas is president of the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association.

USA, an organization which provides volunteers to conduct warrior transition workshops at major military installations across Georgia. Workshop

volunteers provide assistance to transitioning military service members and spouses in résumé writing, job search methods, interviewing skills and networking techniques. One of those volunteers is Max Torrence, a retired vice president with Wachovia who was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. According to Max, “An employer is going to be inclined to hire someone who in the military has shown that they can be effective on day one. They can take on a task and get the job done.”

The Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association (AVVBA) is an organization of more than 300 Atlanta-area business men and women who served in Vietnam during the conflict from 1963-1975. AVVBA's purpose is to promote patriotism and activities of a patriotic nature among the local business community; to recognize those who served and honor those who gave their lives in the Vietnam War; and to promote a positive image of the Vietnam veteran.



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