

APPLYING MILITARY LESSONS TO WORKING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR



As we celebrate Veterans Day, I would like to share the story of my transition from 11 years of military service to the civilian workforce at BMC, which was just ranked 15th out of the 200 companies on the *Forbes* 2022 list of [America's Best Employers for Veterans](#).

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I joined the military a week after graduating from high school in Montana, driven by a strong desire to serve my country. Based on a combination of my test scores and, more importantly, the needs of the United States Air Force, I was placed in a career field called contracting (a.k.a. procurement). You can imagine how disappointing this was to an 18-year-old who wanted anything but a desk job.

Fortunately for me, though, with a little change in attitude and self-application, I grew to love the contracting career field, its complexities, and most importantly, the people and leaders who were a part of it.

At my first assigned station in Shreveport, Louisiana, I became inspired by the young lieutenants who served with me. They were extremely competent, confident, and passionate, and, well, I wanted to be just like them. At the earliest opportunity, I began taking college courses to further my education and advance my goal of crossing over to the officer side.

After three years of serving as enlisted, the Air Force recognized my potential and granted me the opportunity to earn my degree and commission from the University of Portland in Oregon. I graduated three years later with a degree in business economics, butter bars on my shoulders, and orders to report to my first assignment as a contracting officer at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam in Hawaii.

I spent the next three and a half years in Hawaii developing my skills as a procurement professional and a leader—along with hiking, surfing, and snorkeling, etc. I was also able to advance my education further, earning my MBA and MS in strategic management from the Kelly Connect program at Indiana University. It was there that I met my eventual reason for separating from the military, my now-husband.

Making the move

My last assignment in the military was teaching ROTC at the University of Houston in Texas, the only assignment available for Air Force members in the same city as my husband. After six months in this role, and considering my future goals of family and returning to the exciting world of procurement, I made the very difficult decision to separate from the military. With six months remaining on my military commitment, I had plenty of time to strategize my career transfer to the civilian workforce. Fortunately, I was postured with experience in a military career field that was relevant and needed in the corporate world—procurement.

I started replying to job postings and sending my resumes out to a plethora of companies. When I found the job posting for a Global Sourcing Manager at BMC on Indeed, I felt most attracted to the description of the role. Unlike other companies that really focused on the transactional duties of procurement, BMC described its needs in terms of the leadership skills desired; skills such as “strong intellectual curiosity.” I excitedly sent in my resume and application, and BMC called me right away.

The hiring process moved very quickly, as did my desire to work for BMC. The managers who interviewed me were impressive and engaging, and through them I caught a glimpse of the caring and creative culture at BMC. I wanted to be a part of it. Deciding to join BMC, like my decision to serve in the officer capacity in the Air Force, was motivated by my interactions with people.

Fostering an inclusive ERG for veterans

This compass of people and relationships continues to steer me forward in a positive direction. More recently, it steered me to the Veterans [Employee Resource Group](#) (ERG) at BMC. Having met the then-ERG Captain, I sincerely appreciated his work and vision of accelerating the growth of veterans at BMC.

When he moved on, I decided to take the reins as leader and continue pushing things forward. ERGs

at BMC serve as a fantastic platform for people of similar interests and backgrounds to get to know and learn from each other—despite being in completely different areas of the organization. I'm honored to lead the Veterans ERG at BMC and look forward to what we'll accomplish together in our efforts to recruit, retain, and advance veterans.

Invaluable insights

I am incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to serve in the military. Not only has it molded me into the person I am, but it has also provided me with invaluable perspective and skills that can be applied to all positions I now serve in life—mother, wife, leader, and procurement professional (among others, of course).

I am fortunate to be a senior manager of a small team in Global Procurement at BMC. Many of the ways in which I choose to manage and lead my team are rooted in the lessons I learned from my military experience. I can say confidently that BMC values and leverages the ideas, insights, and backgrounds of its veterans, and for that, I am extremely thankful. BMC continues to be a post-military home for me, one where I have found camaraderie, purpose, and connection to an amazing group of people.

Getting involved

While my path to the private sector was different, BMC fosters opportunities for veterans by working directly with the [BreakLine](#) organization to help U.S. veterans and their spouses transition to the civilian workforce. As we mark this Veterans Day, I hope you'll join BMC as we support the [USO](#) and its [annual salute to military chefs](#) and [Project USO Elf](#) Christmas toy drive, and BMC Cares as we volunteer our time with [Hire Heroes USA](#), [Wreaths Across America](#), and [Combined Arms](#).

To learn more about career opportunities for veterans at BMC, visit <https://bmcrecruit.avature.net/veterans>.

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