



LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADER'S GUIDE ON **COMBAT VETERANS**

*A Transition Guide for Veterans Beginning or
Continuing Careers in Law Enforcement*



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

“In today’s all-volunteer military, these citizens have become the finest examples of selfless service and courage that our country has to offer. As a veteran of the US Air Force, I know that the information contained in this guide will greatly improve our veterans’ transition experience from military to law enforcement. I ask that all police chiefs ensure that these patriots are provided with the utmost support so they can now serve their community as law enforcement officers.”

CHIEF MICHAEL J. CARROLL

*West Goshen Township Police Department, Chester County, Pennsylvania
IACP President
Veteran - USAF*

“The Employing Returning Combat Veterans as Law Enforcement Officers project and this guide provide a most valuable tool that can be used by law enforcement leaders to help facilitate the integration of America’s heroes into rewarding law enforcement careers. For the first time, managers will have at their fingertips a capstone manual with thoughtful guidance on the reintegration, employment, care, and training of our most prized asset: our combat veterans. All those who have contributed to this guide deserve our everlasting thanks and admiration.”

JAMES H. BURCH, II

*Acting Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs,
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“Recognize those who sacrifice.”

—ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN, *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

I. Introduction

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and law enforcement leaders across the United States recognize that combat veterans face many issues when they are deployed to combat duty and then return to either new or previously held positions as federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers. Because of our nation's large scale commitment to two

major conflicts in the Middle East, our military forces face an increased reliance on our National Guard and Reserve. The deployment of these highly trained and skilled volunteers and their subsequent return to the workplace is a complex transitional process. This process—specifically how it affects,

and must be understood by, law enforcement agencies that employ these veterans—is the focus of this guide.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and Applied Research Associates, Inc., Klein Associates Division, the IACP examined the challenges veteran officers¹ face to provide a better understanding of their transition from military service to their law enforcement duties in local police or sheriff's departments. Our research revealed that some departments are unprepared to address the issues faced by their returning veterans and have no strategy in place to reintegrate them back to their law enforcement duties. Rapid deployments and fast turnarounds of units and individual military service members exacerbates this unpreparedness, which can cause a severe disruption within law enforcement departments that are already facing stretched personnel resources and declining operational budgets.

Law enforcement professionals and their families bear a significant burden in meeting the challenges faced by military veterans because law enforcement officers of all ranks are mem-

bers of activated and deployed military units. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) data², 23 percent of the approximately 18,000 law enforcement departments in the United States have Guard and Reserve citizen-service members in their ranks who were called to active duty under the provisions of United States Code (USC) Title 10. The nation's strategy of combating terrorism around the globe implies that military activations of sworn and unsworn personnel throughout the United States will continue well beyond 2010.

The success or failure of reintegration or initial academy recruitment of military veterans will largely depend on a department-wide understanding of both veteran capacities and concerns coupled with thoughtful and determined leadership. This Leaders Guide will provide you with the tools and strategies to define or refine a transition/reintegration strategy that optimizes your support for veteran officers. To gain an understanding of veteran's issues, the IACP interviewed law enforcement leaders and sworn veteran officers during the 2008-2009 research process. The comments made by these officers and leaders are articulated in the findings and recommendations found throughout this document. This guide includes the following sections:

II. Understanding Today's Military: A description of our military forces in 2010 and how they are organized

III. Veteran Officer Reintegration Guidance: Information about the common issues faced by your returning sworn veteran officers (explained using a model deployment cycle), and those veterans you recruit into your department, with specific sections for each category

IV. Employing Veteran Recruits: Skills veterans bring to your department

V. Action Agenda: Short, medium, and long-term strategies—most at minimal cost but optimum value

VI. Training Curriculum: A template for incorporating subjects and issues into academy,

¹We use the term "veteran officers" throughout this guide. We define veteran officers as sworn law enforcement officers who are combat veterans.

²U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR/STUDY/04411.xml>.

TIP

Leaders are encouraged to share this guide with public officials and community leaders.

in-service and specialized training for mid-level managers, new recruits, and veteran officers

VII. Resources: A listing of law enforcement departments that employ “best practices” and useful web sites

► **Smaller departments may consider partnering with other agencies in their state or region to implement the recommendations in this guidebook.**

II. Understanding Today's Military

This section is designed for those individuals who are unfamiliar with current military operations and protocols. Others may find this section a useful refresher. If you have current military experience and/or knowledge of military protocol, you can proceed to Section III.

Under the President of the United States, who is also the Commander in Chief, the Secretary of Defense exercises authority, direction, and control over the Department of Defense (DOD). The DOD is responsible for providing the military forces necessary to deter war and to protect the security of the United States. The four branches of the U.S. military are the Army (USA), Navy (USN), Air Force (USAF), and Marine Corps (USMC). The Department of Homeland Security controls the Coast Guard (USCG); however, in times of war or national emergency, the USN controls the USCG. A reserve force supplements each of the five services, and can be called to active duty during war or national emergency to supplement the regular forces under the authority of USC Title 10. The Army National Guard or Air National Guard, otherwise known as state militia, can also be called to active duty under the authority of USC Title 10. There are two important distinctions between the Guard and Reserve: 1) the Guard serves a dual mission; they are under the state governor (commander in chief) for peacetime tasks such as hurricanes and floods; and federal missions such as war or conflict and 2) the Reserves have only one mission—to support the Commander in Chief.

Your law enforcement officers, with few exceptions, are likely members of one of the seven Guard and Reserve components representing one of the five services. USC Title 10 outlines the legal basis for the roles and missions of each service and provides the Commander in Chief with the authority to activate or mobilize individual service members or entire units. The duration of the mobilization or call up varies, but the military can order your officers to active duty for up to 12 months with extensions.

All branches of the U.S. Armed Forces mandate that service members participate in a demobilization and transition process before their release from active duty and their return to their pre-deployment jobs. This process includes briefings on service members' rights and benefits, and a health assessment. Guard and Reserve members who are geographically remote from a military installation have less support and resources compared to active duty veterans when they return to their communities. Police chiefs and sheriffs need to recognize this and step in when necessary.

Challenges of Contemporary Warfare

U.S. military and coalition forces are engaged in combat in both rural and urban areas in Iraq and Afghanistan, where our commitment remains open ended. Military operations in urban environments pose a challenge to war-fighters because opposition forces blend in with the population thus blurring the distinctions between “friend” and “foe”. In contrast, veterans returning from the Vietnam War were better able to distinguish their combat environment—mostly jungle, farm, or open terrain—from their urban

TIP ◀

Pair academy recruit-veterans with officer-veterans who understand leadership styles and can assist in acclimating combat veterans.

—DENVER (CO) POLICE DEPARTMENT

or suburban policing environment. For returning Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans, their combat environments and their policing environments may appear surprisingly similar.

Consequence of Military Deployments

The obvious consequence of a military deployment will be the loss of your officer(s) for a year or more. You and your department can absorb the loss with early intervention by your management team and careful reprogramming of personnel resources. Some sections may have to absorb a staff reduction while others may be able to combine assets or suspend non-critical tasks. Consider utilizing community volunteers in your agency to offset any losses. For more information on creating volunteer programs visit www.policevolunteers.org. A key strategy for you is to plan for the loss before it actually occurs so you are not caught unprepared.

On the plus side, many of your veteran officers will return with a variety of positive skills that can add to the professional capacity of your department. Some of your combat veterans may adjust more easily to a stateside policing environment than others; however, they could all use the patience, support, and enthusiastic leadership (and encouragement) from their chain-of-command as they reintegrate into their civilian roles.

The mission and objectives of military service members are different from the mission and objectives of domestic law enforcement officers. Participation in multiple deployments and/or sustained combat operations may increase the difficulty of transitioning back to civilian crime-fighting situations, resulting in inappropriate decisions and actions, particularly surrounding the correct application of use-of-force levels. These challenges are recognized and mitigated by proper reintegration training and are included in Section VI of the Training Curriculum.

Governing Law

Veterans have certain rights and protections both during military service and upon return from active duty assignments directly related to reemployment in their previous job, their benefits, and their financial obligations.

► TIP

You may wish to discuss provisions of these two federal laws with your appropriate public officials and union representatives as they could influence a wide range of human resource actions.

USERRA

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor through the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). USERRA covers every person who has served in the military and applies to all employers in the public, private, and federal sectors. Federal, state, and local law enforcement departments must adhere to USERRA.

USERRA mandates that returning service members are to be re-employed in the position that they would have attained had they not been absent for military service, with their seniority, status, and pay as well as other rights and benefits determined by their seniority. USERRA also requires employers make reasonable efforts, such as training or retraining, to enable returning service members to refresh or upgrade their skills and help them qualify for re-employment or continued employment. The law provides for alternative re-employment positions if the service member is not able to qualify for their previous position or the position to which they would have been promoted. If an officer returns from deployment and is unable to return to sworn duty, the department will usually be required to find an alternative position.

► To learn more about USERRA, visit the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) at www.esgr.mil

SCRA

The expanded Servicemembers Civil Relief Act of 2003 (SCRA), formally known as the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act (SSCRA), was passed by Congress to provide certain legal protections for active duty personnel when they are deployed. Under SCRA, it is possible to postpone most civil court cases or actions, such as traffic tickets, bankruptcy, foreclosure, or divorce proceedings. SCRA also provides the ability to terminate housing leases, receive protection from eviction, and caps the interest rate on credit card debt one had prior to deploying. SCRA protects Guard and Reserve members while on active duty.

If an officer serving in the Guard and Reserve reveals that deployment will significantly decrease his/her income and will subsequently affect his/her ability to meet financial obligations, encourage them to notify their creditors, landlord, or mortgage company, and to seek protection under SCRA. This will reduce financial stress they face upon return.

III. Veteran Officer Reintegration Guidance

A. Issues Common to Both Returning Veteran Officers and Veteran Recruits

The transitional issues affecting combat veterans, whether they are newly hired veteran recruits or veteran officers who are returning to their sworn positions, are very similar. This section contains guidance and strategies to use as you develop your department's unique transition policy for veterans. The importance of the strategies discussed below: publically acknowledging our veteran's service, understanding their needs, recognizing their individual attributes and frustra-

tions, and supporting individual health concerns are all significant issues that may not only have a profound effect on your veterans' careers, but will create the foundation of your transition/reintegration standard operating procedure (SOP). Additionally, you should consider creating the role of a military liaison officer (MLO), an additional but critical duty for one of your staff officers. The MLO can become an important staff position with the task of developing your new transition SOP, and will become your liaison to a nearby military assistance group or reserve center.

Public Acknowledgment

Your veterans are volunteers who are serving their country as well as their community. Veterans and their families deserve public acknowledgement for their individual sacrifice and commitment. They will remember and appreciate any efforts made by you or their department to provide continuous assistance, positive reinforcement, and expressions of gratitude for their service.

TIP

The Colorado Springs (CO) Police Department has a uniformed officer meet the returning veteran at the airport to say "welcome home."

A great time to acknowledge your veterans is on Veterans Day.

► The Employing Returning Combat Veterans as Law Enforcement Officers project has developed a companion guide for veterans that includes information for veterans on how to manage a successful deployment and reintegration into their law enforcement duties. To request a copy, e-mail militaryveterans@theiacp.org

Needs Assessment

In order to serve your veteran officers effectively, your department should develop an understanding of your veteran officers' specific needs. Your department can determine the veterans' needs in several ways:

- ▶ Conduct focus groups with the veterans in your department. (New recruits can be added *after* they graduate from their respective academy). Create a safe, confidential environment to elicit honest feedback, and assure participants that there will be no repercussions. Ask questions such as:
 1. How has their department supported them and what could be improved?
 2. What assistance do they need?
 3. Are they having any problems?
 4. Are there any real or perceived problems in the reintegration process?
- ▶ Another useful tool is a survey for veterans and their families to gauge their opinions.
- ▶ Consider using your department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which utilizes department chaplains, psychologists, or union representatives, to interview your veterans and their families. The information obtained from these professionals will assist your department in using the program components to structure a specific approach to fit veteran officer's needs. Again, the department must ensure participants that no repercussions will result from their comments.

Individual Attributes

Combat veterans have developed many positive skills, knowledge, and abilities that readily transfer to domestic policing. In an IACP survey, veteran officers found several skills and attributes strengthened by their combat experience such as:

- ▶ Increased patriotism, for both nation and community
- ▶ More maturity
- ▶ Increased engagement in planning and preparedness activities

- ▶ Increased physical fitness level
- ▶ Superior firearms and tactical skills
- ▶ Improved decision making abilities and enhanced leadership skills
- ▶ Enhanced skill at assessing situations and reacting under stress
- ▶ Greater willingness to involve themselves in dangerous situations
- ▶ Enhanced threat assessment
- ▶ More experience interacting with diverse groups
- ▶ Greater discipline, ethical standards, and integrity

For many departments, training non-veteran officers to acquire these same skills sets would be cost and/or time prohibitive. Veterans enter or return to their departments as team-orientated professionals with these skills learned through their military experiences.

These positive skills were widely reported by the veteran officers and department leaders we spoke with in large and small departments across the country. While there was consistency across our data collection efforts about the positive characteristics of veterans and law enforcement officers, we also discovered consistency in the many challenges faced by veterans as they transition back into civilian life from combat and return to their daily law enforcement duties.

▶ TIP

Alert your department chaplain and include them as a valuable resource.

Personal Frustrations

Veterans' separation from family often results in changes in routine and shifts in family structures and roles. Upon returning home, many veterans feel they no longer have a role within their families and feel isolated from family decisions. In addition, veterans often report that family members cannot relate to their experiences, so they withdraw further. Veteran officers reported increased frustrations with family and friends, such as:

- ▶ Difficulty reintegrating back into a family role
- ▶ Indifference to spouses and their “petty problems”
- ▶ Withdrawal and strained communication
- ▶ More arguments and increased potential for domestic violence
- ▶ Financial strain

Health Concerns

Some service members return from war suffering from illness, wounds, or injuries of varying severity. Because of advances in medical care, body armor, and rapid battlefield evacuation, more service members than ever are surviving their physical wounds. Others may return with permanent disabilities, hearing loss, back pain, or other issues that may impact functioning as a law enforcement officer.

The psychological effects of combat duty have been well documented. One common illness that follows a traumatic event such as combat is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). With symptoms such as anxiety attacks, depression, nightmares, aggressive behavior, flashbacks, sensitivity to noises and movement, and a numbing of emotions, PTSD can make it difficult for veterans to get along with family and friends and function consistently on the job. If untreated, these ‘invisible’ injuries can lead to problems including alcohol and drug abuse, and even suicide. Rates of PTSD run high among combat veterans compared to the civilian population, and likely run higher for veterans with multiple deployments.

▶ Common Mental Health Symptoms of Combat Veterans: PTSD, Anxiety, Sleep Problems, Depression, Withdrawal, and Isolation

PTSD symptoms may not develop until 6-12 months after a traumatic event and less than half the service members with current or emerging mental health problems seek treatment beyond demobilization (*Webster, 2008*). In addition, veterans in rural areas may live too far from the mental health resources of military installations and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities to receive timely and continuous care.

It is important to note that many mental health problems are akin to psychological “injuries” and just as with many physical injuries, they eventually heal and the injured person makes a full recovery. Officers with mental health issues should not be judged as flawed or weak.

“Vets give 100% in OIF/OEF; they deserve 100% from their country when they return.”

—ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN, *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

The negative stigma often attached to seeking mental health treatment does a great disservice to returning combat veterans who could benefit from such treatment. Concerns about what others would think if they seek treatment and how it may influence their career can lead veterans to avoid seeking treatment.

▶ Police leaders need to be sensitive to these issues and handle identification and treatment with understanding and confidentiality.

Law enforcement leaders and their command staff and supervisory personnel should also become thoroughly acquainted with the physical/mental health issues that confront returning veterans. In addition to providing department support and resources for the officer and his/her family, it is suggested that the department develop a policy pertaining to post-deployed officers who may have been diagnosed and treated for psychological injuries, such as PTSD.

The importance of enlisting the assistance of your department psychologist or contract mental health professional cannot be understated. These individuals understand the value of early intervention, and you should discuss their role in the transition process so they can counsel and properly treat veterans in a compassionate and confidential way. Psychologists work in tandem with other health professionals, and when

necessary, recommend evaluations for appropriate adjunct medical interventions including the possible use of antidepressants or other medications. If medications are required, departments should not restrict officers from duty simply because a health professional is treating them with prescription medications.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 is a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. For more information, visit www.ada.gov.

Support the health and well-being of your veterans by expressing concern and creating a climate where it is acceptable to seek assistance. Work together to identify challenges, problem behaviors, ensure confidentiality, and find the resources and recovery solutions necessary for them to be productive and contributing members of your department.

Military Liaison Officer Role

Assign one individual to serve as the point of contact between your department leaders, veteran officers, and the military. The MLO should handle all military deployment-related

issues, provide resources for veteran officers, and handle practical matters for veteran officers while deployed and upon return. Veteran officers in our research described the ideal candidate for MLO as someone with prior military experience who served in combat in OIF or OEF. This experience would contribute to their current knowledge of the military and increase empathy and understanding toward veteran officers. Female veterans may have special needs and issues and may initially feel uncomfortable discussing their experiences with a male counterpart. Take care to ensure they too have the necessary support.

The size of the department will dictate who can serve in this role and what this duty might entail. Smaller departments may want to network with larger departments that have a broader spectrum of resources and experience with veteran issues to supplement their resources. Departments might also consider seeking a public or private grant to hire and fund someone in this position. Regardless, this officer should establish a link with an active military base, Guard, or Reserve Center to remain up-to-date on deployment cycle policies, procedures, and regulations.

The MLO can provide a variety of services; they can:

- ▶ Manage the veteran deployment process
- ▶ Manage the veteran officer transition process into law enforcement
- ▶ Coordinate paperwork, forms, and department requirements for returning veterans
- ▶ Handle administrative and logistic issues during deployment
- ▶ Maintain communication between department leaders and veteran officers
- ▶ Identify and facilitate a peer group for veteran officer support and assistance
- ▶ Identify issues and make referrals to the appropriate support resources
- ▶ Provide an understanding of the differences between military and civilian workplaces
- ▶ Model a healthy and productive path to reintegration into civilian life
- ▶ Provide input to academy instructors on required training and serve as a subject matter expert

▶ TIP

The Newport News, (VA) Police Department has created a “Military Support Officer” (MSO) who assists in the care and oversight of the employee’s family during their absence.

After appointing an MLO, they should contact the nearest military installation and initiate the liaison process.

- Coordinate and plan for any extraordinary circumstances such as serious injury or death

Your department should develop a relationship with the military **Transition Assistance Officer (TAA)** in your state. This professional will be your link for Guard members and the VA and is located in the National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters

TIP

The Los Angeles (CA) Sheriff's Department has published a "Military Leave Resource Handbook" and provided a copy to each commander and line officer.

in every state and territory. They are the state-wide point of contact for answering concerns and questions you or your officers may have about your Guard members and the deployment cycle. They also provide assistance with enrollment for DOD or VA healthcare, applying for VA benefits such as the GI Bill, compensation for service connected disabilities, home loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation, insurance benefits, etc. The TAA is also a direct link to community resources, departments, and veteran's service organizations. **To find the TAA in your state or territory, call the National Guard Office, Warrior Support Program at 703-607-0180.**

No-Cost Implementation Strategies:

- Conduct a complete veteran personnel inventory: their service affiliation, when they returned, training they required, health issues requiring follow-up, and likelihood of redeployment, etc.
- Develop a program to meet and greet returning vets and their families
- Appoint an MLO who is dependable and understands the military; ensure the MLO is sensitive to both male and female veteran needs

B. Reintegrating Returning Veteran Officers

Law enforcement leaders need to plan for reintegrating returning veteran officers before the deployment cycle begins, not wait to plan reintegration until the veteran officers return. Preparing your department and veteran officers for impending deployment or redeployment, as the case may be, will ease their reintegration upon their return. As law enforcement leaders prepare their reintegration strategy, they should consider all three stages of the deployment cycle. This section identifies several issues facing your returning veterans and discusses transitional issues as described by participants during our data collection efforts. Note: In 2010, Guard and Reserve units are being called upon once again to support OIF/OEF. A veteran officer that may have returned to your department in 2009 could possibly redeploy in 2010 or 2011. A good strategy is to consider all returning combat veterans in a "post-deployment" phase knowing that a reactivation could occur during the next calendar year.

Preparing for Deployment

Preparing for deployment can be a stressful time for service members and their families. If your department understands the activation process and the impact it has on veterans, their families, and their department, early preparations will enable a smooth transition home.

TIP

Keep good notes; your officer may deploy multiple times.

- All officers and staff in your department can benefit from understanding veterans issues and the impact it may have on the department.

Learn About Your Veteran's Military Obligations

Your department should familiarize itself with its officers' military obligations and take proactive steps in anticipating a potential deployment.

Awareness of military processes and procedures

will help departments reduce the impact of losing officers to deployments and will reduce the stress placed on department leaders and other officers who must fill the void. To prepare, understand the U.S. Army activation process (i.e., they announce activation dates six months prior to deployment).

This allows you to adjust shift

and squad schedules in advance. Work with your deploying officers and establish communication with the military to exchange information about the deployment process, notification processes, return dates, and military reintegration and assistance programs. This is an ideal role for the MLO.

Evaluate Your Department's Existing Veteran Policies

Review your department's existing military leave and return policy. If one does not currently exist, establish one that covers employees who are Guard and Reserve members. Be sure to educate your veteran officers on these topics. For instance, establish a monthly or quarterly Q&A session or include a briefing during routine in-service training sessions.

Human Resources—The range of benefits and programs that apply to veterans, including provisions from USERRA and the VA, can be confusing. Consider how the following aspects will be handled during deployment:

- ▶ Benefits—departmental, union, or personal
- ▶ Compensation
- ▶ Personal and medical leave—accrual, use or lose policies
- ▶ Disability—injuries or wounds
- ▶ Medical (VA) appointments

Legal Matters—Encourage veterans to maintain a current will and power of attorney. These important legal documents can protect the veteran and their families during deployment.

Readiness—Establish a clear policy on assessing the performance readiness of officers who are absent from the agency for an extended period of time. This will involve human resources (HR) as well as the department's health professionals and will apply to all sworn personnel.

Resources—The MLO and your EAP should be equipped to address the full spectrum of challenges and behavioral health issues that affect military employees and have the resources to refer them to outside medical treatment facilities if necessary.

▶ TIP

The Waynesboro (VA) Police Department has established a flextime approach to an officer's schedule to allow them time with families.

Officers, on orders for deployment, may have to curtail even simple patrol activities such as issuing citations because subsequent court dates or hearings may be scheduled after the officer is deployed.

Discuss Process for Handling Equipment and Legal Issues

Communication is a crucial component of a model veterans program. Work together with veterans on a plan for managing court and case issues (old ones and current ones) and let veterans know how your department will handle turn-in procedures of their weapons, badge, and vehicle while they are deployed.

“Surround your veterans and their families with support.”

—CHIEF RICK MYERS,
Colorado Springs (CO) Police
Department

Departments should also inform other employees about any impact the deployment may have on their patrol or operational responsibilities. Taking these proactive steps and opening communication with fellow officers will lower stress and clarify expectations about what to anticipate during the deployment and return of their veteran comrades.

Meet with the Veteran

Finally, prior to deployment, you should meet one-on-one with the veteran officer. This meeting provides an opportunity for a veteran to communicate their needs and concerns and for the department leader to offer reassurance and establish a plan for:

- ▶ Family Support
- ▶ Promotional Processes
- ▶ Job Security
- ▶ Maintaining Communication
- ▶ Timeline for Returning to Duty

▶ **Family support is critical. Support should be proactive and not as a response to the family asking for support. Actions speak louder than words.**

During Deployment

Even though your deployed officers are not present for duty in your department, they are still part of your organization and you should treat them as such. The MLO should continue to be the point of contact for the veteran and the family and be prepared to handle any issues during deployment.

Maintain Communication

Many veteran officers reported feeling forgotten by departments while deployed; they felt left out and isolated. Understandably, it may be difficult for them to communicate with their loved ones stateside. With few opportunities to call home, veterans are not likely to call their departments, thus department leaders, officers, and staff should reach out to them through e-mail, other electronic media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), letters, and telephone calls when possible. Veteran

officers stated in the focus groups that they appreciated any communication they received from their departments. They felt like the department still considered them a part of the law enforcement family when they were:

- ▶ Provided updates about policy changes
- ▶ Kept informed of upcoming promotions and the promotional process
- ▶ Notified so they could maintain their certification or training status
- ▶ Included on announcements about other officers, their families, and department events

TIP

The Baltimore County (MD) Police Department established a countywide “Homefront” web link as a ready reference tool. Link: www.bcpl.info/info/comm/comm_veteran.html

Provide Family Support

There is a major burden placed on a veteran's family during deployment. Separations can cause significant stress for both the veteran and family members. Some military families are isolated from their family members and may not live near military installations where support services are most readily available. The department can play a role in filling this gap by offering to:

- ▶ Assist family members and their pets
- ▶ Invite family members to department functions
- ▶ Help with household chores and projects
- ▶ Involve families, including children, in department and neighborhood events
- ▶ Provide needed breaks in childcare
- ▶ Connect children with after school activities (e.g., sports, scouting)
- ▶ Designate a point of contact for families to reach out for assistance or support

▶ **Families will not have to reach out for support if the department is reaching out to them.**

Post-Deployment

The process of reintegrating veterans back into your department will include a number of steps already taken by you during the pre-deployment phase. Continue to maintain communication with your officers during leave and establish an appropriate transition plan that includes timing, training, and assignment.

► **Don't let veteran officers become disenfranchised while they are deployed or when they return.**

► TIP

Remember—your veteran is home readjusting to work, family, and friends. *You* are readjusting to having your officer back.

Welcome Home

The environment veterans return to influences how the transition process evolves. War zone veterans, their families, and their communities benefit when everyone gets involved and creates a welcoming, thoughtful, and helpful environment. Plan a celebration such as a ceremony, breakfast, luncheon, or office party where you can acknowledge the veteran officer for their service to a grateful nation. Include the families so they can witness the department support and share in the pride and emotion of welcoming back their veteran. *This is one of the most critical strategies to adopt if your transition program is to be successful.*

Debrief with Veteran

Learn about any new specialized training the veteran has experienced while deployed, and maximize these valuable skills in the performance of their law enforcement duties.

The veteran's personal matters may have changed during deployment and may include the addition of a new family member, loss of a family

member (i.e., divorce), or a significant health issue with a spouse or sibling. Things will not be the same as when the veteran left. Keep informed about veterans' concerns and the potential impact it may have on their performance.

Adhere to Veterans Policy and Stated Expectations

Adhere to your reintegration policy and the expectations laid out prior to deployment. Steps may include in-processing through the human resources department and reissuing new equipment or uniforms.

Discuss Transition Timing

A common discussion point for veterans and leaders is how much time veterans should have off after deployment and before they enter or return to law enforcement. Most research participants agreed that some transition time is necessary, usually estimating a timeframe of three to six months. For some veteran officers, their first inclination was to go back to work immediately, later realizing this was not always the best decision.

► **“Steady transition is the key. Constant contact with the employee and tailoring the reintegration process to the individuals involved is paramount to guaranteeing success.”**

Respect veteran officers' needs to return quickly by helping them feel engaged in their career while allowing for transition time. Encourage returning veterans to take time to decompress,

“Missouri Police Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) has relaxed requirements for veterans, allowing them time to catch up when they return.”

—KANSAS CITY (MO) POLICE
DEPARTMENT

reacquaint with family and friends, and adjust to family life and normal daily activities. This adjustment period before returning to work helps the veteran positively readapt to dealing with life's normal challenges.

Readiness for Duty Issues

Some veteran officers return from military service with physical and psychological injuries. In addition, the transition from a military to civilian environment may raise concerns regarding their readiness for return to duty. Agencies must keep in mind that USERRA and other laws prohibit a blanket fitness-for-duty evaluation or any mandated medical assessment of the returning veteran officer as a prerequisite for return to duty. Instead, agencies should develop an approach that depends upon a range of programs designed to assist all returning veteran officers, with a strategy that relies on the proposition that returning officers may manifest counterproductive behavior during the reintegration process. If such counterproductive behavior arises that is suspected to be the result of a medical condition, agencies can properly pursue an assessment that is compliant with the law.

It is suggested that all returning veteran officers be offered reintegration programs as discussed in more detail later in this guideline. These may include a graduated reentry, riding with veteran officer partner officers for a time, the offer of confidential counseling with a mental health professional (and perhaps a mandatory, one-session, confidential psychological debriefing), language transitioning review from a combat environment to a community policing environment, muscle memory reprogramming, and transition driving training. Such reintegration programs, while targeted to restore all returning veteran officers, concurrently provide the agency with an opportunity to observe counterproductive or other problematic behavior that may arise during reintegration that, as with any other officer, may reveal objective evidence that raises a reasonable suspicion of impairment. If such evidence emerges, a medical examination would be lawful and appropriate pursuant to both USERRA and

ADAAA. If observed counterproductive behavior appears unrelated to a medical condition, the normal supervisory or disciplinary procedures would be more appropriate.

There are circumstances in which a chief would be wholly within his/her rights to compel a medical/psychological fitness-for-duty evaluation (FFDE). If the agency observes behavior, or receives credible reports of behavior or other facts that raise reasonable concerns about the officer's ability to safely and effectively perform the duties of the job, an FFDE may be required. For example, if it is learned that a returning veteran recently threatened or attempted suicide, an FFDE may be indicated. The officer should be treated like any other employee under such conditions, including being placed on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the evaluation, if other employees would be similarly treated.

► **Most veterans will be able to cope with change. You need to be alert for those who struggle.**

TIP ◀

Baltimore County (MD) Police Department requires all veterans returning from OEF/OIF to receive a psychological debriefing.

Update Veterans on Changes in Your Department

Refresh returning veterans on the policies and procedures of your department and direct them to the most recent updates and the most helpful resources.

Provide Needed Training

Each veteran may have specific needs for training when reintegrating into their law enforcement duties, thus it is necessary to take a flexible but comprehensive approach to training/re-training

that incorporates their unique skill sets. Some of the training topics you might consider, (included in the curriculum template in Section VI) include the following:

- ▶ Transitioning language from an environment where everyone is the enemy to an environment of community policing
- ▶ Reprogramming muscle memory corresponding to the equipment and tactics used in domestic environments

“I had to readjust to geography because they knocked down a lot of houses and changed streets. When I came back it was like the city had totally changed.”

—VETERAN OFFICER

- ▶ Developing a comprehensive driver training program where the veteran can transition from tactical driving to domestic driving
- ▶ Demonstrating and teaching newly acquired department information technology
- ▶ A geographical reorientation
- ▶ Scenario-based training
- ▶ Re-qualification and renewing state/department mandated training

Transitional Issues

For veteran officers (returning sworn officers as well as recruits), reverting to civilian life involves more than just hanging up the military uniform. While some service members make the transition with few difficulties, others may need a little more assistance to deal with their combat experiences, and to handle changes occurring in their civilian lives. Responsibility for ensuring a smooth transition process often falls upon those who have the most contact with returning veterans: their employers, their families, and their

units. People involved in these support systems may not recognize or diagnose a problem as it is developing. Families and employers frequently learn of a veteran's difficulties only after they reach a crisis stage that requires immediate intervention, placing them in a reactive situation with insufficient resources and information. To succeed, it is important to educate those who interact with veterans about the key issues they face so they can develop a process to address these issues and access any necessary resources and assistance early on.

It is inappropriate to assume that all veterans return with problems not easily overcome. Many veterans return with no adjustment issues and face few challenges as they transition back into their civilian lives. It is unfair to generalize the problems faced by a subset of veterans to all veterans. It is important to remember that many of the behavioral, emotional, and physical symptoms experienced by veterans when they first return home are normal and naturally dissipate with time, needing no treatment or intervention. However, the impact of combat is evident as veterans make the transition into law enforcement. Challenges that can face veterans as they change their mindset from war fighter to peacekeeper include:

▶ TIP

Encourage thoughtful feedback from support system personnel so early intervention can mitigate problems.

Research findings showed that a transition time of three to six months is a good rule of thumb, but a flexible transition period would allow for veteran preference and individual circumstances.

- ▶ Readjusting to taking rather than giving orders
- ▶ Adjusting rules of engagement to civilian, rather than military environments
- ▶ Increased apathy and low tolerance for citizen complaints
- ▶ Family frustrations such as changes in family dynamics and roles, damaged relationships, loss of support, and alienation
- ▶ Financial hardships
- ▶ Mental health symptoms associated with PTSD such as depression, anxiety, anger, and withdrawal

Many of these issues naturally dissipate over time, while others take several months to appear, making continued discussion with veterans vital to their positive transition. Leaders should individualize each veteran's transition period because each veteran's needs are unique.

Performance Issues

Re-acclimating from military to civilian law enforcement can impact a veteran officer's performance. A supportive, structured approach benefits veterans, departments, and communities. Presented below are some of the performance issues that may arise as veterans shift their mindset and behavior from combat to civilian environments.

Department

Changes may have occurred in the department while veterans were deployed such as leadership, reorganization, new policies and procedures, the acquisition of new technology and equipment, and new crime fighting priorities. Communities may also have undergone geographical and economic changes that can be disorienting for the veteran when responding to calls.

One notable point is that work transitions are potentially more manageable for veteran officers whose roles and tasks in the department are similar to those in the military. For example, tasks related to working intelligence for the police department and serving in an Intelligence Analyst role in the military may be similar

enough that the technical re-acclimation process may not be as time consuming as those who serve in divergent roles.

TIP 

Reinforce and exploit military skills

Leadership

After working within a typically regimented military environment, veteran officers often find it difficult to work under leaders who may not be as decisive, direct, or polished, as were their military officers or noncommissioned leaders. Veteran officers reported comparing their law enforcement managers and leaders decision-making processes to military leadership styles.

Often veteran officers are leaders in a combat theater but not in a leadership or decision-making role upon return to law enforcement. Survey results showed that 41 percent of respondents had a military rank of E7 (i.e., Sergeant First Class, Chief Petty Officer, Gunnery Sergeant, Master Sergeant) or above. Ninety-eight percent of respondents had a military rank of E4 (i.e., Corporal, Petty Officer, Senior Airman) and above. Service members with a noncommissioned officer rank starting at E5 (Sergeant) have strong leadership roles with increased responsibility *and* authority. Returning to their department presents a challenge for veterans who often desire to maintain a leadership position upon returning. For those veterans who rank higher in their military position than in their law enforcement position, losing this rank can be difficult to accept. This reduction in leadership authority can lead to increased frustration with their department leadership as they readjust to *taking* rather than *giving* orders.

Recommendation: Look for opportunities for veterans to exercise new skills acquired in the military by assigning new tasks or special projects that leverage those skills for the benefit of both the veteran and the department.

Peers

Combat is a unique experience that is highly stressful. It creates an environment where veterans form strong bonds within their units. Veterans report that only other veterans can relate to their experiences and post-deployment challenges. Because many law enforcement leaders and officers never served in the military or served prior to 9/11, veteran officers tend to seek out, interact, and confide in other OIF/OEF veteran officers. Veteran officers report that they place significant and sometimes exclusive trust in other veterans; this can lead to a communication and credibility gap within departments. Departments should monitor for any active exclusion by veteran officers of non-veteran officers and reinforce the notion that both groups of officers have skills vital to effective law enforcement.

► **Los Angeles (CA) Sheriff's Department (LASD) established a Vets 4 Vets Program – a peer support network that connects previously activated LASD reservists with personnel who are currently reintegrating back to family and department.**

In departments with few or one veteran officer, they lack this one-on-one support, which can lead to isolation and a desire by the veteran to return to a combat theater and a familiar environment. Assist sole veteran officers in finding peer support at other departments in the region.

► **South Carolina (SC) Law Enforcement established a post-deployment peer support team using a cadre of SC Law Enforcement combat veterans.**

Recommendation: Departments should reinforce the notion that both veterans and non-veterans bring something to the table. The goal of the department's leadership should be to create a cohesive unit between the two groups and reestablish the bond between officers.

Muscle Memory

Veteran officers return with skills unique and intuitive to military combat survival, such as where to reach for their weapons and other military survival weaponry not used in law enforcement. The differences in weaponry and other equipment during deployment versus post-deployment underscore the premise that training to reprogram muscle memory is vital. Officers need to relearn the automatic reactions that correspond to the equipment, tactics, and procedures necessary and appropriate in domestic environments. Behaviors veteran officers reported engaging in when first returning from combat that are more suited to combat environments include:

Driving—Combat veterans avoided driving over potholes, debris close to the road, and changed lanes under bridges to avoid potential ambushes and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). These driving behaviors of swerving and avoiding, more suited to OIF/OEF roadways, sometimes carry over to local streets.

Approaching Civilians—The enemy is not readily identifiable in current combat environments, making it difficult to distinguish friend from foe. Veterans report hesitation when approaching cars during traffic stops, walking into crowds, and dealing with gang members. This is a reluctance that they did not feel prior to deployment.

Crowds—There is significant risk when dealing with crowds in combat environments because the enemy is concealed and blends into their surroundings. One can understand the increased stress level when confronting dozens of strange and unruly citizens coupled with the threat of possible suicide bombers. Often veteran officers retain their mistrust of crowds upon return, feeling anxiety or fear when approaching or being in crowds.

Sights and Sounds—Veteran officers understandably have conditioned responses to hearing explosions, alarms, and other loud and unexpected sounds reminiscent of the battlefield. Their reactions may not be appropriate to a normal but loud sound while they re-acclimate themselves to non-combat environments.

Although it is important to note that conditioned responses can be a good thing, there is a need to calibrate conditioning to appropriate levels rather than training these responses out of veterans' altogether. Veteran officers reported that these automatic reactions tended to reset naturally over a short amount of time.

Recommendation: Create live exercises that present situations where these automatic reactions may occur rather than waiting for these behaviors to return to appropriate levels. In this way, recalibration can take place in safe training environments rather than on the streets.

Apathy

Examples illustrating a reduced level of concern for civilians once returning to policing were prevalent throughout the interview phase of the research. Some participants reported lack of patience or tolerance for the "small problems" or "whining" from the civilians they encounter on the streets during routine patrol. Others expressed decreased concern and greater frustration with people who they perceived as indifferent to the war. This attitude may influence an officer's effectiveness on the job. The role of an officer to protect and serve is not only compromised by this mental shift from protector to a disinterested or unconcerned individual, but the public perception of the officer's willingness, or lack thereof, to protect can have a detrimental impact on community relations.

Recommendation: Consider providing training where veterans can practice talking to U.S. citizens to break the habits developed when talking to combatants or hostile citizens overseas.

Aggression and Suspicion

Some veterans return to their jobs and initially have trouble adjusting their level of force to appropriate levels and adhering to domestic operating procedures. Rules of engagement change for troops depending on their mission and objectives, which is not the case for law enforcement officers. For instance, in military operating environments, troops can physically detain suspicious individuals even when little threat is present, and can break down doors

without a warrant. Domestically, officers need a greater threat level to "go hands on" and a warrant to search property.

There may also be an increased suspicion of citizens based on their nationality. Specifically, a heightened awareness when seeing someone of Middle Eastern descent may be commonplace. Veteran officers stated that these views were solely an artifact of deployment rather than the veteran officers' personal perceptions of people of Middle Eastern descent.

“America’s citizens are doing our bidding – we owe them a caring system when they return.”

—ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Recommendation: Cultural training can be beneficial where veteran officers can practice transitioning their language from an environment where everyone is the enemy to an environment of community policing.

Retrain veteran officers so they adjust from breaking down doors in a combat zone without a warrant to searching houses on Main Street, USA. This training is vital and veterans must be reminded that applying military protocols to domestic law enforcement is not permitted and may in fact be criminal.

No-Cost Implementation Strategies:

- Understand the U.S. Military deployment cycle and shape your revised policies and procedures around it
- Don't wait for families to ask for assistance; be proactive and wrap your arms around them
- Create an electronic home page that vets can easily access; ensure weekly updates and populate with fresh material
- Be flexible in leave, time off, retraining, and in shift assignments

IV. Employing Veteran Recruits

Law enforcement leaders who recruit combat veterans are gaining experienced individuals whose skills are highly transferable to a career in law enforcement. Veterans were part of a dynamic organization and many want to maintain their skill sets and dedication while serving their country. You and your academy staff will provide them with the skills they require to

“The military prepared me to be very organized, so when I am on a traumatic scene, I am very calm about those things. In just a few seconds, I figure it out and start to manage the crisis. That is a major advantage of the military.”

—VETERAN OFFICER

become successful members of your department and they may be able to contribute the special skills they learned while in uniform to your training staff and other recruits. Be aware that some veterans may resent or feel uncomfortable about your using them in a “training role.” This may cause them unpleasant memories or flashbacks to events they chose to forget and stir emotions they have successfully repressed. Tread lightly in this area until you and your trainers are satisfied that they will be placed in a situation within their comfort zone.

Numerous law enforcement departments are currently understaffed, thus they welcome the influx of returning service members interested in law enforcement employment and advertise their vacancies in electronic media such as IACP’s Discover Policing (www.discoverpolicing.org). The perception among law enforcement leaders

TIP

Fairfax County (VA) Police Department interviews each returning veteran prior to placing them in a training role to ensure the training experience will not precipitate a PTSD type reaction.

is that individuals with military experience make desirable law enforcement employees. Many have college credits or degrees in criminal justice and other disciplines, which increases their usefulness to your department.

Law enforcement careers offer veterans long-term stability, with a sense of real accomplishment that few other careers can deliver, and where veterans can apply their dedication to protecting and serving the public. An active transition program that addresses and supports veteran issues is an attractive benefit for new recruits and sets a department apart from other employers.

Provide Needed Training

Each veteran may have specific training needs beyond the typical academy syllabus when reintegrating into their policing duties; therefore, a flexible but comprehensive approach that incorporates their unique skill sets may be appropriate. Many assume that their academy will teach all the law enforcement fundamentals required of a commissioned or sworn officer who has recently returned from military service. Some of the training topics you might consider in a training curriculum template include the following:

- ▶ Transitioning language from an environment where everyone is the enemy to an environment of community policing
- ▶ Reprogramming muscle memory to correspond to the equipment and tactics used in domestic environments

- ▶ Developing a comprehensive driver training program where the veteran can transition from tactical driving to domestic driving
- ▶ Demonstrating and teaching newly acquired department information technology
- ▶ Scenario-based training
- ▶ Reemphasizing warrant (constitutional) vs. warrantless (unconstitutional) searches
- ▶ Communication skills which emphasize civilian vs. military shorthand

No-Cost Implementation Strategies:

- Conduct personal interviews with new veteran recruits when they graduate from their academy. This will place them at ease, facilitate their introduction to law enforcement, and underscore your commitment to them.
- During the interview, discuss the special skills gained while veteran officers served that may translate into academy and in-service training programs
- Work with veteran officers to pinpoint specific training needs and create a transition program that refreshes skills and reintegrates veterans to domestic operating procedures

TIP

Officers do better if given the opportunity to select training subjects based on individual needs.

—DENVER (CO) POLICE DEPARTMENT

A system for caring and supporting veterans with visible wounds or injuries is well developed. The challenge is to develop a system to discover and treat invisible wounds.

“I am happy to see veterans in law enforcement receive attention, as there are a high percentage of veterans in law enforcement. Veteran’s issues are unfortunately low on the priorities list in this country despite the challenges asked of us.”

—VETERAN OFFICER

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V. Action Agenda

Actions to be taken within the following timeframe, if implemented, have minimal budgetary impact for law enforcement leaders. This timeframe is useful to departments that: 1) have not initiated a departmental veterans transition SOP, 2) have not hired combat veterans, or 3) currently employ or recruit returning combat veterans. These actions likely will have the greatest impact on combat veterans as evidenced in the research with returning veterans and law enforcement leaders. Your department leadership may have other suggestions not listed here. We list the actions, discussed throughout this document, in short, medium, and long-term categories as strategies, not a mandate, for completion.

RCV = *Returning Combat Veteran* **VR** = *Veteran Recruit*

▶ Actions to be Taken Within 30-60 Days	RCV	VR	Both
Publicly acknowledge veteran officers for their service upon their return to their department and community			X
Create within-department focus groups to learn more about veteran officers' needs			X
Develop communication methods with veteran officers and their families throughout the deployment cycle	X		
Offer veteran officers a flexible timetable to meet a range of transitional needs	X		
Contact your state's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) office and consider signing a Statement of Support and review recruiting information			X
Determine if your HR recruiting strategies includes combat veterans		X	
Create a specialized Field Training Officer (FTO) type program structured to assist veteran officers when they first return to duty. This FTO should be a peer and be of the same or higher rank.	X		
Allow the veteran officer to ride-along or job-shadow with a peer	X		
Address the confidentiality policies of the services offered and clarify misconceptions			X
Update veteran officers on new policies procedures, laws, and changes in equipment and technology	X		
Begin a thorough review of regional academy or recruit training programs. The Training Curriculum contains many of the subjects/scenarios you may wish to consider.			X
Consider collaboration with other departments to share resources and ideas			X

► Actions to be Taken Within 6-9 Months	RCV	VR	Both
Establish peer and family support groups			X
Incorporate training that addresses equipment differences and the reprogramming of muscle memory	X		
Develop a comprehensive family care plan and checklist			X
Join ESGR to indicate support of recruits and returning veteran officers			X
Visit IACP's "Discover Policing" website and enter recruiting information		X	
Structure training for each veteran officer's individual needs	X		
Review rules of engagement and standard operating procedures			X
Establish a comprehensive driver retraining program	X		
Develop a comprehensive web-based communication system	X		
Update returning officers on new policies, procedures, laws, equipment, and technology	X		
Develop an ethics and language review process to ease the transition back to a civilian culture			X

► Actions to be Taken Within 1-2 Years	RCV	VR	Both
Develop core training e.g., firearms, in-service, and specialized training			X
Reassess/modify recruiting strategies based on budgetary or personnel limitations		X	
Create scenario-based training to identify transitional issues and to practice tactics			X
Develop strategies to employ disabled combat veterans			X
Gauge the effectiveness of military and civilian law enforcement partnerships			X
Evaluate the transition programs in place and make adjustments as needed			X
Develop a special project or task force suited for veterans who demonstrate leadership skills			X
Sign an ESGR "statement of support"			X

NOTE: Much of the preparation and education of your department for returning combat veterans will take place in the classroom. As you review the following training curriculum, review your entire training program to determine where best to make changes, if warranted. Veterans involved in our research concluded that many lieutenants, sergeants, and career law enforcement officers, particularly those without military backgrounds, do not understand veteran issues. As a result, most of the training curriculum is focused on your mid-level managers though all department staff will likely benefit from inclusion in this training program.

VI. Training Curriculum

To implement the recommendations made in this guide, this draft training curriculum was developed with the assistance of sworn law enforcement officer trainers to support training at three levels: 1) department staff consisting of mid-level managers such as lieutenants and sergeants, 2) returning sworn combat veterans, and 3) veteran recruits new to law enforcement. The curriculum will require further development and refinement depending on veterans' needs, P.O.S.T. requirements, and local needs. Its intent is to serve as a baseline or template for subsequent training programs.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE

Time Allotted: We understand that there is limited training time available at the academy and in-service due to state mandated training requirements. Two hours is the recommended minimum time to teach this block of instruction depending on the department's requirements and structure. Instructors do not have to present the curriculum teaching points consecutively.

Training Aids:

- ▶ Flip charts
- ▶ PowerPoint (PPT) (optional)
- ▶ *Law Enforcement Leader's Guide on Combat Veterans; Combat Veterans & Law Enforcement; Employing Returning Combat Veterans as Law Enforcement Officers: Findings and Recommendations From Field Research, September 2009.* (www.theiacp.org/vets2cops)
- ▶ Professional staff (department chaplain, psychologist, physician, etc.)

Method of Presentation: Lecture, Group Exercises, and Student Response/Interaction

Instructor: Designated instructors should be combat veterans or be familiar with Department of Defense (DOD) terminology, principles, or procedures.

II. PURPOSE

This training curriculum is a template for in-service, chain-of-command topic familiarization, and understanding. It can also serve as:

- ▶ Refresher training for returning combat veterans who have unique transitional issues and require recertification or certification
- ▶ Reintegration training for combat veteran academy recruits who bring unique experiences to the academy classroom and to the department

III. TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Assist law enforcement executives, mid-level managers, first-line supervisors, and training (academy) instructors to gain an understanding of the experiences and challenges combat veteran officers face when integrating from a combat environment to civilian law enforcement duties
- ▶ Present tools to enhance or create a veteran refresher or training program within a police or sheriff's department
- ▶ Provide law enforcement leaders and instructors with an introduction to transitional issues and offer suggestions as they develop their own unique training curriculum
- ▶ Refresh mid-level managers' understanding of pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment concerns
- ▶ Identify the positive skills veterans bring to law enforcement
- ▶ Explain the unique transitional obstacles encountered in shifting from combat to civilian law enforcement; present training recommendations
- ▶ Provide a basic introduction to military organizations, missions, objectives, and obligations

IV. PROGRAM CURRICULUM FOR DEPARTMENT STAFF (1.5 Hours)

Instructor Notes: This training program consists of four instructional areas: definitions, the deployment cycle, veteran attributes, and transition issues.

1. Definitions: Provide a short explanation of DOD terminology to recognize differences between Active and Reserve components and provide the definition of combat veterans versus veterans to differentiate between peacetime and wartime service members. The discharge characterization will govern a service member's employment and career opportunities.

2. Deployment Cycle: Explain the fundamental steps an activated service member takes when they are about to deploy, serve, and return from a combat theater

3. Veteran Attributes: Departmental leadership must understand the attributes veterans bring to the table and why they make ideal law enforcement employees

4. Transition Issues: These issues have a tremendous bearing on the veteran's morale, esprit de corps, and job satisfaction as the veteran transitions from war to a community environment. *[Over 50 sworn officer combat veterans described experiencing these issues during confidential interviews and surveys. If not understood by law enforcement leadership, these issues can be a source of tension between veterans and their chain-of-command].*

Instructors should modify, add to, or delete certain subjects depending on the unique mission requirements of each department.

1. Review Definitions (PPT/lecture)

1a. Service Organizations

- ▶ **Active Forces** – Full-time members of the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, or U.S. Marine Corps serving an obligated tour of duty
- ▶ **Reserve Forces** – Members of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, or the U.S. Coast Guard who have been activated under the provisions of Title 10 U.S. Code (USC) for “active duty to serve in time of war or national emergency”
- ▶ **National Guard** – A dual federal-state force commonly referred to as a state militia. This

force comprises both the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard and can also be activated under the provisions of Title 10 USC.

1b. Combat Veteran

A combat veteran is a service member who has recently been released or discharged from active duty (most under honorable conditions) and has served or been activated under the provisions of Title 10 USC. It usually applies to serving in a combat theater of operations as designated by the Commander in Chief. Your combat veteran does not have to serve directly in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) to be considered as such. Many activated service members serve offshore, in adjacent countries, or on air bases removed from an active combat theater but should have received imminent danger or hostile fire pay. *Source: National Defense Authorization Act (PL 110-181)*

1c. Discharge Characterization

Most service members separate under honorable conditions and receive a DD Form 214 indicating such. An administrative separation can also include a general discharge (under honorable conditions) and one Under Other Than Honorable Conditions (usually called an OTH or punitive discharge). A punitive discharge would include a Bad Conduct discharge and/or a Dishonorable discharge. Service members who receive an OTH discharge are usually barred from joining any Guard organization. *Note: Law enforcement managers should closely examine an applicant's record of service if a DD Form 214 is not offered. It would be unusual to accept a service member who has other than an Honorable discharge.*

1d. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD is a type of anxiety disorder. It can occur after one sees or experiences a traumatic event that involved the threat of injury or death. A veteran usually recovers after three months but for some, can last for many years. A good social support network can help mitigate PTSD.

Symptoms fall into three categories: *repeated reliving of the event*, which disturbs day-to-day activity; avoidance, such as feelings of detachment, lack of interest, emotional “numbing” or feeling you don’t care, or sensing there is no future; and arousal, difficulty concentrating, exaggerated response to things that startle you, and outbursts of anger or hypervigilance. Peer-to-peer groups where officers share experiences are helpful, especially in conjunction with treatment by a mental health professional. *Source: National Institute of Health – Medline Plus.*

2. The Deployment Cycle (PPT/discussion)

2a. Pre-Deployment

Preparations taken when a service member (SM) is alerted for activation and/or deployment. Notification is usually accompanied by Official Orders. A military liaison officer (MLO) can assist with pre-deployment preparations. Departments should:

- ▶ Understand military organizations and missions
- ▶ Learn veteran’s military obligations, e.g., weekend drill, armory duties, weapons qualification, deployment training (The MLO can provide the instructor with the necessary background)
- ▶ Evaluate existing veteran policies regarding human resources, legal matters, administrative requirements, and medical treatment (most found online)
- ▶ Discuss process for handling equipment, court requirements, and other legal issues that might require temporary suspension or delay
- ▶ Meet with the veteran and their family members; they deploy as a team
- ▶ Plan for deployment; develop a time-phased SOP from time of alert to departure

2b. During Deployment

Steps departments can take for the duration of the deployment:

- ▶ Maintain communication with veterans while they are deployed and exchange cell numbers for emergency contact

- ▶ Provide family support, particularly to children
- ▶ Develop support mechanisms for checking on family, residence, and pets
- ▶ Involve the community and encourage the sending of “care packages”
- ▶ Plan for post-deployment

2c. Post-Deployment

Steps departments can take after the veteran’s return:

- ▶ Arrange for welcome home recognition which involves family
- ▶ Plan a debriefing process with chief or sheriff
- ▶ Connect veteran with peer support groups
- ▶ Discuss transition timing
- ▶ Assess need for refresher training
- ▶ Assess readiness for duty
- ▶ Provide updates on major department changes/developments
- ▶ Provide necessary training and support
- ▶ Arrange for no-cost counseling and support
- ▶ Plan for re-deployment (multiple deployments)

3. Veteran Attributes (PPT/discussion)

Note: Focus group participants in Los Angeles, CA, Columbus, OH, Baltimore, MD, and Jacksonville, NC, consistently identified the same positive skills veterans bring to law enforcement and how readily those skills transfer to domestic policing. An understanding of these skills is necessary as the instructor plans for a flexible, reintegrated training schedule for combat veterans. Some examples for Part V include:

- ▶ Patriotism
- ▶ Superior firearms and tactical skills
- ▶ More disciplined, better ethics, integrity
- ▶ Better decision makers and leaders
- ▶ Better able to assess situations and react under stress
- ▶ More life experience and maturity
- ▶ Better at planning and being prepared
- ▶ High physical fitness level
- ▶ Better critical incident response capability
- ▶ Greater willingness to involve themselves in dangerous situations

4. Transition Issues

(PPT/discussion)

Performance Issues

- ▶ Impatience with decision makers and leaders within their department
- ▶ Feeling that veterans are the only people who understand their issues and experiences, leading to isolation and desire to interact only with other veterans
- ▶ Only trusting other veterans; an “us vs. them” mentality
- ▶ Different rules of engagement and standard operating procedures
- ▶ The need to adjust driving behavior from downtown Kabul to Main Street, USA
- ▶ Low-tolerance for citizen’s minor complaints relative to their own combat experiences
- ▶ Reduced level of empathy for others
- ▶ The need to adjust language from foreign military phrases and acronyms to commonly used civilian expressions and interactions
- ▶ Retraining on use-of-force techniques from those taught by military instructors

Health Concerns

- ▶ Discuss veteran’s feelings of stress, depression, irritation, isolation, and other symptoms of PTSD

Note: Law enforcement psychologists, social workers, and chaplains can assist with explanations and symptoms which may not appear for months after return from combat

Personal Frustrations

- ▶ High level of frustration with families, civilians and other non-post 9/11 veterans
- ▶ Perception that Guard and Reserve personnel have fewer support systems available compared to those enjoyed by active duty veterans
- ▶ Indifference to spouse or family problems
- ▶ Recognition that family has survived without them for their 12+ month deployment

V. PROGRAM CURRICULUM FOR RETURNING COMBAT VETERANS

Instructor Notes: Instructor should begin the lesson by identifying and recognizing all veterans participating in the training, thanking them for their service, and explaining the purpose of the session. Some instructors may wish to include other department professionals (e.g., psychologists, chaplains, HR personnel) as training assistants if available. Subjects from the deployment cycle can be added if the service member is subject to multiple deployments. Structure training to meet individual needs and conduct an assessment on what training they are current on and what needs refreshing. Veterans do not want a thick 3-ring binder tossed in their lap. Time is flexible and training can be over a week or two.

- ▶ Incorporate training that addresses equipment differences and the reprogramming of muscle memory
- ▶ Develop core training (e.g., firearms, in-service, CPR, specialized training such as SWAT, hostage negotiation, K-9, 2-wheel vehicle)
- ▶ Review rules of engagement and use of deadly force
- ▶ Establish a comprehensive driver training program; renew licenses
- ▶ Develop an ethics and language review to ease the transition to a civilian culture
- ▶ Consider a Field Training Officer (FTO), shadow, or ride-along program
- ▶ Discuss medical issues that might cause impairment. *Note: a health professional should be available to explain PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and other combat-related medical issues.*
- ▶ Review importance of maintaining physical fitness
- ▶ Review communication/electronic procedures
- ▶ Create scenario-based training to identify transitional issues and to practice tactics
- ▶ Other training as appropriate to individual returnee’s needs

VI. TOPICS TO ADD TO ACADEMY LESSON PLANS FOR VETERAN RECRUITS

*Instructor Notes: Skills necessary to become a sworn law enforcement officer will be taught by academy instructors. As a lone veteran may be among 50-60 fellow classmates, individual training is not practical. Additionally, their training and military specialty may be far removed from the law enforcement field (e.g., infantry, cavalry, artillery). Therefore, their exposure to “policing” skills may be incidental and not relevant to an academy course of instruction. However, the recruit **can** assist the instructor in some areas and discuss how military skills learned while deployed translate to civilian policing skills. For example:*

- ▶ Military working and narcotics K-9 handling
- ▶ Intelligence gathering
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Advanced weaponry, tactics, and threat assessment
- ▶ Transportation of prisoners/detainees
- ▶ Medical assistance and/or evacuation of casualties
- ▶ Explosive Ordnance Team duties
- ▶ Traffic control duties
- ▶ Unarmed defense

Additionally, recruits who are combat veterans could assist with:

- ▶ Wearing of the uniform
- ▶ Weapon maintenance
- ▶ Use of deadly force scenarios
- ▶ Physical fitness
- ▶ CPR/AED Certification
- ▶ Leadership

Note: Resourceful instructors will make use of the knowledge and skills veterans bring with them as they can add a practical dimension and real-world experience to a host of lesson plans and scenarios. Be mindful that some veterans may experience uncomfortable flashbacks when placed in this position. Ensure they are volunteers.

VII. GROUP EXERCISES (15 minutes each scenario)

Instructor notes: These real-life scenarios will help students understand the issues combat veterans face upon returning and resuming their patrol duties. Divide participants into three groups with no more than 10 participants in each group. Give each group one scenario about a combat veteran. Ask them to identify the following, and have one participant present the findings to the group. There is no “school solution.”

Apply these questions to each scenario below:

- ▶ What behaviors are expressed or displayed by the veteran?
- ▶ Can you identify areas of increased stress or discomfort levels?
- ▶ How do you think the veterans combat experience and deployment attributed to this scenario?
- ▶ What would you do in this situation?
- ▶ How do you bring this to the attention of the veteran officer and/or the department so the veteran can receive appropriate help?

Have volunteers from the class respond to the following scenarios individually. Following each response, allow members from the group to offer input.

Scenario #1: You have been assigned to your current patrol squad for the past three years. Officer Green, who has recently returned from a deployment, has been assigned to work with you for two weeks to re-familiarize him with the job. On day four, while speaking to you about his combat experiences, Officer Green begins to cry. He states that when he returned from theatre, his spouse had moved out and he frequently has a difficult time coping.

Scenario #2: Officer Brown calls out a car stop over the radio and you respond to back her up. Everything appears to be going fine with the car stop and you observe Officer Brown return the citizen's license and registration. As the citizen begins to leave, the car backfires, and Officer Brown fires her weapon three times toward the ground. The citizen stops his car and you call out to Officer Brown and ask her what she is

doing. Officer Brown looks dazed and states she was “putting down suppressive fire.” There are no injuries to anyone on the scene and you are aware that Officer Brown recently returned from a combat mission in Iraq.

Scenario #3: Officer White has worked in your squad for the last five years. He has always been outgoing and active, but since returning from Afghanistan, he has been coming to work late, his uniform has not been neat and well kept, and he has been generally withdrawn. He told you in confidence that he has not been feeling like himself and he really didn't feel like talking about it.

Scenario #4: You have been assigned a new partner, Officer Roberts, who has just returned from a tour in Iraq. You are in the passenger seat, your partner, Officer Roberts, is driving. A call comes in from dispatch about teenagers shoplifting at a local convenience store. Your partner begins to increase to speeds well over posted limits while swerving around cars, and you notice Officer Roberts carefully avoiding potholes and debris on the side of the road. When you reach the convenience store, you suggest that we take it slower next time to minimize the risk of hitting other cars or pedestrians. Your partner reacts surprised and says, “I did not realize I was driving that way.”

Scenario #5: You have been friends with Cpl Mendez since you both graduated from the academy two years ago. Cpl Mendez has recently returned from a 12-month deployment in Afghanistan. In conversations with Cpl Mendez, she has uncharacteristically criticized the management and leadership styles of the station commander. Cpl Mendez explains that in the military, she was a Sergeant and could better manage her military police squad, while their rank of Corporal carries little or no influence on station operations. Cpl Mendez has repeatedly said she could do a better job.

Instructor notes: After the groups present their findings, ask them how each issue can effectively be addressed. Engage in a discussion of issues and possible solutions. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

VIII. EVALUATION

Instructors can evaluate their training effectiveness by collecting feedback, using a post test to measure knowledge, following up with a questionnaire, or observing behavior over time. Meeting with veterans from time to time may also be a method of evaluating effectiveness and behavioral change.



VII. Resources

Best Practices/Model Programs

Baltimore County (MD) Police Department

Major Randy Russin - (410) 887-2220

rbrussin@baltimorecountymd.gov

Colorado Springs (CO) Police Department

Chief Richard Myers - (719) 444-7401

myersri@ci.colospgrs.co.us

Delaware State Police

Captain Alice J. Bailey - (302) 672-5466

Alice.J.Bailey@state.de.us

Kansas City (MO) Police Department

Doug Weishar - (816) 234-5411

Doug.Weishar@kcpd.org

Los Angeles (CA) Sheriff's Department

Dr. Audrey Honig - (818) 429-0432

ALHonig@lasd.org

Dr. Jung Kim - (213) 738-4500

J2Kim@lasd.org

New York City (NY) Police Department

Deputy Chief John K. Donohue - (646) 610 - 5390

John.Donohue@nypd.org

Newport News (VA) Police Department

Chief James D. Fox - (757) 928-4305

foxjd@nngov.com

South Carolina Law Enforcement

Assistance Program

Reverend Dr. J. Eric Skidmore - (803) 783-3024

ericskid@sclcap.org

Washington DC Metro Police Department

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Dr. Beverly Anderson - (202) 546-9684

www.mpeap.com

Military

- ▶ **Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve:** www.esgr.mil

- ▶ **Department of Defense:** www.defenselink.mil

- ▶ **Military acronyms and abbreviations:** www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary

- ▶ **Military Homefront:** www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil

- ▶ **Military One Source:** www.militaryonesource.com

- ▶ **Non-technical Guide to USERRA:** www.dol.gov/vets/whatsnew/userraguide0704.rtf

- ▶ **Post-9/11 GI Bill:** www.gibill.va.gov

- ▶ **Wounded Warrior Regiment:** www.woundedwarriorregiment.org

- ▶ **Wounded Warrior Resource Center:** www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.com

Government

- ▶ **Department of Labor:** www.dol.gov

- ▶ **Department of Veterans Affairs:** www.va.gov

- ▶ **U.S. House of Representatives Title 10:** http://uscode.house.gov/download/title_10.shtml

Law Enforcement

- ▶ **Baltimore County Homefront:** www.bcpl.info/info/comm/comm_veteran.html

- ▶ **Discover Policing:** www.discoverpolicing.org

- ▶ **Domestic Violence by Police Officers Model Policy:** www.theiacp.org/tabid/299/Default.aspx?id=1130&v=1

Community/Family Support

- ▶ **America's Heroes at Work:** www.americasheroesatwork.gov

- ▶ **American Red Cross:** www.redcross.org

- ▶ **American Veterans:** www.amvets.org

- ▶ **Child Care Aware:** www.childcareaware.org

- ▶ **Lets Say Thanks:** www.lets saythanks.com

- ▶ **National Center for PTSD:** www.ptsd.va.gov

- ▶ **National Resource Directory:** www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov

- ▶ **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

- ▶ **Operation Homefront:** www.operationhomefront.com

- ▶ **Operation Military Kids:** www.operationmilitarykids.org

- ▶ **Our Military Kids:** www.ourmilitarykids.org

References

Webster, B. COPS Innovations, Combat Deployment and the Returning Police Officer. U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. August 2008.

Appendix A

Project Advisory Committee

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Pennsylvania State Police

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Adjutant General
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► The IACP and project staff are suggesting that the findings and recommendations from this research effort can be an effective guide for local law enforcement. The IACP learned from hundreds of savvy, compassionate, and thoughtful law enforcement leaders who engage veterans daily with a great degree of empathy and know how to care for them and their families. This guide will hopefully provide some answers to unanswered questions and provide for an improved department, community, and law enforcement family. Comments and suggestions to the project staff at militaryveterans@theiacp.org are always encouraged.

As a law enforcement executive, it is in your best interest, and the best interests of your officers and your community to maximize the value of combat veterans who are either returning to their jobs as law enforcement officers after a combat tour, or applying for new positions as officers upon discharge from the military. IACP and BJA have spent the last two years assessing both what is being done successfully to reintegrate/integrate combat veterans into law enforcement, and importantly, what is in need of improvement. The results of that study—synthesized into this guide—will help you 1) fully understand the needs of returning combat veterans, and 2) take necessary steps to ensure that veterans returning to or beginning their careers in your department are prepared.





The International Association of Chiefs of Police

► The International Association of Chiefs of Police is the world's oldest and largest nonprofit membership organization of police executives, with over 20,000 members in over 100 different countries. IACP's leadership consists of the operating chief executives of international, federal, state and local agencies of all sizes. Founded in 1893, the association's goals are to advance the science and art of police services; to develop and disseminate improved administrative, technical and operational practices and promote their use in police work; to foster police cooperation and the exchange of information and experience among police administrators throughout the world; to bring about recruitment and training in the police profession of qualified persons; and to encourage adherence of all police officers to high professional standards of performance and conduct. Since 1893, the International Association of Chiefs of Police has been serving the needs of the law enforcement community. Throughout the past 114 years, we have been launching historically acclaimed programs, conducting ground-breaking research and providing exemplary programs and services to our membership across the globe.

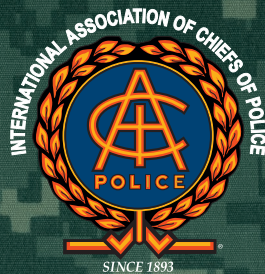
Professionally recognized programs such as the FBI Identification Division and the Uniform Crime Records system can trace their origins back to the IACP. In fact, the IACP has been instrumental in forwarding breakthrough technologies and philosophies from the early years of our establishment to the present. From spearheading national use of fingerprint identification to partnering in a consortium on community policing to gathering top experts in criminal justice, the government and education for summits on violence, homicide, and youth violence, IACP has realized our responsibility to positively effect the goals of law enforcement.

Even with such an esteemed history, we are continually initiating programs to address the needs of today's law enforcement professionals. Our members have let us know that they consider IACP to be a progressive organization, successfully advancing the law enforcement profession.

If you would like additional information about the IACP, please contact IACP Headquarters at 1-800-THE-IACP (1-800-843-4227) or visit our website at www.theiacp.org

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