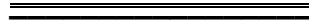


**The Bill Blackwood  
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**



**Law Enforcement Should Hire Veterans to fill their Ranks**



**A Leadership White Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Required for Graduation from the  
Leadership Command College**



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## **ABSTRACT**

The law enforcement world is changing faster than the police agencies can realize new philosophical ideas and ideologies. Law enforcement recruits veterans when faced with a shortage of police applicants. Across the United States, law enforcement faces many challenges in recruiting new officers. Law enforcement's problem is the desire to uphold high standards of professionalism in an increasingly violent society while certifying the applicant pool is adequate to meet the needs of the community. This paper examines the pros and cons of why law enforcement agencies should hire veterans for police agencies during a staffing crisis (Barker, 2011). Law enforcement agencies have faced astronomical applicant disqualification rates with filling vacancies. Law enforcement has turned to the military as a source of successful recruitment, although it has its pitfalls. The incidence of PTSD and other service-connected disabilities in veterans who have been discharged is a reason for concern. Another burden is the increased public concern over the use of deadly force by police on the professional's mental health retained to all applicants, including the veterans.

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## INTRODUCTION

Leaders in law enforcement involved in veterans' recruitment are gaining experienced individuals with highly transferable skills to a career in law enforcement. Veterans were part of a changing organization, and most veterans wanted to maintain their dedication and skill set while serving the country. For many law enforcement agencies, the military has many potential employees ready to fill their ranks. All branches have their perspective values that they pass on to their service members. The seven Army Values is LDRSHIP. The acronym stands for Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. From day one, the Army begins to instill these seven values into the service members in hopes that it will build the foundation of a successful career. Veterans have demonstrated the ability to follow orders and exhibit punctuality. They also have a sense of pride and honor that fits well within law enforcement. Law enforcement leaders perceive that people with military experience make desirable law enforcement officers.

Some veterans have degrees in criminal justice and other disciplines or some college credits, which increases their significance in the respective departments. Veterans are offered long-term stability through a law enforcement career with a tangible accomplishment that other jobs cannot deliver as they can apply their dedication to serving and protecting the public. Law enforcement leaders use a transition program that supports and addresses veterans' challenges and issues. The program is an attractive benefit for new veteran recruits and forms a department different from other employees. Police agencies are working hard to retain and obtain qualified personnel and constantly compete with opposing groups.

According to Taylor et al. (2005), police agencies perceive inadequate recruiting pools. Most organizations focus on needs to satisfy their recruitment needs by improving the methods and strategies. There are many benefits to employing former military veterans in policing, making them a pool to get officers in the future. This paper aims to discuss why law enforcement agencies should hire military veterans. Veterans have a great sense of duty, commitment, and leadership skills.

## **POSITION**

It is estimated that law enforcement personnel in the United States comprises more than 20% of military veterans (Stone & Stone, 2015). The police agency hires veterans as they have a strong work ethic, the ability to work under pressure, a deep sense of mission, and commitment (Stone & Stone, 2015). The Community Oriented Policing (COPS) office is committed to supporting the military veterans and the law enforcement agencies, such as the police agencies that hire them (Arendt, & Sapp, 2014). The veterans have work skills that make them ideal candidates for police work. The Cop's office was created in 1994. Veterans are hired through the COPS Hiring Program (CHP). The CHP is issuing additional consideration to applicants and is committed to rehiring and hiring military veterans.

Ideally, there are programs like the Community Oriented Policing Services organization and the Department of Justice, which help advance military veterans in various ways. For instance, both the COPS and the Department of Justice (DOJ) programs have the ability to offer financial help to participants so that they may attend military police academies, where they will receive specialized training and where they will also be given the opportunity to advance to higher positions (Justice.gov., 2020).

The CHP defines a veteran as an individual who has worked on active duty in the armed forces for more than 180 consecutive days. The demands and rewards for police officers are unique, but the training and military skills will help and create an advantage for a successful career. The veteran's contribution to law enforcement can assist the police agencies in advancing public safety. Their sacrifice in serving the community is a testament to the veteran's courage and patriotism. Offering them a chance to become police officers is an opportunity to continuously serve the community through problem-solving and collaborative partnerships that few careers can match. Their experience in the military tested their physical, emotional, and mental limits. The new roles in policing will enable them to challenge their potential. Whether the veterans are serving as a patrolman or a detective, the duties of the officers are evolving. Hence, there is an enormous potential for the development of the profession. The veterans are more mentally and physically fit than the non-veterans as they have some variables in education, degree of altruism, intelligence, and ability to work in the duress environment. The veterans are familiar with conflict, psychological coercion, physical danger, and competing values and missions. They may also be adopted in working in dynamic environments and achieving a situation outcome.

Veterans of the United States Armed Forces are known for being trustworthy and respectful of the rights of others. These characteristics make them potential individuals for employment in the United States Army. For instance, these veterans of the military police force keep up positive connections with the neighborhood's citizens (University of Massachusetts, 2022). Therefore, if the community views the national guard as trustworthy and respectable, there is a greater likelihood that they will work with them.

In addition, officers who have prior experience serving in the military as veterans are better able to empathize with and comprehend the difficulties encountered by members of military intelligence.

In addition, military veterans who have been honorably discharged from the armed forces have a lower risk of being convicted of crimes or having criminal records than individuals who have not served in the armed forces. (Stone & Stone, 2015). This leads one to believe that they protect the rights of people to reduce the number of civilian deaths. Additionally, the dependability of these veterans may contribute to the establishment of trust between the military police and the populations they are tasked to protect.

When looking for recruits, the police departments have increasingly hired military veterans to don their uniforms and put in experiences and skills unique to more public services (Stone & Stone, 2015). Military veterans have adopted a structured lifestyle and adherence to a strict chain of command. They have learned to work together, wear uniforms, restore order and protect the people in their country. The veterans are familiar with weaponry and the discernment exercise in handling, caring and using weapons. The ex-military are sought highly for hire by police recruiters as they seek women and men capable of making good decisions, well-developed moral code, and common sense off and on duty (Stone & Stone, 2015). Additionally, military veterans have met the physical criteria, and through their service in the military, they have proved their capabilities. Therefore, the police recruiters' list for a pool of applicants is topped by military veterans.

The military veterans are team players. They are trained to contribute to a team to succeed and thrive and acquire knowledge through training that they must count on one another through teams to survive. The members with a change in working with teams are identified and, through training, followed. Even after the follow-up training, the members who cannot participate as team members meet various fates and will not hold back their units. It is simple to identify the service hiring member on the list. The law enforcement department can consult the supervisor in the military or use the military records with the employment packet. Short conversations with the veteran platoon sergeant or first sergeant, or platoon leader, and a call to his former unit will provide an honest examination and analysis of the personal quality of the veterans. The assessment is a great way to measure the attributes and qualities of military veterans because the military leaders on active duty do not hesitate to share the good with the bad and will say what is in their minds. In law enforcement, working with other cops as a team player and following orders and commands from supervisors is essential for professional success.

The service members are taught how to communicate concisely and confidently from the moment they exit the wagon at the boot camp to when they leave the military. Their survival depends on the message and how it is delivered; hence, they learn to speak with clarity and efficiency. Law enforcement should not allow their lack of exposure to veterans to influence hiring decisions. A good cop can easily pass the message and receive messages delivered to him with ease. Law enforcement with difficulties in communications will always find themselves in trouble (Stone & Stone, 2015).



Military veterans are mature and hardly ever complain about immaterial things (McNichols, J., & Anderson, A.,2020). The military service members are recruited at young ages, most aged eighteen years. At the different ranks, they are taught to be leaders. The military uses most of its time training its leaders, and promotions come with excellent leadership schools and are not available in law enforcement. The ability of military veterans to function as leaders will provide tremendous value to a law enforcement agency (McNichols, J., & Anderson, A.,2020). The veterans are quite professionals in squads, constantly pushing forward and never complaining (McNichols, J., & Anderson, A.,2020).

Veterans can manage stress. They are exposed to stress as they expect nothing but success, whether they have or lack combat experience. The level of stress they are exposed to is unimaginable for those individuals who have never served in the military. The Boot camp is the beginning of the service member's sleep deprivation, mental stress, and physical stress, and it does not lessen until they leave or retire from the service. Law enforcement is filled with moments of calm and hours of extreme stress, and military veterans will not crack under this type of pressure as they know how to perform. Stress management cannot be taught at an educational institute. Veterans have acquired leadership training during the service period, making good leaders. The veterans come from diverse cultures and backgrounds, creating greater diversity in law enforcement and a unique viewpoint among the individuals with whom they work.

## **COUNTER ARGUMENTS**

The police agencies have assumed a smooth, clear, and linear transition from the military to law enforcement services. The assumption is due to the involvement of

firearms, uniforms, and services in both careers, assuming the military transition would be simple for the veterans. Critical differences in tactics and mission should lead law enforcement agencies to be cautious about hiring military veterans (Schafer & Levin, 2017). The differences do not indicate the veterans are inadequate in policing services. Whether former military or not, all new employees should be educated on the difference between civilian police and military services in terms of tactics, methods, outcomes, and strategies (Taylor et al., 2005), the four dimensions need tending, and the content will differ from one police agency to the next.

Another dimension that requires attention is the values, as the soldier's creed would be, on the surface, consistent with the values of the civilians. However, the values in the military may conflict with those expected in civilian policing. For instance, in the military, the notion of an enemy is currently not consistent with civilian policing. Civilian policing allows using reasonable force while the military constructs a proportional response. The rules of engagement are not the same as the versions of civilian police departments. Under stress, the veterans can revert to their standards in the military, although the standards may not be applicable in policing (Schafer & Levin, 2017). It is likely the military trained the officer to carry out the roles within those parameters versus the police agencies' training that aids the police in making an appropriate decision under conditions of duress in the field. Soldiers do not fit the expectation of the police tasks even though it is considered combat policing. "I stand ready to deploy, engage and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat" is not consistent with the familiar policing model (Taylor et al., 2005).

Conflicts are not apparent when values taught in the United States Navy are examined. On the surface, the Marine Corps and the Airforce values seem to be compatible with policing. However, the implicit values may be problematic due to the shift in context with which consequences are intended. The law enforcement agencies may expect conflict between the non-veterans who may pick up conflicting values with no orientation towards the values of the organization and the veterans who are taught value appreciation. Some of the leaders in law enforcement may not be unaware of the military's move towards empowering the troops (Taylor et al., 2005).

The veterans' applicants will bring with them physical and psychological disabilities. The disabilities arise due to recruiting and retention standards that vary in the military from time to time and, to some great extent, due to the trauma incurred during the service period and being deployed to a theater of combat operations. (Taylor et al., 2005). The traditional method of testing may not detect the conditions. The United States Administration of veterans has improved assessment, screening, and treatment standards for service members suffering from post-traumatic stress following the duty related to combat. Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms can delay up to six months or more, increasing the likelihood of policing implications. According to Cabrera et al. (2007), when soldiers are exposed to childhood adversity raises the possibility of post-traumatic stress disorder despite the soldiers having or lacking combat experiences. According to Dong et al. (2005), in another study, childhood adversity influences civilians' adult health and behavior in law enforcement.

The veterans are accustomed to higher training quality than what is available in policing, modern equipment, ethical environment, mission clarity, and team orientation

instead of individual performance. Police agencies may have a challenge in retaining the veterans who are disappointed with sad constraints that bring a tragic reality to most agencies of police. (Read, B. B. 2009).he veterans will fit differently with police departments. They bring varying work experience, life experience, interests' education, and ambitions to policing. Recruits from the military should be taught that policing is a political entity and that the needs and opinions of the stakeholders should be attended to. The policy training should initially provide them with an understanding of the law concerning human resources, including risk management (Schafer & Levin, 2017).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Veterans with service-connected disabilities can face a difficult time getting hired. Veterans recover from post-traumatic disorder after several months, while some can take years. With the help of prescription medicine and a robust support system, the veteran will be able to navigate through these issues. Law enforcement should establish a solid support network to help mitigate PTSD. It is also necessary to encourage the soldiers to form peer-to-peer groups to share their experiences. The peer to peer should work with the mental health professional treatment (National Institute of Health- Medline plus). A health professional should discuss options with the veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic injury of the brain, and other medical issues related to combat duty (Cabrera et al., 2007). The health professional should discuss the significance of maintaining physical fitness in the discussions. The department should look for opportunities that allow the veterans to exercise the new skills acquired in policing by assigning new tasks or projects that leverage the benefits of the skills to the department and veterans.

The police departments should reinforce the notion that non-veterans and veterans bring something good to the table. The department leadership objective should establish a cohesive unit between the groups and reestablish the bond between officers (Schafer & Levin, 2017). Another recommendation is to create live exercises that reflect the situations where these mechanical stimulations may occur instead of waiting for the behaviors to return to appropriate levels. The police department should also conduct training that educates the veterans to talk to United States citizens to break the habits developed when talking to hostile citizens overseas.

Cultural training can be beneficial even when veteran officers can practice transitioning in a region where everyone is an enemy to the community policing environment. Law enforcement should conduct personal interviews with veteran recruits as they will be at ease, underscore their commitments, and introduce the veterans to law enforcement. The interview talks about the veteran officer's skills and experience. It works with the officers to highlight the need for training and create a program that reintegrates and refreshes veterans to domesticate the operating procedures. The training tools should be present before training, enhancing a refresher program within a police department.

The police department should identify the positive and helpful skills that the veterans bring along in law enforcement and provide basic information about the law enforcement departments, objectives, missions, and obligations (Schafer & Levin, 2017). The training sessions should start with the instructor identifying and recognizing all the present veterans in the training program, thanking them for their service, and explaining the purpose of the training session. The objective of the training should

involve assisting the law enforcement workforce in understanding the challenges and experiences the veterans face when integrating from a combat environment to the duties of civilian law enforcement. The instructors should also explain the transition obstacles the veterans encountered in shifting from military to civilian law enforcement, and the training recommendations should be presented.

Police departments should hire veterans. Veterans possess a strong work ethic and the knowledge to be functional in a team environment. Public organizations are missing current opportunities, such as hiring veterans. There is great potential in integrating military veterans into law enforcement as they bring positive attributes. However, when law enforcement is maximizing the chance, they should consider the concerns with the strategy and examine the organizational environment to appeal to military personnel. There is a nationwide inadequacy of police recruits, and law enforcement should invest in strategies to attract individuals into the profession. A veteran stands an excellent chance of being hired by a law enforcement organization; civil service agencies will allow the veteran to claim up to five veterans' points to be added to their final test score. This is an incentive to recruit veterans and facilitate their hiring process.

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