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Textron Aviation employees open up about transitioning from the military through the DoD SkillBridge Program

Making the transition from the U.S. military to the civilian sector can be intimidating. By supporting the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge program, Textron Aviation strives to learn from participating military members and make the transition as smooth as possible.

Applying military skills to an industry job

James Noel, a United States Air Force (USAF) veteran and program manager for Textron Aviation Defense, was the second DoD Skillbridge participant to work for Textron Aviation.



Jim Noel, USAF veteran and program manager for Textron Aviation Defense.

After 21 years in the USAF, Noel was ready to apply his skills learned in the military to an industry job. Having heard about the DoD Skillbridge program from his peers, Noel researched companies with which he could explore a career through the program and found Textron Aviation in Wichita, Kan.

“It almost seemed too good to be true, to be able to maintain active duty while gaining experience in a civilian job.”

— Jim Noel, Program Manager, Textron Aviation Defense

After completing the six-month program, Noel accepted Textron Aviation’s offer to stay at the company as a full-time employee.

Jay Wall, a USAF veteran and customer service manager for Textron Aviation, said he learned how to translate from military to aviation jargon while in the internship program.



Jay Wall, USAF veteran and customer service manager for Textron Aviation.

Wall said the experience helped him understand the day-to-day processes and overall expectations of the job, so when he got a full-time offer of employment, he knew what to expect in the civilian sector.

Understanding the complexities of transitioning to civilian life

Jessica Young, an E-7 Sergeant in the USAF, a Superintendent of Operations & Compliance for the 22nd Logistics Readiness Squadron and leader of 24 logistics professionals, said it is important for companies to understand the complexities of transitioning from military to civilian life.

“When I began my Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at McConnell Air Force Base, Jennifer Barbour came out to speak as part of an employer panel and she gave me great advice and even helped me with my résumé,” Young said.

“As I prepared for my transition, it was also important to me that the company understood the needs and requirements of transitioning members. For example, a gaining company and department have to present a training plan and understand that the member is transitioning, so they may have appointments they must keep... they are still an active duty member, which means that they are on permissive Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY) and can be called back to the base for anything,” she said.



Jessica Young, an active duty member of the USAF and current intern at Textron Aviation Defense.

“Making the transition from the military can be scary, so I have made it my mission to coach and guide military members who are exploring a new career,” said Jennifer Barbour, Textron Aviation director of human resources. Barbour is also a USAF veteran and made the transitional journey from the military into general aviation herself.

“I look forward to growing our relationship with future military members and partnering with military bases and posts to explore employment opportunities for family members of active-duty personnel.”

— Jennifer Barbour, Director of Human Resources

Connecting service members to civilian work opportunities

The DoD SkillBridge program is an invaluable opportunity for U.S. service members to gain civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships or internships during the last six months of their active duty service.

The program also allows industries to compete for and capitalize on several of the nation’s most highly sought-after skillsets — proven leadership experience, analytical reasoning skills, adaptability and an unbreakable commitment to teamwork.

Textron Aviation is a proud supporter of the DoD Skillbridge program and, through the program, leverages the world’s most highly trained and motivated workforce. While Textron Aviation has been involved with the program since 2019, the company was recently named an official DoD SkillBridge Authorized Organization.

“SkillBridge partners with private industries to help veterans find jobs, but also [enables] companies to find the workforce that they need for their industries,”

— Matthew P. Donovan, former Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Becoming a DoD SkillBridge Authorized Organization further enables Textron Aviation to offer real-world training and work experience to U.S. Service members transitioning to civilian life.

Growing the program

To date, 13 members of the U.S. military have interned at Textron Aviation and Textron Aviation Defense, and over half of those participants accepted full-time employment opportunities across the company. Textron Aviation is continuing to interview and onboard additional interns through the program.

Active duty personnel considering transitioning out of the military or preparing to retire from active duty are encouraged to learn more about DoD SkillBridge and its mission. Find more specific information about the program on the DoD SkillBridge website.

Chart your own aviation journey by visiting Textron Aviation Careers.



<https://txtav.com/careers>

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