

**Name: Joe Winiarz – Deputy Director, Office of Human Capital Management (Code 110)**

**Branch of service: United States Army; retired Master Sergeant**

**Years of service: 20 years**

**Education: Master's in Public Administration & Bachelor's of Liberal Arts**



**How did you learn about NASA?** Star Trek!! Seriously, that was my favorite show as a child, and as I grew older I was very interested in our moon landings and as a teen I would sit with my Grandfather in his back yard and watch Sky Lab pass over the house. Not being naturally oriented to science and math (yuck!), I didn't think I'd have an opportunity to work here, but a network contact thought I'd be a good fit for an opening, and here I am!

**What is your position and how did your military service fit into your current career?** As the Deputy Director of the OHCM, I am in constant touch with people. One of the biggest benefits of my military service is being able to quickly assess and fit into a new environment, and to start conversations fairly easily with people that I don't know.

**What made you decide to go into this field?** I love working with people, and I love public service. So, while I'm no longer serving the public via military service, I am proud to continue to serve as a civil servant and to be able to work with people! In fact, while many of my peers in the military were pursuing a Master's in Business Administration, I chose to pursue a Master's in Public Administration – the business of the running government for the public good!

**What background/education/experience was helpful in obtaining a position with NASA?** I have no doubt in my mind that the many years of practical, hands-on leadership experiences I gained while in the Army have played a significant role in my being selected for a position with NASA, just as with my prior civil servant professional opportunities. I've also been fortunate to have had some phenomenal mentors, most of whom have been in an occupational area outside my own, that have helped me understand organizational synergies and integration points from a new or different perspective. I'd also say that continuing to pursue academic or professional development opportunities have been valuable, as well, even the times that I've had to pay for those opportunities myself due to a lack of organizational funding, military commitments, etc. – I've always felt that any investment I make in myself will be more beneficial to me personally than an investment made by an organization.

**How was your transition from military life to your civilian career?** I was fortunate in that the last 5-6 years of my military career was spent primarily in organizations with a mix of military, civil servant and contract employees. I didn't understand what a tremendous opportunity the exposure to the civilian arena was at the time; it was only as I neared retirement that I fully appreciated that I had unknowingly attained a fairly deep knowledge base in that area. So, my transition may be viewed as fairly easy compared to some folks that make that transition but I firmly believe it's all about having the right perspective. Taking off a military uniform and putting on a shirt and tie, or more casual business attire, is definitely a change and takes some adjustment, but it doesn't have to be a challenge.

**Any advice for soon-to-be veterans who may want to choose this career field?** No matter what career field you want to pursue, have a plan, set objectives and milestones for your plan and build your own personal network of former veteran's that you can reach out to for advice, guidance and assistance. Take courses in

your field that will boost your marketability, and participate in Transition Assistance Programs offered at your installation to access transition resources, including advice and/or ideas on how to match your military specialty to civilian occupational specialties as well as how to tailor your resumes or applications to your target specific jobs.

**What are your best three transition tips for soon-to-be veterans?** 1) As mentioned in my response to the previous question, plan for your transition. And be flexible, for as an old Army saying goes “No plan survives first contact with the enemy”. And while the job market is not an ‘enemy’, it does present a challenge for you to overcome. So, plan, plan some more and then do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission – which is to transition as smoothly as possible!! 2) Study the career field you’re interested in pursuing and understand how your military skills, leadership and technical alike, fit. 3) Be proud of your service, bask in the bonds of friendship and camaraderie you’ve forged and in the world-mapping experiences that you enjoyed while serving...and realize that while the civilian community may not offer those same types of opportunities, there is a wealth of different yet equally rewarding and challenging opportunities waiting for you.