

Honoring Military Members: A Heart for Service Starts With Our People

At Southwest Airlines, we seek to attract, hire, onboard, and retain extraordinary veterans who serve or have served our country and given our Company the freedom to fly. We're grateful for our military service members who fought for our freedoms and continue to bring their unique skills to Southwest.

Our support of the military resounds with more than 10,200 Employees who self-identify as military members and over 1,800 military spouses. From our Warrior Hire program that supports the transition of military veterans from active duty and reserves to careers in our Technology Department to our Military@SWA Employee Resource Group (ERG), we're passionate about supporting our People. With these programs, it's no surprise Southwest [ranked the top airline in Forbes America's Best Employers for Veterans 2023 list](#) and received the [2024 Military Friendly® Employer \(Gold\) Recognition from Victory](#), which marks an astounding 17 years of recognition in the 21 years since the list's inception!

Hear from Cohearts about their transition from the military to civilian life:



Juan B.

Software Engineer and Warrior Hire

United States Marine Corps Veteran

"I'm Juan, a Software Developer for the Air Operations Team. I served in the Marine Corps for five years before transitioning to civilian life and joining Southwest through the Warrior Hire program, which recruits and helps military personnel transition to the civilian world.

In the Marines, I was a combat photographer. I photographed different units or commanders' humanitarian acts in addition to training exercises, the change of leadership from one unit to another, retirements, and ceremonies. My military experience helped me understand what I could accomplish, but there was so much uncertainty when I transitioned out of the armed forces. I'm grateful for the skills I learned in the military, including adaptability.

I planned to attend college to study computer science and become a software developer. Then, I discovered the Microsoft Software and Systems Academy (MSSA) program, which provides education on the necessary technology skills for transitioning service members, so I shifted my

plans to pursue the program. The MSSA program is unique in that it trains transitioning U.S. service members and veterans for careers in the technology industry. It also creates a pipeline for Candidates to discover open positions within Southwest's Technology Department.

Upon joining Southwest, I learned about the Company's Warrior Hire program. I felt understood, received resources, and partnered with a mentor while bridging the transition to civilian life. Once you transition from the military, it can feel like you're missing camaraderie or belonging. Southwest provided the People and Culture I was used to having around me while serving."



Jeni T.

SWA U Team Leader

United States Navy Veteran

"I'm Jeni, and I began my Southwest chapter in 2015 as a Sr. Learning Developer in the Southwest Airlines University (SWA U) Department, where I designed and developed training content for

Technical Ops. Now I'm a Team Lead, focused on elevating my love of Southwest Airlines and supporting the veteran's voice in the Company.

There are so many different paths that one can take to get to where they are now. My story began in Vietnam, where my family fled violence and communism to create a new life in the United States. Thanks to their sacrifices, hard work, and determination, I'm a proud U.S. Navy veteran and Southwest Employee.

I've overcome hurdles and challenges as a Vietnamese American. As I grew older, I started to think about what I wanted to do with my life. School was important, but I knew that my family couldn't afford to send me to college, even with a partial scholarship. Tuition would be too much to burden them with. Luckily, I listened to a presentation from a Navy recruiter that made me consider enlisting after graduation. This experience was memorable because I had never seen an Asian female recruiter in uniform. When she spoke, her experience impacted me, and I knew it was something that I wanted to do. So, I joined the military and didn't tell anyone until it was time for me to leave for boot camp in 1998. In total, I served 20 years in the Navy and was able to retire and celebrate with friends, family, and my Southwest Cohearts.

Working hard comes naturally to me, and I grew up being grateful and appreciative of all the opportunities that came my way. These values molded me into the person I am today. I wouldn't have a story to share regarding my journey to the United States or my professional career if it weren't for my parent's choices and sacrifices."



Tom M.

Aircraft Maintenance Technician

United States Air Force Veteran

“I’m Tom, and I’ve been an Aircraft Maintenance Technician at Southwest Airlines for over 25 years. My involvement in our Company and Station Culture has been important to my career. During my Southwest journey, I’ve participated in our Culture Committee, Hiring Committee, Technical Operations (Tech Ops) Council, President’s Council, and the Military Ambassador Program. I’ve enjoyed opportunities to do many different things with the Company, including leading volunteerism efforts, and it’s made me a better person.

Before Southwest, I was an active-duty Air Force guy for over six years and worked on ground support equipment and airplanes. My love for working with my hands led me to pursue earning my Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) Certificate once I left the service. I returned to the Air Force Reserves for 15 years before fully retiring from the military, and I consider my time serving an honor and a privilege.

My Southwest career is a blessing. Currently, I work on the shop side of maintenance. We move planes in and out for different maintenance shifts, coordinate timing, and effectively manage the limited maintenance space available in Phoenix. I love taxiing airplanes around the hangar or airport.

As I think about retirement, I'd like to get our newer Employees involved with our various committees to keep our traditions and Culture alive for the next 20-30 years. I hope they experience the same Family feeling I've always felt. While I'm not yet ready to turn off my career engine, I've had an incredible ride. We're all one Southwest Family and our Culture of caring provides a good foundation."



Our [multiple military-focused programs](#) encourage Employees to create and discover their unique careers at Southwest. As the military community shines with Heart for service over self and continual excellence, we're proud to continue fostering the comradery our veterans, service members, and family members treasure.

- **Warrior Hire Program:** Started in 2018 and throughout the years, more than 40 Southwest Warrior Hires have successfully transitioned and received the full support of technical and career skill training, along with a "battle buddy" from a previous class, a transition mentor, and direct guidance from the Warrior Hire Steering Committee.
- **Destination 225° Military Pathway:** Launched in 2019 with other pathways for those interested in pursuing their dreams as a commercial Pilot. This pathway in the Destination 225° program provides the transitional bridge for current or aspiring aviators with military flying experience to pursue a Pilot career at Southwest.

- Military@SWA ERG: Introduced in 2023 as an opportunity to provide a community of support and camaraderie by connecting military veterans and their Cohearts with resources to help them reach their full potential and fulfill their career aspirations.

We're also proud of our national partnerships with military-focused nonprofits, including Team Rubicon, Help Heal Veterans, Honor Flight Network, and PTSD Foundation of America, who provide impactful services to military personnel, veterans, and their families. Our Recruiting Teams also attend annual conferences directly supporting the military community, such as the Rotary to Airline Group (RTAG) and The Pilot Network Conference (TPNx), and regional events with military partners, including Hiring our Heroes.

While our colors may be red, yellow, and blue, our Southwest Heart beats red, white, and blue. Thank you for everything that you do to serve those who serve our country.



