

A high-contrast silhouette of a soldier standing in profile, facing left. He is wearing a helmet and holding a rifle across his chest. The background is a warm, gradient sunset or sunrise sky.

Military



Transition to Educational Facilities

By Major Steven D. Gasser, CD, CEFP, P.Eng., CA Army (Retired)

Near the end of 2017, the APPA Professional Affairs Committee formed a new subcommittee, the Military Transitions Subcommittee, to focus on military members transitioning to educational facilities. The group is made up of former military personnel from a variety of services in both the United States and Canada currently working in educational facilities.

The purpose of the committee is “to engage in a long-term relationship with military personnel and their respective association(s) in the USA and Canada that aids in their transition to civilian facilities management roles in educational facilities (should they so choose).”

Our goals are to:

- Provide an avenue to educational facilities as a career choice (take away the mystery).
- Promote an awareness of educational facilities as an industry.



Members of the committee, along with Lander Medlin from APPA, met with several key organizations in the Washington, DC area in December 2017 to connect with and learn more about how we (APPA) can support the transition of military personnel to educational facilities. We spent some very valuable time with Michael Miller, director of private and public engagement at the **Transition to Veterans Program Office** of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense. His presentation focused on:

- Soft skills—what talents do the transitioning military members bring to the workforce and their value proposition? Leadership, mission orientation, discipline, teamwork, and strategic vision.
- Connections—what other organizations are involved in supporting transitioning military members? (e.g., <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/>).
- Skills bridge—overview of the programs in each of the Armed Services that exists to assist members to prepare for civilian vocations.
- Overview of the Transition to Veterans Program.
- Top 20 locations for transitioning military in the next year—where are the recruitment opportunities?

As a result of our meeting with Michael Miller, his colleague Commander Eric Vandiver spoke at the **Military Transition to Educational Facilities Workshop** on Saturday August 4, during the APPA 2018 Annual Conference and Exhibition, to update us on the aforementioned opportunities. He also talked about a report from the Rand Corporation entitled *What Veterans Bring to Civilian Workplaces: A Prototype Toolkit for Helping Veterans Communicate to Private-Sector Employers About the Nontechnical Skills Developed in the Military* (<https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL160z1-1.html>). In this toolkit, Rand describes how 19 general skills important to civilian job success are developed through on-the-job experience and selected formal military education courses for enlisted personnel in the Army and Marine

Corps in selected combat arms occupations.

The APPA subcommittee has also met with the **Naval Facilities Engineering Command** headquarters staff in the Washington Navy Yard, and discovered the opportunities available for personnel serving with the various Seabee battalions on the East and West Coasts. United States Naval Construction Battalions, better known as the “Seabees,” form the deployable Naval Construction Force (NCF) of the United States Navy. Their nickname is derived from the initials “C.B.” and stands for “Construction Battalion.” These enlisted personnel are highly skilled trades staff that would be welcomed at any of our institutions.

Last but not least, we also met with the **Society of American Military Engineers (SAME)**. SAME leads collaborative efforts to identify and resolve national security infrastructure-related challenges. Founded in 1920, SAME unites public and private sector individuals and organizations from across the architecture, engineering, construction, environmental and facility management, cybersecurity, project planning, contracting and acquisition, and related disciplines in support of national security. Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, SAME provides its more than 30,000 members extensive opportunities for training, education, and professional development through a robust offering of conferences, workshops, networking events, and publications.

On January 2, 2018, APPA and SAME launched the Partnership to Expand Training and Work Opportunities for exiting military personnel entering the educational facilities profession. The APPA-SAME alliance will bring support to transitioning military officers and personnel by providing access to professional development opportunities and career credentialing services within the educational facilities profession. Additionally, the alliance will support exiting military personnel in their search for career opportunities at colleges, universities, and K-12 school systems. For example, APPA’s Job Express service allows any exiting military personnel to place their resume in the APPA Resume Bank at no charge.

The partnership is an important one for the educational community. Within higher education, professional opportunities in facilities are growing, as large numbers of baby-boomer generation employees are rapidly retiring from the facilities profession. It is projected that boomer retirements will be the leading cause for as much as 70 percent turnover and new vacancies within the profession over the next six to seven years.

The facilities management practices for both college or university campuses and military installations have many similarities. Both operate much like small cities, have a diverse property and building portfolio, and contain facilities with unique operations and construction needs and requirements. For both military and educational facilities professionals, a diverse blend of facilities management skillsets across multiple disciplines is often required. Exiting military facility professionals who join educational facilities' organizations for their second career often remark on the striking similarities between both professions.

Among the projects that APPA and SAME are considering are educational facilities career workshops, which would be held at military installations and in metro areas with a large military presence. APPA and SAME would seek member engagement at APPA state and local chapters and at SAME's local Posts to conduct these events.

Additionally, SAME and APPA seek to offer online training and examination preparatory courses for use in acquiring either the Certified Educational Facilities Professional (CEFP) or the Educational Facilities Professional (EFP) credential. The credentials and associated training systems developed by APPA are used by educational institutions to further develop current employees and to hire qualified facilities management talent.

The Military Transition Subcommittee determined that we could achieve our two goals through outreach to SAME by participating in:

- The SAME annual **Transition Workshop and Job Fair**: February 28-March 1, 2019 in Linthicum, Maryland.
 - The Transition Workshop and Job Fair connects Architecture/Engineering/Construction (AEC) professionals with SAME Sustaining Member Companies and federal agencies looking for talent to help them pursue their federal programs and projects. Each attending company and agency has a private suite, which allows for small-group gatherings as well as one-on-one discussions. Christina Hills, APPA's director of credentialing and benchmarking, attended the 2018 workshop on APPA's behalf and spent the entire time meeting with potential new facilities employees.
 - APPA staff have attended this workshop previously, and, in speaking with SAME's staff, have determined that there is the potential to expand APPA's presence there and also engage APPA member institutions. In future workshops, APPA may be able to address attendees on the business of educational facilities, familiarize them with what it is like to work in educational facilities, and inform them of the kinds

of work opportunities we have available in APPA's four core areas, in positions ranging from Senior Facilities Officer to trades jobs. Additionally, APPA and any institutions so willing would be able to secure one-on-one meeting room space where they can personally meet and greet with those interested in careers, and even conduct interviews with potential candidates. It would be worthwhile for any institutions in the Maryland/DC/Pennsylvania area who have positions to fill to attend this event in partnership with APPA.

- **SAME/IFMA Facilities Management Workshop**: February 6-8, 2019. Held every year in San Antonio, Texas, in partnership with the International Facility Management Association (IFMA), the Facilities Management Workshop combines technical sessions, programs, and events for leaders in the facilities management field, with focuses on energy, asset management, technology, and executive leadership. There is an opportunity for APPA to present sessions, especially on content dealing with utilities, energy, building energy innovation and software, etc., as well as collaborating on programming.
- **Credentialing**: SAME has agreed to advertise APPA's credentials (CEFP or EFP) on their website; and APPA offers anyone who is active or retired military a substantial discount for the credentials (<https://credentialing.appa.org/purchaseoptions.cfm>). All you need is a ".mil" email.
- **Chapter Collaboration**: SAME Posts and APPA Chapters are encouraged to collaborate and foster relationships and mentoring by having joint meetings and hosting education sessions for members of both associations. SAME has agreed to share information on APPA's Facilities Drive-In Workshops with local Posts as potential educational opportunities.
- **Drive-In Workshops**: The Drive-In Workshop is viewed as an excellent way to support the concept of transitioning military (i.e., to think about your long-term career strategy well before your service ends). Rather than staging the drive-in event at a college or university, the subcommittee is considering holding an event at a military installation or SAME Post where the surrounding area has a substantial military personnel presence (San Diego, Norfolk, San Antonio, etc.). This might bring the transition opportunity "closer to home." Ideally, APPA would collaborate with member institutions near these installations, and the facilities officers there could also lend support by allowing their staff to attend. We would consider providing interview rooms for college/university facilities personnel to meet and greet current and exiting military. Anyone in the San Antonio and Fort Worth/Dallas areas who is interested in a partnership for this fall should reach out to one of the Military Transition Subcommittee members.

Our other outreach avenues would be through:

- **APPA's website**: We will be developing a website that is searchable for "prior military service" and has a list of people

who are able and willing to speak to the opportunities in educational facilities, starting with our Military Transition Subcommittee members. If you have not already done so, please update your member profile on your myAPPA page (login at www.appa.org/login.cfm). Edit the "Military Service" field within your profile so we can reach out to you for future assistance.

- **Sponsorship Program:** We are currently developing a sponsorship program similar to programs that military members would be used to while in the service, where a transitioning military member can reach out to an APPA volunteer sponsor and ask for assistance with navigating the complex recruitment system and acronyms of the educational institutions that we work for. We will endeavor to pair individuals from the same military service/branch if so desired and in their region of interest.
- **Military Transition Workshop for Careers in Educational Facilities:** The first such workshop held by APPA took place during the recent Annual Conference and Exhibition in Washington, DC, to connect active duty military with former military officers and enlisted personnel who transitioned into successful careers in educational facilities. Our workshop provided the opportunity to meet senior facilities officers, di-

rectors, facility managers, and others who shared their career stories, identified opportunities, and answered questions on the many rewarding career paths available to you. Admission was free to active duty military personnel in uniform, and about 25 serving military members attended.

- **APPA LinkedIn Group "Military Transition to Educational Facilities":** This group is for transitioning military members to connect with former military members who are already pursuing a career in educational facilities in North America. All branches of service in Canada, the United States, and Mexico are included. If you are a retired military member in educational facilities, please join our LinkedIn group and assist transitioning military members with any questions they may have about our profession.

If you are a former military member employed in educational facilities and are interested in volunteering, please reach out and let one of the committee members know. We are looking for one at-large former military member from each APPA Region to participate in our subcommittee.

I would like to thank the following subcommittee members for their work on the Military Transition Subcommittee:

- Darren Hale, associate director, facilities operations and maintenance, University of Texas Austin, U.S. Navy retired
- John Michalewicz, senior director of facilities, University of Hartford, U.S. Coast Guard retired
- Bruce Nevel, associate vice president for facilities development and management, Arizona State University, U.S. Navy retired
- Ron Tarbutton, chief facilities officer, Oklahoma State University, former U.S. Air Force
- Christina Hills, APPA staff liaison

We firmly believe that military service members make great employees and leaders! ☺

Steven Gasser is associate vice president, facilities management, at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. He chairs the Military Transitions Subcommittee and can be reached at steven.gasser@ucalgary.ca. This is his first article for *Facilities Manager*.

Open Doors for Everyone
with America's Durable Door Openers™

Model 2300 residential and **Model 4300** commercial automatic door openers work with wall plates, switches, keypads, radio-operated hand controls and almost any activation method. Power Access continues to be the premier provider of automatic door openers for four decades, with many thousands of installations.

- For interior or exterior doors
- Easy installation and retrofit
- Automatic or manual operation
- Wired and wireless controls
- Programmable open, close & hold times
- Standard 115 VAC current

800-344-0088
automaticdoor.biz

**POWER
ACCESS**
AMERICA'S DURABLE DOOR OPENER™