

Veteran's Day 2016: Honoring Ace corporate, field and RSC employees who served our country

Many employees of Ace Corporation have nobly and selflessly served our country, and their military experiences have strengthened their spirit of service, not only to their county and community, but to you and your customers. Here we honor a few ...



Kevin Shephard (middle)
Outbound Supervisor, Wilmer, Texas Retail Support Center
U.S. Army and National Guard.

Q: Where did you serve, how long and in what role?

I went to boot camp in 2005, where I was a quartermaster of repair. During training, I learned to eat and breathe the military, and I was in the best shape of my life. Then I was sent to Iraq. I served in the 2nd Battalion 149th Aviation Regiment as a door gunner and crew chief for ch47 Chinook helicopters, which are like transport trucks in the sky. They have room for 60 men, two Humvees, and a variety of other vehicles and equipment. I also spent time in Kuwait and Afghanistan.

Q: How has Ace supported your service?

I've worked here for two years. I'm still in the National Guard, and I've been deployed and have yearly training. On one mission in Afghanistan, we lost a crew. A flag they had was shipped back with them to their homes, and Ace had a dedication ceremony. That flag now hangs in the Dallas (Wilmer) warehouse. Ace has been great about my deployment and yearly training. While I was on leave from Ace during my last deployment in Afghanistan, Ace continued to communicate with me, and my co-workers celebrated when I returned to work. Ace shows you they understand.



Joanne Sciola-Smith
Customer Service Specialist, Sacramento, Calif.
Retail Support Center
U.S. Army

Q: What was it like being a woman in the Army during the 1970s?

It was so different for women in the army in those days. There were quite a few women in my unit; a lot of us were very young and finding our way in the world. One of the women I served with was the first woman ever assigned to my unit. This was toward the end of the Women's Army Corp. [created during World War II and disbanded in 1978]. It was a major transition period for women in the Army. Some days were really hard. That's how it was. But, I would say, as a woman, I had positive and fun experiences too.

Q: What is the most important thing the military taught you about life?

It helped me grow up. When I got out, I was I was still a kid, but at least I was less of a kid. I lived in a small

town my whole life. A lot of us in the Army were away from our families for the first time in our lives. It helped me learn that not only could I survive far away from my family, I could also have close bonds with people not in my family.



Bryce Church
District Manager, West, Pocatello, Idaho
U.S. Navy

Q: What attracted you to military service?

Right out of high school I went to trade school to study air conditioning and refrigeration repair and then had my own business doing that in my hometown in Southern Utah. After a while I wanted to go back to school to study aviation and I couldn't ask my parents to pay for school again, so I enlisted in the Navy. This was during the first Gulf War [a.k.a. Operation Desert Storm, August 1990– February 1991], so I also felt like I wanted to do my part, but that war was over before I even deployed. While I was in the Navy I studied for my professional aeronautics degree and my pilot's license, both of which I finished up once I got out.

Q: What is the most important thing the military taught you about life?

It taught me to really live life — to “do stuff.” To contribute. I have been to Europe and multiple states. I've been grateful to be able to travel to different places. It makes you appreciate what you have and want to do and see more. In the military, you get to experience things very few people get to and it really makes you appreciate those life experiences.



Kyle Hansen (middle)
Care Center Representative, Oak Brook, Ill.
U.S. Air Force

Q: What attracted you to military service?

It was something I was always interested in. In high school, I started a veteran's committee and worked with the Veterans of Foreign Wars [VFW]. After high school I went to college, but my heart wasn't in it. Driving home from school to tell my parents I wanted to do something else, my car broke down in front of a recruiting site. I spent a couple of hours talking to recruiters from all branches of service, but it was the Air Force recruiter who said, "We don't really need you." So, I took that as a challenge!

Q: What did you do after you left the military?

After years in a stressful career, which afforded me little social life and few relationship prospects, I needed a break. So, I grew a big mountain man beard and travelled all over the states for a few months — did 'me' for a while. After that I went back to school but I needed more. My neighbor worked at Ace and recommended I apply for a job. I did and was hired on as a contractor in 2013, and became an employee in March 2014. It was a completely different world; it derailed my plans but in a good way. I didn't think I'd find a company where I'd feel so comfortable right away.

Read more of Kyle's story [here](#)

Submitted by [Kimberly Crooms](#), Corporate Communications