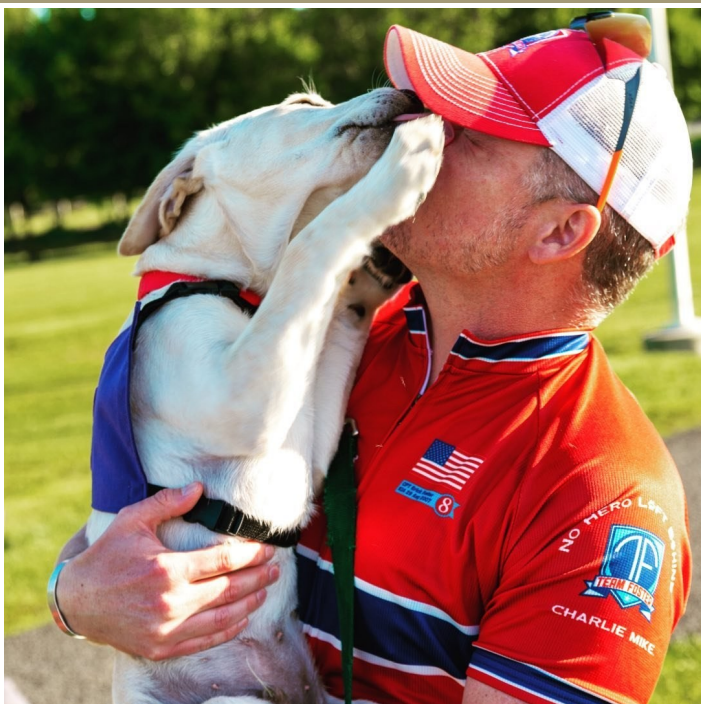


Beyond the Barracks: Structuring Wellness in Civilian Life



FEBRUARY 2025 | ISSUE 5



Turkey, Hungary, South Korea and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Nick has earned the Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, and Parachutist Badge, among others.

In 2014, Nick founded non-profit organization Team Foster, in honor of Captain Erick Foster, who was killed in action in 2007. Team Foster raises money to provide accredited, life-saving service dogs injured and disabled Veterans. To date, Team Foster has raised over \$2 million dollars. Through Team Foster's training partners, approximately 1,000 Veterans have been paired with accredited service dogs and over 1,600 have benefited from pet therapy.

Nick earned his law degree at Temple University in 2007 and worked as a prosecutor in Philadelphia, most recently in the Homicide Unit, successfully bringing hundreds of cases to trial. He is now the owner and principal attorney for Liermann Legal Consulting.

continued page 3

Who is Nick Liermann, Founder; Executive Director, Team Foster?

Nick Liermann served on active duty as a U.S. Army Patriot Missile system operator from 2000 to 2004. In 2012, he re-joined the military as a reservist with the Army Judge Advocate General Corps (JAG). LTC Liermann currently serves as the Command Judge

Advocate for USAR Sustainment Command CECOM based at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Nick deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and Operation Enduring Freedom in 2020; he has served across the globe, including Germany, Israel,

MilitaryConnected.org is committed to improving the lives of America's military-connected community through employer education, talent engagement, and data-driven research. It seeks to ensure every member of America's military-connected community has equal access to the resources necessary to unlock their full potential. Be more than military-friendly, become military-ready.

CONT. INSIDE ➔

**HOLISTIC HEALTH FOR
TRANSITIONING VETERANS:
THE FOUR PILLARS**



ACTIVITY



MENTAL HEALTH



RECOVERY & SLEEP



NUTRITION

MilitaryConnected.org is a nonprofit organization improving the military-connected community's transition experience through employer education, data driven research, and access to a network of job opportunities with military-ready employers.

The Vegetus Foundation is dedicated to helping Americans improve their quality of life through education on healthy living and has published the Nutrition Health Review since 1979. Learn more at nutritionhealthreview.com



**MILITARY
CONNECTED.
ORG**

LEARN MORE AT MILITARYCONNECTED.ORG

NO HERO LEFT BEHIND.

Team Foster raises money to provide accredited, life-saving service dogs to injured and disabled Veterans.



Interview with Nick Liermann Founder; Executive Director, Team Foster

Can you talk about your path to the military and service?

I am the child of three military veterans. Both my parents and stepfather are all enlisted Air Force veterans. When it came time for me to go to college, I didn't have the resources to pay for it. I found out quickly that I could have college paid through the Army and still go after whatever major I wanted. We all start somewhere, but ROTC is where I met Eric Foster and he changed my life and perspective in many different ways – all for the better. I ended up falling in love with the Army and the idea of service and went on active duty in May of 2000.

How did Team Foster Get Started and what is the mission?

Eric was in my ROTC class so we were connected from the very beginning. When he was killed in August of 2007, I knew I needed to do something. He had been so integral in changing my life and others around me. But I didn't know what – I had just started a new job and I had no idea what that "something" would be. In 2012, I got really into cycling, eventually committing to do a 100-mile race. It is the cycling equivalent of running a marathon. It is hard, but with training most people can do it. Through that race, I was able to raise money in Eric's name and contribute to local charitable organizations.

I decided that whatever this turned into, it was important to capture two parts of Eric's legacy and personality – his willingness to always push himself and the people around him to work harder both mentally and physically and being the consummate teammate. He was always looking out for everyone else – at PT, at the bar on the weekends when things went sideways, or volunteering during his free time.



Where did the idea for the Ruff Ride originate?

It was originally born out of an effort to bring attention to the 100-mile race we did every year. We didn't have a marketing budget, we didn't have any traction in the media and one of the ideas that was floated was to set up a bike in a storefront somewhere in Center City Philadelphia in hopes that it would attract attention. Within a week, just asking around for help with making that happen, a spin studio offered to donate every single one of their bikes to help raise awareness; soon after a venue opened their doors to us. It became clear we were about to have something much bigger than ever intended. Year 1 was 9 teams riding for 24 hours under a couple of pop-up tents and a standup speaker.

The first year I thought it was going to be a slog, just grinding it out for the sake of the challenge, but by midnight of the first night I realized we had stumbled into something that was magnetic and dynamic in a way that I had never experienced. This is year 8 for Ruff Ride Philadelphia.



As someone who's transitioned, what message would you have to veterans about health and physical activity?

Specifically, when it comes to health, both physical and mental, one of Team Foster's pillars is Community. When we put down the uniform we lose two things – teammates and sense of purpose. Those are two things we need to get back. We all know how much easier it is to stay fit or stay motivated when you have someone next to you pushing and supporting you.





MilitaryConnected.org and Verizon Skill Forward Join Forces to Bridge the Skills Gap and Support Economic Mobility for the Military Community

“
Quality education to give individuals the freedom to pave their own path, at no cost.



PHILADELPHIA, PA – MilitaryConnected.org, America’s only resource offering holistic solutions to military-connected families’ workforce challenges, today announced its partnership with Verizon Skill Forward that will unlock free training programs and certifications to military-connected individuals.

MilitaryConnected.org is the only organization combining employer education, talent engagement, and data-driven research to improve the lives of America’s military-connected community. Employers can become Military Ready and find top military-connected talent through the service offerings of MilitaryConnected.org.

“We are excited to announce our partnership with Verizon Skill Forward to provide career-enhancing online courses focused on high-demand skills for our nation’s heroes and their families,” said Robert Archibald, Founder of MilitaryConnected.org. “Our focus is on ending workplace attrition and unemployment in the military community. Having a partner like Verizon Skill Forward will help us do just that.”

Verizon Skill Forward is part of Citizen Verizon, Verizon’s responsible business plan to prepare 500,000 individuals for in-demand jobs by 2030.

With this partnership, Military-Connected and Verizon Skill Forward are set to help military personnel and their families acquire in-demand skills for in-demand jobs to facilitate long-term career growth.

Interview with Nick Liermann, continued...

When it comes to service dogs, I know a lot of guys who say "I don't want to take a dog from someone else" - can you talk about the types of servicemembers who benefit from a service dog?

First, when it comes to who is the right candidate – it can really be anyone who is struggling mentally or physically. It has been shown that service dogs can detect cancer in the human body or drops in blood insulin levels in diabetics. They can sense seizures before they happen. Service dogs can even detect oncoming panic attacks. There are challenges that we aren't going to medicate our way out of. Talk therapy can mitigate symptoms, but we need to open up a variety of tools to the Veteran population and a service dog is the most impactful tool that I've seen.

The challenge is sometimes folks "self-selecting" out. The veteran community has a problem with gatekeeping – who is a veteran, did they deploy, did they serve in the "right" units, are they deserving? There is so much self-reliance within our population and comparison to others' service that, as Veterans, we don't think we are deserving of the resources that are out there.

We always think someone is more deserving, but at Team Foster we don't discriminate based on deployments, gender, era of service, politics – none of it. We are here to support Veterans of all stripes.

If you are one of those Veterans, you can reach us on our website <https://www.teamfoster.org> or on our social media sites. Even send us an email – and I will likely be the one getting back to you.

If you are in the Philadelphia area and would like to attend the Ruff Ride check out: <https://www.ruffride.org/Philadelphia>



Unlocking Untapped Potential: Recruitment Tools for Veterans and Referrals

Why successful employment programs are looking at hiring tools and resources for these overlooked sources.

In today's talent-scarce market, mid-market companies are increasingly leaning on their employee referral programs to drive quality hires. One Midwestern logistics company's strategy is paying off – with up to 40% of new hires stemming from employee referrals. But what if these programs could do more than just fill open roles? What if they could tap into an underutilized yet immensely talented workforce: military-connected individuals?

Veterans bring a unique set of skills: from leadership and teamwork to adaptability and technical expertise, making them an invaluable addition to any workforce. However, connecting with these individuals often requires intentional outreach. By integrating a military-focused referral solution, companies can empower their teams to build bridges to veteran talent pools. These platforms not only streamline referrals but also reward employees for expanding the company's reach into military networks. The result? A rare triple-win for the company, the referring employee, and the veteran hire.

Technology is at the heart of modern talent acquisition,

and AI-powered tools are changing the game. Imagine a system that can parse job descriptions for transferable skills, notify candidates about suitable openings, and even track referral bonuses – all while syncing seamlessly with existing workflows and Applicant Tracking Systems. Such tools don't just make recruitment more efficient; they create a more inclusive hiring process tailored to diverse candidate backgrounds, including veterans. The added bonus? Real-time data insights to track the impact of military hiring initiatives.

Ultimately, an effective employee referral program, tailored to attract military talent, is more than a recruitment tool: it's a strategy for building a stronger, more diverse workforce. By leveraging technology, fostering partnerships, and embracing the value veterans bring, mid-market companies can not only fill open roles but also set themselves apart as destination employers for military-connected talent. The result is a more inclusive, innovative, and mission-driven organization.



Healthy Tuna Salad:

Ingredients:

- 10oz canned tuna, drained
- 2 medium celery stalks, minced
- 2 Tbsp red onion, minced
- 2 Tbsp dill pickles, minced
- 1/3 cup plain full-fat Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp fresh dill, chopped
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper

Directions:

- Place the tuna, celery, red onion, and pickles in a bowl.
- Combine the yogurt, lemon juice, mustard, and herbs.
- Stir the yogurt mixture into the dry ingredients.

Note: No fresh herbs? No problem—just substitute for 1/2 tsp of dried varieties.



Approximate Nutrition Information: Calories: 247; total fat: 8g; saturated fat: 2.6g; cholesterol: 35mg; sodium: 369mg; total carbohydrate: 7.6g; dietary fiber: 0.7g; total sugars: 5.3g; protein: 34.3g; calcium: 183mg; iron: 1mg; potassium: 453mg