



As Published in Parking Today Magazine – November 2020

**It All Started With .....** How many times have you heard the expression “We came up with the whole idea over a glass of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your favorite beverage here)”? In fact, one of my very successful businesses, The Housing Company, started exactly like that! It was almost twenty years ago and it was over a glass or three of Bourbon with my business partner and co-founder Steve Hale. The general topic of conversation began as “why doesn’t anyone manufacture a non-metallic housing for card readers” and turned into a righteous hangover with some sketches on cocktail napkins and The Housing Company was born. What has this got to do with Veterans in Parking? Well, once again, bourbon was the innovative accelerator and the partner this time was Jeremy Duplechin at a bar during an IPI (IPMI) show. Jeremy and I met at the bar and immediately began chatting about and actively engaging in our mutual love of Kentucky small batch bourbon. I learned that Jeremy was employed by NextGen Parking in Houston had had recently served in the US Army and being an Army Veteran myself, we had two more things in common, the Parking industry and the Army. The discussion turned into the exchange of ideas about how to get more Military Vets into the Parking and Transportation industries and I learned that Jeremy had had a similar discussion with Todd Tucker of Park Whiz, also a Veteran. From that point forward, the three of us founded Veterans in Parking and here we are.

The meaning and/or mission of our organization is quite straight forward: Parking Jobs for Vets and Vets for Parking Jobs. We are accomplishing this mission with a plan of attack as follows:

- 1) Get face to face with Service Members that are close to ETS (expiration term of service) and educate them about all the career opportunities and technologies in our industry. If you have ever seen the “blank stare” from the uninitiated when you tell them you are in the Parking industry, you understand the importance of educating these Service Members. Getting their **resumes** is the measure of success for step 1. (With the pandemic causing cancellation of job/career fairs, the “face to face” has morphed into “PC to PC” more often than not)
- 2) Recruit Members and Sponsors from within our industry so that we can solicit **job openings**. Not only are members and sponsors the source of job listings, they are our only stream of revenue to fund our operations. We are a Not-For-Profit 501(c)3 (pending) and we do not charge Service Members for our services.
- 3) Match the **resumes** with the **job listings** and put the Vets in front of the prospective employer. We do not interview the Vets or pass judgement on their qualifications, that is the job of the prospective employer. This step in the process is about to become much more dynamic and effective thanks to a pending (as of this writing) Strategic Partnership Agreement with IPMI and integrating our efforts with their Career Center and Resume Exchange.

To understand the value of what we do at Veterans in Parking, it is helpful to first understand the common personality traits that exist in most Military Veterans. One common misperception is that Basic Training (aka Boot Camp) teaches the service member to handle basic combat weapons and march in a straight line while screaming out crazy cadences and doing lots of pushups. While these are part of the training, it goes much deeper into the psychological realm. The common expression that is used to describe this type of training is: Breaking the person down and building them back up again. Boot Camp lasts 8 to 13 weeks depending on the branch of service and in that time the Drill Instructors/Drill Sergeants need to expunge the bad habits, poor attitudes, disrespectfulness, inflated egos and lack of discipline from their charges and teach them to work as a cohesive group and commit to the same goals as a team. Once a recruit graduates from Boot Camp, the next phase of training is called AIT (Advanced Individual Training) or A School or MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) training. This is where the service member gets the technical training that allows them to be successful in their Military career.

Why am I describing these phases of military training to you? Because simply put, these are the key attributes of a Veteran that make them valuable to you as an employer.

- **Teamwork:** working together as a team to achieve a common goal
- **Discipline:** respecting the chain of command, being truthful and courteous to your customers
- **Punctuality:** as in showing up to the job on time
- **Training:** most, if not all employers agree that the training that Veterans bring to the job saves that employer time and money from day one and helps integrate the employee into the team
- **Physical and Mental Toughness:** and the ability to face adversity, persevere through rough times and achieve a satisfactory outcome
- **Courage:** the ability to overcome your fears and the unknown
- **Leadership:** being able to display the traits mentioned above and instill those same into your team while making the entire team an integral part of the successful outcome

So.... what does Veterans in Parking do for the industry and for your company/organization? We recruit women and men directly from the military and match them with opportunities and careers in your company/organization. If that one task alone doesn't prove the value of our organization, then please re-read the previous paragraph and ask yourself, why wouldn't we want more men and women of this caliber working with us in our industry and for our company?

*About the author: Douglas Cram is a Founding Member of Veterans in Parking and currently serves as the Vice President and Treasurer. He is the President and Founder of cramZ marketing services, Inc. as well as Vice President in charge of Sales and Marketing and Co-Owner of The Housing Company. Doug served in the U.S. Army from 1976 to 1980 stationed in Kaiserslautern, FRG and Ft. Hood, TX. He can be reached by phone at (770) 529-1040 and via email at [admin@vetsinparking.com](mailto:admin@vetsinparking.com)*



---

**Vets for  
Parking Jobs**

**Parking Jobs  
for Vets**