



REPORT FOR DUTY

WHY THE MILITARY MAKES A PERFECT TRAINING GROUND FOR ENTREPRENEURS

by Matt Kelley

Considered one of the last people who would ever join the military, Trina Rice shocked family and friends when she entered the Corp of Cadets program at Virginia Tech. The idea of being a part of something more important than herself spurred her to sign up. After serving in faraway places such as Korea, Saudi Arabia and Hawaii, Rice's commission landed her in Atlanta, where the booming economy inspired her to become part of the free-enterprise ideals she'd protected for so many years. While still serving active duty with the Army, Rice bought an Atlanta-based franchise of TSS Photography, an on-site youth and sports photography business.

"Having a business makes you a part of something bigger—you help keep the country growing," Rice says.

Rice isn't alone in her entrepreneurial mission. Twenty-two percent of veterans are either purchasing or starting a business, or at least seriously considering it, according to a study by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"Some key traits for being successful in business include strong leadership, strong organizational skills, intelligence, management ability and optimism—all skills that veterans gain through military experience," says Wade Binion, chief communications officer of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Center for Veterans Enterprise.