

SECURE YOUR FUTURE WITH A CYBERSECURITY CAREER

THERE ARE FEW OCCUPATIONS WITH A BRIGHTER FUTURE THAN CYBERSECURITY.

Every organization is dependent on information technology, which in turn requires cybersecurity. The demand is high, the pay is generous, and veterans with security clearances have an edge. These professionals are in demand in every industry.

We talked to two veterans working in cybersecurity in two different industries to give you a glimpse of their world.

Where did you grow up? Western New York (Buffalo/Niagara Falls)

What was your military job? My job throughout my years as an officer as I worked in progressively higher levels of the chief information officer (CIO) offices in different Marine Corps organizations had four main components: First, plan how my organization would use telephones, radios and computers to achieve their military mission. Second, supervise the installation of the architecture that was planned. Third, ensure the daily running of the network in support of the unit's missions. Fourth, maintain the network.

What was your biggest fear as you prepared to transition from the military? That I would be able to find a company based in the D.C. area with a Military Friendly® culture that I could embrace their mission.

What did your biggest challenge turn out to be? Learning to connect with my co-workers primarily using TEAMS and a phone. It is a very different work environment than being in the office everyday.

Why did you choose this career field? I have deep experience in the information technology and cybersecurity field and enjoy the

ever-changing nature of the field. You must be a life-long learner to maintain your understanding and skills.

Why did you choose defense? I believed that I could continue to help support the defense of our country through working in the defense industrial base.

How did you find this job? I was matched with Leidos through the Hiring our Heroes Fellowship program, completing a fellowship with them in November 2023. I was offered a full-time job at the end of my fellowship.

Please summarize your current job. I support Marine Corps Cyberspace Operations Group (MCCOG) in their cybersecurity section as a subject matter expert. I am tasked with working on varying projects to improve both the short-term and long-term cybersecurity for the MCCOG.

What do you love about your job? Seeing the positive difference that I and my Leidos teammates make in hardening the cybersecurity of the MCCOG and the Marine Corps.

What's the biggest challenge? With this being my first job out of uniform, deciding what clothes to wear to the office each day and remembering that as a contractor I offer recommendations to government leadership to determine the appropriate next step.

What days and hours do you typically work? I generally work 45-50 hours a week Monday through Friday, with a few hours of work on a normal weekend.

Would you recommend this career field and industry? Yes, the information technology/cybersecurity field is very diverse and you can come in from almost any other field and find a corresponding role in the field. There is a critical shortage of these career fields in the United States.



COLONEL

BRET HYLA

Marine Corps Account Client Manager
Navy and Marine Corps IT Business Area
Leidos*

JOB LOCATION: Quantico, Va.

EMPLOYED SINCE: December 2023

AGE: 54

MILITARY SERVICE:
Colonel (O-6), Marine Corps (1989–2023)

MOS: Ground officer (8041)/
Communications officer (0602)

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:
Bachelor's degree, business administration,
Texas A&M University, 1997

Master's degree, computer science,
Naval Postgraduate School, 2006

Master's degree, strategic studies,
Army War College, 2018

Certifications:

Certified Information Systems
Security Professional, 2007

Certified Cloud Security Professional, 2023
Project Management Professional, 2023

What mistakes would you urge transitioning service members to avoid?

Failing to file for their VA disability while on active duty. You can start a Benefits Delivery at Discharge claim six months prior to your separation from active duty. Seek out a local veteran service organization to have an accredited representative file the claim on your behalf.

What about you would surprise most people?

That after 34 years in the Marine Corps, I could swiftly switch off the rank and be a junior team member again. 🇺🇸