
CORPORATE SECURITY INSTITUTE

From Service to Security

A Transition Playbook for Veterans and
Law Enforcement Moving Into the Private Sector

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Introduction: You Are More Ready Than You Think

Every year, thousands of veterans and law enforcement officers leave service and discover that the private sector values exactly what they spent their careers building: discipline, judgment under pressure, integrity, and the ability to lead people through uncertainty.

Corporate security teams, executive protection details, investigations units, and risk management departments actively seek people with your background. The challenge is not your capability. It is translation: learning to present your experience in the language business understands, earning the credentials that open doors, and knowing where the real opportunities are.

This guide is the playbook for that transition.

Chapter 1: Translate Your Experience

Hiring managers in the private sector rarely understand military or law enforcement terminology. A "platoon sergeant" or "detective sergeant" means little to a corporate recruiter. Your first job is translation.

The method: For every role on your resume, write what you did in plain business language.

Instead of this	Write this
Led a 40-person platoon	Managed a 40-person team across multiple concurrent operations
Conducted surveillance operations	Planned and executed discreet information-gathering operations
Patrol supervisor	Shift operations manager responsible for incident response across a 50-square-mile area
Internal affairs investigator	Conducted sensitive workplace investigations involving policy violations and misconduct
Range instructor	Designed and delivered training programs for groups of up to 200 personnel

Three rules for your resume:

1. One page if you have under 10 years of service, two pages maximum beyond that.
2. Lead with outcomes, not duties. "Reduced incident response time by 30%" beats "responsible for incident response."
3. Kill the acronyms and shorthand. Corporations do not know what your unit designations, branch abbreviations, or internal program names mean, and a confused reader stops reading. Write out full department and function names every time.

The acronym rule, with examples:

Do not write	Write instead
2/75	2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment
CID	Criminal Investigation Division
IA	Internal Affairs Division
XO	Executive Officer (second in command of a 120-person unit)
TDY	Temporary duty assignment
OIC	Officer in charge

The test is simple: if a civilian hiring manager would have to guess, spell it out. The one exception is a term so widely known it needs no help, and even then, write the full name on first use: "Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)." Your experience is impressive. Do not let shorthand hide it.

Chapter 2: Certifications That Open Doors

In the private sector, certifications are shorthand for credibility. These are the ones that matter most in corporate security:

ASIS International certifications (the gold standard):

- **CPP (Certified Protection Professional):** The most recognized credential in security management. Requires 7+ years of experience (fewer with a degree). If you pursue one certification, make it this one.
- **PSP (Physical Security Professional):** Focused on physical security assessments, systems, and measures. Ideal if your background is in facilities, installations, or infrastructure protection.
- **PCI (Professional Certified Investigator):** Built for investigations professionals. A natural fit for detectives and investigators.

Worth considering by specialty:

- **PMP (Project Management Professional):** Valuable if you are targeting security management roles that oversee programs and budgets.
- **CISSP:** Only if you are moving toward cybersecurity or the convergence of physical and cyber security.
- **EMT/First Aid/CPR instructor credentials:** Relevant for executive protection work.

What not to do: Do not collect entry-level certificates hoping volume impresses. One respected credential outweighs five obscure ones.

Chapter 3: Where the Jobs Actually Are

The private sector security landscape is broader than most transitioning professionals realize:

Corporate security departments. Fortune 1000 companies employ global security teams covering investigations, travel security, executive protection, crisis management, and intelligence. These are salaried roles with benefits, often at director level and above for experienced leaders.

Executive protection. High-net-worth individuals, family offices, and corporations hire full-time protection professionals. Pay is strong but the lifestyle demands flexibility and discretion.

Investigations and consulting. Firms specializing in corporate investigations, due diligence, and fraud examination hire former investigators constantly. Your casework experience transfers directly.

Global Security Operations Centers (GSOCs). 24/7 monitoring and response hubs. Good entry point into corporate security with clear advancement paths.

Risk management and business continuity. Companies need people who can assess threats, plan for disruption, and lead through crises. Your operational planning experience is the core skill.

Security technology and guarding companies. Large providers need operations managers, account managers, and regional leaders. Less glamorous, often lucrative.

Where to look: LinkedIn (set your profile to "open to work"), ASIS International's career center, company career pages directly, and your network. Most senior roles are filled through relationships, not job boards.

Chapter 4: Salary Realities

Set expectations honestly:

- Entry corporate security roles (analyst, coordinator, GSOC operator): typically \$60,000 to \$90,000 depending on market.
- Mid-level (manager, regional roles): \$90,000 to \$140,000.
- Senior (director, head of security): \$150,000 to \$250,000+, with total compensation higher at large corporations.
- Executive protection: \$80,000 to \$150,000+ for experienced full-time roles; daily rates for contract work vary widely.

Total compensation matters more than base salary: bonuses, equity, 401(k) matching, and

health benefits often exceed what public service offered. Negotiate the full package, not just the number.

Chapter 5: Networking Like a Professional

In the private sector, your network is your career infrastructure. Start building it before you separate or retire.

1. **Join ASIS International.** Attend your local chapter meetings. This is the single highest-value move on this list.
2. **Build a civilian LinkedIn profile.** Professional photo, headline describing where you are going (not just where you have been), and a summary written for hiring managers.
3. **Conduct informational interviews.** Ask working professionals for 20 minutes to learn about their roles. Do not ask for a job. Ask for insight. Jobs follow insight.
4. **Attend GSX.** ASIS International's annual Global Security Exchange is where the industry gathers. One trip can produce a year's worth of connections.
5. **Stay in touch with everyone.** The officer you served with five years ago may be a director of security today. Relationships compound.

Chapter 6: How Corporate Hiring Differs

- **Cultural fit matters as much as competence.** Companies hire people they want to work with daily. Show you can operate in a business environment, not just a chain of command.
- **Prepare stories, not recitations.** Behavioral interviews ("tell me about a time when...") reward specific examples with clear outcomes.
- **Learn basic business literacy.** Understand what P&L, KPIs, and stakeholder management mean. You do not need an MBA, but you need the vocabulary.
- **Follow up.** A brief thank-you note after every interview is standard professional practice. In service culture it may feel unnecessary. In business it is expected.

Chapter 7: Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. **Leading with tactics.** Employers care about judgment, leadership, and results. Nobody is hiring you for room-clearing skills.
2. **Undervaluing yourself.** Your clearance, your leadership experience, and your crisis track record have market value. Research before you accept.
3. **Skipping the resume translation.** A jargon-filled resume gets filtered out in seconds.
4. **Waiting until separation to start.** Begin networking and certifying 12 to 18 months before your transition date.
5. **Ignoring soft skills.** Communication, writing, and executive presence decide who advances. Invest in them deliberately.

Chapter 8: Your 90-Day Action Plan

Days 1 to 30: Foundation

- Rewrite your resume in civilian language
- Create or rebuild your LinkedIn profile
- Join ASIS International and your local chapter
- Identify which certification you will pursue first

Days 31 to 60: Visibility

- Attend at least two industry events or chapter meetings
- Conduct five informational interviews
- Begin certification study
- Research target companies and roles

Days 61 to 90: Momentum

- Apply to roles strategically (quality over quantity)
- Ask your network for introductions, not just job leads
- Complete or schedule your certification exam
- Prepare your interview stories

A Final Word

Your service taught you to run toward problems, lead people you would trust with your life, and make decisions when the information is incomplete and the stakes are real. The private sector needs exactly that. The transition is a translation exercise, not a reinvention.

The Corporate Security Institute exists to support professionals like you. Explore our training programs, connect with our community, and keep building.

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