

Post-deployment



Tips for the returning Reservist

The return home can trigger a plethora of differing emotions and feelings. The majority of these feelings are common to all returning diggers. However, for the returning Reservist, he or she may have additional burdens to carry as they re-assimilate into the home and civilian work environment.

Returning to work after deployment can be a stressful experience. Whilst some veterans can take it all in their stride, some can find the reintegration experience difficult. Your employer has had to adapt to your absence. Like your families, they too have had to depend on others to discharge your work tasks. Fitting into your 'new' work environment can be challenging. Here are some tips for an easier integration into the work place.

Consider what you are going to say to your co-workers

Before checking into work, think careful about what information you are prepared to impart. Some questions may be dumb or insulting and you may find yourself becoming angry at their ill-informed opinions. Remember, their questions are a reflection of them, not you. Work out a script you are comfortable with. Touch on the culture, the climate, the terrain and the people you encountered during your overseas tour. Gently inform your co-workers you will not discuss the operational aspects of your tour.

Find the right person to speak to

Find someone you know and trust. Learn what has changed in your workplace. Have things changed? Has your job specification changed? Have other people's roles and responsibilities changed? Getting the correct work-related intelligence prior to recommencing work will diminish any surprises or shocks you may subsequently encounter.

Take a positive attitude to your return to work

It is unhelpful to everyone if you adopt a negative stance on returning to the workplace. Give yourself time to acclimatise to your job. You need time to move from the tempo of your operational duties to your radically difference civilian employment. Look for the good in your changed environment.

Don't make any quick decisions

You may feel the urge to say or do things on your return to work. When this occurs, give yourself some time and space before doing something you may later regret. In more extreme cases you may feel driven to change jobs. In this instance, make a list. Write down what you believe to be the positive and negative factors relating to your work. If you are married or live with a partner, ask for their input to your list. When the list is complete, weigh up the pros and cons prior to making any decisions. If you decide to leave your employment, do not 'knee jerk' and leave abruptly. Try to have another job waiting in the wings. Remember two important points when conducting a job search: it is always easier to get a job when you've got a job and always play to your strengths.

Coming home to no job

If you were in employment prior to your departure, your job is generally protected under law. However, if you were not in full-time employment prior to your departure to theatre, returning home to no work can be a highly unsettling experience. Being rejected in your subsequent job search can intensify the emotional challenges you may be dealing with in the aftermath of your operation tour. Although losing your job can be highly stressful, if approached positively it can be a change for good and will at least allow you to reevaluate what you wish to do with your future. After carrying out a thorough search try and find a job you can see yourself doing for several years. If you don't have the luxury of taking time to look for employment, you may need to find temporary work while you consider your longer term job interests and opportunities. Look for a temporary job that will give you the flexibility to work out what you really want to do.

Conclusion

The pressures of combat operations can leave its imprint on us all. Although there is no 'silver bullet' that can undo the effects of separation and war, there are many agencies that can assist you. These resources, coupled with the fortitude and strength of the veteran supported by their family and friends can shape the future and make returning to the civilian environment a more positive and enriching experience.



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