

TOOELE Transcript Bulletin

Young Veterans: A special salute to younger veterans in our community

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Many people think of older men who served during the Vietnam era as the typical “veteran.” Perhaps this is because nearly one-half, or 49%, of all veterans in the United States are 65 years old or older, according to information from census.gov published in July.

As we approach Veteran’s Day 2023, the Transcript Bulletin talked to four local veterans from more recent times about their service.

Nick Bartlett, an Air Force veteran, is 29 years old. Bartlett joined the Air Force in March 2016.

“I love planes, and both of my grandfathers and aunt and uncle were in the Air Force,” Bartlett said. “I come from a big Air Force family. After high school I kind of went through a rough patch. I knew the Air Force was a good route for a lot of people to give them structure and set them on the right path to bigger and better things.”

After joining the Air Force, Bartlett was sent to basic training in San Antonio, Texas, for two months. During his time in basic training, Bartlett was assigned a job in aircraft structural maintenance.

“I’ve always been good with my hands and it’s what I enjoy doing,” Bartlett said, speaking about his maintenance job.

After basic training, he was sent to Pensacola, Florida where he was stationed with Marine, Navy, and Army members where he worked to learn his job for four months.

Bartlett was sent to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tuscan, Arizona for three years where he worked on A-10, C-130, and HH-60 aircrafts. Then, he was sent to Misawa Air Base in Japan for four years.

During his time stationed in Japan, Bartlett worked on F-16 aircraft and traveled to Alaska, the Philippines, and Thailand.

"I explored all throughout Asia," Bartlett said. "I had a good time scuba diving in the Philippines. We were on a boat with a big engine on the back. It seemed really sketchy, but it turned out to be a good experience."

After his time in Asia, Bartlett participated in a program called "SkillBridge" that allowed him to transition to a civilian job while exiting active duty in Jan. 2023.

Bartlett and his wife chose Utah at random, and after they moved from Japan to Utah, Bartlett took a position at Duncan Aviation in Provo working on civilian aircraft. Bartlett is also a part of the Air National Guard.

Bartlett looks forward to Veteran's Day.

"Veteran's Day is a day to celebrate those that served and those who have served," Bartlett said. "I don't want to celebrate myself, but I have pride in my country. The people that served made our country what it is today."

As a result of his service, Bartlett has gained a new perspective about the world around him.

"I would definitely recommend serving," he said. "If more people did at least a two-to-four-year contract in the military, it would open a lot of people's eyes and give them many benefits and tools for the future."

In his free time, Bartlett enjoys spending time with his wife and baby, golfing, off-roading, and snowboarding. Bartlett lives in Tooele.

Bram Winterling, 27, served in the United States Army from Aug. 2014-Nov. 2017.

"During high school I knew I didn't want to go to college or anything," he said. "I knew it wasn't for me. Joining the military seemed like the most practical choice. The Army is the largest branch, and I knew there was the most potential for different jobs. My brother was also in the Army already and my grandfather and great-grandfather were in the Army before me."

Winterling was assigned a job as an infantry man and was stationed in Germany for most of his deployment.

"We did a lot of training in Eastern Europe, but nothing too crazy," Winterling said. "For most of my time I was an automatic rifleman, which is kind of a subset of an infantryman. I carried a m249 SAW, which is a light machine gun."

During his time in Eastern Europe, Winterling served in Romania on the border of Moldova and Ukraine. Romania quickly became his favorite place to serve.

"We did a lot of training with the Ukrainian and Romanian militaries," Winterling said. "In Romania I was able to train with different foreign nationals. It was really interesting. That was a highlight of my time."

Also in Eastern Europe, Winterling served in Poland and Lithuania.

After the Army, Winterling spent some time in Afghanistan as a security contractor. Now he works for OC Tanner in private security. As far as military service goes, Winterling said it's not as strange as some may think.

"I think people think about the military and think it's this craziness and everyone in the military is a robot," he said. "It's not true. Soldiers are normal people. It's definitely blue collar, working-class people and it's not as crazy as people think. People hear the infantry and they're like, "Oh!" In reality they are just normal guys."

For Winterling, Veteran's Day is a time to remember the past to prevent it from happening again.

"Veteran's Day is important, because it's a reminder of our history," Winterling explained. "We are standing on the shoulders of giants... You have to know your history and have self-respect for yourself and your people, otherwise you won't be able to stand up for what matters when someone comes to threaten it."

In his free time, Winterling enjoys working out, shooting, and spending time with his wife and son. Winterling lives in Tooele.

Joe Carnell, 35, is a veteran of the Marine Corps. He served from 2006-2010.

"I grew up playing football, baseball, and a few sports," Carnell said. "I knew I wasn't going to college based upon what I could do on the field. I grew up in a larger family with a military background. It looked like a good idea for me to grow after high school... The Marines attracted me because I heard the challenges and there were a variety of recruiters in my high school. I figured if I was going to go into the military, I may as well do it as a Marine."

Carnell was assigned to 1st Battalion 5th Marines Regiment. He first served out of Camp Pendleton in California.

Carnell was then assigned to a Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2007 as part of his first deployment. During his time assigned to the Marine Expeditionary Unit, he served on Navy ships and traveled to multiple countries.

"It was really eye opening seeing a lot of different countries," Carnell said.

Then he was deployed to Afghanistan in 2009.

"We were part of President Obama's surge in Afghanistan at that time," Carnell said. "Both of my deployments were a really good experience and I got to know a lot of good people."

"We were a mobile platoon with vehicles, heavy machine guns, anti-armor weapons, and we also provided dismount," Carnell said, speaking more about his job while deployed. "In Afghanistan, I was a vehicle commander when I was inside the truck, and when I was outside the trucks with dismounts, I was a team leader. We weren't hunting down tanks and artillery and that kind of stuff, but me and my dismounts were walking miles and miles, and our trucks would provide us with supported security. Mostly our job was to engage with local folks and to support the mission to provide the Afghan people security."

After he was discharged, Carnell began working as an emergency medical technician. He is now the head of Mountain West Medical Center's ambulance team. He enjoys serving the community.

Carnell said serving in the military is different than most people think.

"You go into the military expecting one thing and it's hard to comprehend what you're going through," Carnell explained. "My biggest takeaway from me being a veteran is going into it, you expect one thing and you learn how to anticipate many different scenarios, results, and situations, and you come out looking back remembering to expect the not-normal. How do you normalize those things? You realize you're a person and you're doing something a lot of folks haven't had the opportunity to do or have chosen not to do, and it's powerful."

Carnell hopes people will make an attempt to understand veterans, rather than judging them.

"Unless you can be emphatic to the situation that veterans and specifically combat veterans, and the decisions that we had to make in a split chance, I think it's hard to put weight behind those judgments," he said.

This Veteran's Day, Carnell is thankful.

"I had an experience that shaped my life," he said. "There's 365 days and you have to go through every day, but Veteran's Day is one that is humbling and a good reminder of the opportunity I was able to participate in."

In his free time, Carnell enjoys spending time with his wife and three children. He also enjoys fly fishing in various states. Carnell lives in Lake Point.

Brandon Scott, 43, is a Utah Army National Guard veteran. He served locally from 2009 to 2013.

"I've always had a thing for the military ever since I was a little kid," Scott said. "I have uncles who were in the Navy and my grandpa was in the Navy. I always wanted to join. I put it off until

I was 29 and at the time, the National Guard was the only one who would take me because I didn't have any formal education."

Scott served in the 214th Forward Support Company in Tooele for all three years of his service.

"We did training at Camp Williams and Dugway," Scott said. "We drove trucks hauling equipment and troops, fuel for the tanks when there would be a tank training, along with food, and supplies that were needed... We also went to the gunnery and were able to shoot different weapon systems and try a lot of the different vehicles."

Scott was prepared to leave Tooele and be stationed elsewhere if needed during his time in the Utah Army National Guard.

In 2013 Scott was injured in a vehicular accident that caused him spine problems and resulted in his discharge from the military.

"We were headed home from one of our two-week drills in the National Guard and I was in uniform," Scott explained. "We got t-boned in Grantsville. It happened to jar me just right and it caused some damage in my neck. I had to have four vertebrae fused. It messed up some nerves in my hands and I have a hard time holding onto things. I don't know how hard I'm grabbing ahold of things."

Although Scott is no longer in the National Guard, he encourages others to join the military.

"I've always believed if someone is willing and able to, they should support their country in some way or fashion and I think the military is a good way to do that," Scott said.

"I have a lot of respect for the men and women who have been deployed," Scott continued. "They not only deal with battles on the battlefield, but they deal with battles when they come home with PTSD. It really hit home for me watching my grandpa, uncles, and friends dealing with that stuff."

During his free time, Scott enjoys spending time with his wife and three children, photography, shooting, being outdoors, and helping at his church.

Scott is also a member of the Hope for Life Foundation, aimed at helping veterans in multiple areas of life. The foundation has helped him to overcome depression after his car accident. Scott lives in Tooele.



Former Air Force member, Nick Bartlett at his Airman Leadership School's graduation ceremony where he was promoted from senior airman to staff sergeant.