

The HirePatriots Story

My name is Mark Baird. I am the author of this book and the founder of HirePatriots.com and its 501(c)(3) Patriotic Hearts. My mission, calling and purpose in life is and has been to serve US veterans and their families since the 1970s. My particular goal is to enhance the amount of respect, honor, support and appreciation given to these exceptional US citizens.

I along with 24 other contributing writers formed a collaborative effort to solve this problem. An Army General, an Army Colonel, the President of VetJobs, a Chaplain, a Congressional Medal of Merit recipient, a Sergeant Major, a Wounded Warrior, a Military Spouse, a Fortune 500 VP, and more, contribute insightful and poignant chapters with the purpose of getting Veterans back to work expediently, or to assist them in becoming successful entrepreneurs. Contributing Authors from every branch of our military have provided material for this book.

I grew up in a particularly patriotic period of American history. We had just won WW II and were considered the greatest country and military power on earth. General Eisenhower, the recent Commander in Chief of European Allied Forces was the US President. He was followed by a war hero, John F. Kennedy. -- Audie Murphy, the highest decorated veteran in WW II, was a movie star. I pledged allegiance to the US every morning at school and sang songs about America and patriotism. There was even a Bible reading time. And at the local drive-in, before every movie, they showed a family kneeling in prayer with these words: "The family that prays together stays together."

My father was a submariner during WW II. He had an unlocked trunk in the garage, and I would often lift the big pirate's chest like lid and peer in. There was a bayonet, medals, a Japanese flag, ribbons, pictures: A history of my father I never heard anything about. It fascinated me.

Then there was my uncle Jake. He was a square jawed, ruddy faced Marine, just like in the recruiting posters. He had a big smile, big shoulders, a big laugh, and

was full of life. If ever there was a “man’s man,” that is what he was to me then and still is.

Jake had stormed a dozen beaches in the South Pacific. He was a Sergeant and led a platoon. I listened to him recount what seemed to be every step of his military career whenever all the relatives got together. After dinner, men would go into the Den and close the door, while the women cleaned up in the kitchen. I got to go with the men. My grandfather, a Marine; my other uncle, a fighter pilot; Jake, my dad and me. Jake liked to talk, and he had great stories, so we sat entranced and listened. When we all met at Jake’s, which we frequently did, I would end up laced with his war souvenirs: necklaces of teeth and ears taken from the enemy. So many dead bodies piled up in front of his ‘hole in the sand’ that he did this to pass the time, since it was impossible to sleep. Jake was a real life John Wayne to me: An American hero. “If only I could grow up and be like him.” I said to myself everytime I saw Jake.

In 1967, when the Vietnam War was about to explode with the Tet Offensive, I got my chance. I was out of high school, so I joined the US Marines. But to my grave disappointment, they found that I had a rare blood type that made me ineligible for service. – However, years later after I had graduated from college, married and had a child, I joined the Marines again to become an Infantry officer. (This was before computers and no one discovered that I was actually registered as “4-F.”) They scheduled me to go to the East coast and enter Boot camp at Quantico. – But destiny had a different plan. I got kicked in the groin while playing soccer, went to the hospital for surgery, had Hepatitis transmitted to me in a blood transfusion and was deemed unfit for military service again. – I am sorry, Jake. Despite all my efforts, it just was not God’s will.

After finishing at Westmont College, a Christian institution in nearby Montecito, I was a pastor at a store front church in Isla Vista, the student community for UC Santa Barbara. It was a time of student unrest and demonstrations against the Vietnam War. In Isla Vista, the students went on a rampage and burned many building, including the Bank of America. The buildings on both sides of my little church were destroyed, but our windows and doors were left totally unmolested.

When a huge, unruly crowd, throwing rocks through all the store front windows, came to our church a loud clear voice came from somewhere out of the din of rioting: “No, not them. Leave them alone!” They did. And I am still convinced that it was an angel who spoke.

Being a new pastor, I decided to visit all 20,000 student residences in Isla Vista; and get to meet my neighbors, share the Gospel, and see if they would fellowship at my church. This effort changed my life in an unexpected way. About every hundred doors that opened to my knock were recent Vietnam veterans. Some had been separated as “Section 8” (a U.S. Army discharge based on military assessment of psychological unfitness or character traits deemed undesirable) because of the severity of their psychological trauma.

I would have doors slowly opened that immediately revealed an atmosphere of darkness, oppression and horror. I did not have any idea what these war veterans had experienced. They were my age and living in a nightmare that consumed their lives! They opened their doors with threatening countenances, anger and disdain. They knew about a reality of humanity that I had never experienced, and they had no respect for my opinions about God and eternal life, because I had not seen what they had.

I began attending Vietnam Veterans Association meetings and events to try and understand. I ended up in a camouflaged tent representing Point Man Ministries at their veteran gatherings. Veterans would come inside my tent if they wanted prayer. But what I was unprepared for were their confessions! Indeed, I heard stories about Hell on earth. And metaphorically, these veterans were Hell’s burn victims.

I prayed for every one of them. Often times, I still do. But each one bore their soul to me and burdened my heart to breaking. I realized I had to do more.

Being a pastor did not pay my family’s bills so I began a business. I bought a home made carpet cleaner in the garage of the guy who later developed *Rug Doctor* and went to work. My business grew quickly and created the necessity for me to train and hire employees. By that time I moved south next to two Marine bases, El

Toro and Tustin. I recruited those Marines to work with me which gave them a way to make money and their lives a bit easier. This made me happy. I knew that the military gave them experience in making and keeping things exceptionally clean.

The Vietnam War was over by then, so I had a mixture of war veterans and civilians. There was a major and noticeable difference. The US Marines, especially the Vietnam veterans, had a maturity and confidence and drive that were unlike anything I had hired before.

The Marines that began cleaning banks and real estate and insurances offices for me did such meticulous work and were so respectful to my clients that soon I began to receive compliments and referrals. Their professional work ethic and attitudes caused my business to explode. Within two years, my small town business covered the entire state. I literally had more new client requests than I could handle.

I began selecting my best US veteran employees, and putting them in charge of regional areas. They were in charge of supervising cleaning crews, and providing customer service for my clients within those regions. -- I made an offer to them: They could buy the accounts under their charge from me and begin their own business maintenance company.

This was a good idea for several reasons. These US veterans were excellent leaders and respected and liked by those they supervised. They took charge, and were trusted by my clients. They paid me 20% of the net profits for a year, and then those clients became their own, new business. Some of these veteran entrepreneurs went on to become building maintenance millionaires! They exceeded anything I was able to do.

I also met a lot of Marines at what was the start of Saddleback Church: The mega-church created by Rick Warren, the author of the best seller, "A Purpose Filled Life." I began attending the church's Vietnam veterans meetings. The veteran who took me there was Greg Essliar, a 3 tour, Vietnam War Army veteran. He was well over 6 feet tall and had a prophet's beard.

Greg had lived in trash dumpsters since his honorable discharge in 1973. He lived for just one reason when he returned 'home' to the States: That was to stay drunk! The police knew Greg well. As a courtesy, every Christmas they would arrest Greg so that he could get medical attention and a good meal in the County jail. But in 1990 Greg had a life changing experience.

On Christmas day, 1990, Greg Essliar, decorated Vietnam War veteran, was arrested by the Tustin Police Department. They knew that he was harmless. Sometimes he broke into abandoned buildings, urinated in parks or fell asleep on bus benches. But he always showed the police respect and never caused any trouble when they took him into custody.

They took Greg to the Orange County Jail. Greg was grateful. He always looked forward to this annual Christmas arrest. He got to see a doctor, dentist, get a shower, a cot, blankets and a warm meal.

The jail doctor knew Greg from frequent visits over the years. The doctor had been monitoring Greg's liver. This year he gave Greg the news that the doctor had known was inevitable. Greg told me that this is what he was told: "Greg, you are going to die soon. Your liver is destroyed. I am going to have the Sheriff release you. Go and get a bottle and then have your last drink. You probably won't live through the week."

Later that day, Greg found an abandoned Gas station and broke a window to get inside. He had panhandled for enough money to buy a fifth of Vodka. But as he sat on the floor, opened the metal cap and lifted the alcohol to his lips, Greg had a vision. He told me that he suddenly saw Jesus Christ appear in the dilapidated station with him. Jesus held out an arm. "Take my hand. I will save your life and use you to save the lives of many others." Greg never drank that bottle.

And so when I first met Greg, he was not the person I have just described. He was a super-nova! His countenance was brilliant. He was the embodiment of God's love and joy.

Greg also saved me. My pastoring of Vietnam veterans and the numerous nightmarish stories, which were told in exact detail, affected me beyond my

ability to cope. I began dreaming their nightmares. Their realities became mine too. I got lost in a maze of Hellish memories. I began experiencing vicarious Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This resulted in me publishing a poem about my pseudo reality in the local newspaper. Greg read it and somehow found me.

I heard several loud knocks on my apartment door. The depression I was experiencing led me to unwisely begin drinking from morning to night. I opened to the brilliant light of the sun flooding in and the outlined figure of a large being in the threshold of my home. I thought Greg was an angel that came to take me heaven.

“Did you write this poem?” he asked abruptly. And he held out a copy he had cut from the newspaper. I recognized the first line and nodded agreement. Then the next thing I knew, Greg grabbed me by the arm and was pulling me down the stairs! He took me straight to an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting.

Greg was a transformed person. He had been completely sober ever since Jesus appeared to him. He now was an elder in a local recovery church and a regular preacher at the county Rescue Mission. Greg was also the founder and leader of the Saddleback Church veterans group. Every year he found enough funding to take Vietnam veterans like himself, who were having difficulty reintegrating to civilian life after the trauma of Vietnam, back to the bases at which they were stationed ‘in country.’ This was amazingly therapeutic for them!

One of the Vietnam veterans that went on these trips had been blown up on his third day in Vietnam. Both of his legs and an arm were blown off and he lost an eye. He was 18 years old when it happened. But he was 40 when Greg took this US veteran back to the outskirts of the village where this had occurred.

Of course, for the last 22 years this Army veteran had lived in a motorized electric wheel chair. When they showed up at this remote village the sight of this elaborate wheelchair attracted a lot of attention. An elderly woman came up and began asking questions. Then she went to her hooch and returned with a US Army helmet. It had that veteran’s name still visible on it. She had recovered it after the

explosion that ripped his truck apart and used it as a flower planter in her home since that fateful day.

That veteran and this former enemy hugged and cried. They were both sincerely sorry for the suffering each had caused to the other and their loved ones.

Greg was not a public speaker. He could talk forever with veterans, alcoholics and substance abusers one-by one. But Greg was nervous when he had to get onstage. I had been a preacher for many years so I was comfortable speaking in front of groups. Greg and I formed a bond. We travelled together from here and there sharing Greg's testimony and my calls to repentance and a new life.

The Assembly of God Church sponsored Greg as a speaker and sent him across America to their churches and rallies. They even gave Greg a scholarship to earn a Master's degree in Theology at Vanguard University, their college in Southern California.

Greg and I were as close as any brothers have ever been. And then in 2004, two Vietnamese young adults, who were members of a church Greg planted outside of Saigon, invited him to be the Master of Ceremony at their Christian wedding. It was a secret event, because belief in Christ is punishable by imprisonment in that country. And so this celebration was held in the midst of a jungle to protect those who attended from prosecution.

Unexpectedly, as Greg was ministering on the temporary stage, a thimble of alcohol was offered to him, as part of the Vietnamese traditional ceremony. He paused for a moment. He had not tasted any alcohol for more than a decade. But he decided not to interrupt the wedding and drank the very small amount.

In A.A. it is taught that Alcoholism is a 'progressive disease.' So although Greg had not tasted any alcohol for years, that simple thimble released a generation of unsatisfied desire. That night, after the Christian wedding, Greg went into Saigon. He bought alcohol. Then he purchased drugs. Then he purchased prostitutes. Greg died a few months later from a massive overdose. There was no way I could stop him. The Vietnam War finally caught up and killed him.

A few months before this occurred, Greg introduced us to a wealthy Vietnam veteran that was the sole sponsor of a Vietnam veterans' recovery center. The owner asked Greg if he knew of a pastor who would hold services for the 25 men it housed full time. Soon afterwards, my wife and I were holding Sunday services and counseling during other days of the week. By 'counseling,' I really mean 'listening.'

We quickly learned that we were strangers in a strange land. We were not one of them and we never would be. Even a suggestive hint from us of what they should or should not do (drinking, drugs, violence, etc.) was immediately obvious as being the wrong way to go. Instead, I preached about God's forgiveness and love. I shared about how their service and sacrifices mirrored the sacrifices and attitude of Christ. I praised them and told them of the glory and honor their trails had earned them. I encouraged them, and implored them to turn their bad experiences into positive channels, like helping other veterans.

I admitted to them that my wife Tori and I knew nothing about the experiences and losses they suffered. But like a doctor and a nurse in a hospital, my wife and I were there to listen and to offer a healing of their psyche, heart and soul, if they wanted it.

We remained at that facility for many months. One-by-one, the US veteran residents who lived and worked there when we came in felt ready to move on. They left our facility with our hugs and prayers. And then it was time for other ministers to take our places and to be used by God in this difficult but precious calling.

At this time, my wife's mother had fallen into the final dementia stage of Alzheimers. She needed constant supervision and care. We sold all that we had and purchased outright a 3 bedroom, 2 bath home, so that we and Tori's mom could live together. This house was right outside the fence that encircled Camp Pendleton Marine Base. Taking care of my wife's mother was another ministry God wanted us to do. And this time, it was my wife who took the lead. My appreciation, respect and love for Tori grew beyond what I ever imagined as I watched her patiently and tirelessly care for her mother's every need. One day,

her mom fell and broke her hip. “Annie” slipped quickly after that and passed away in her bed in our home.

Now, here is the starting point of a miracle that has benefitted thousands of US veterans and their families, as well as transformed my life and Tori’s. It has helped just as many US civilians too. Since this event, it has been as if Tori and I have fallen into a fast flowing river. Its current has taken control of our destiny. This is a unique, 21st century, powerful new marketing concept to increase your business revenue that will help many US veterans and their families at the same time.

HirePatriots.com www.hirepatriots.com

We found a good deal on a condo in Oceanside, CA. US Marines lived all about us. Everywhere we went in town, we saw dozens more. Of course, I relished this! I love the United States Marine Corps. Whenever my wife and I took walks, pushing her mom in her wheelchair, we always said hello to every Marine we saw. Within a few weeks they knew who we were and greeted us by name. It was delightful being their neighbors and friends.

So one day, we were pleased to answer the door and to see a Marine in fatigues. But we had not seen him before. “Sir,” he said standing straight but slightly off center due to injuries, “I need your help.” Hearing those words from an injured US Marine, standing on my very doorstep, still grips my heart and pushes tears out of my eyes.

“Sir, I just got home from Iraq maybe an hour ago. I discovered that my wife was laid off soon after I deployed. She had not let me know. I found out when I got home and there was no electricity or heat in the house. Sir, I have 2 small children. I want them to be warm tonight. Is there any work that I can do for you around your home or yard so that I can earn enough to get my family utilities turned back on?”

My voice cracked as I replied. “Son,” I answered as I shook his hand, “please let me just give you the money you need. It is the very least I can do for what you

have already done for me.” But he adamantly refused. His honor would not abide it.

That stalwart man, this United States Marine, worked for me for 5 hours doing whatever I asked. He cleaned my house. He repaired the timing on my carburetor. And he fixed my favorite chair that I was about to throw out. I paid him \$100. He got his utilities turned back on.

After that we took several thousand dollars from our savings and we paid for a website and job board to be built for local residents and businesses, in case they might also want to hire a local Marine (or their spouse) to help them with chores, or as a new employee. We guessed that there might be a few more Marines who might need a way to earn some extra income to pay bills, etc. It was called *HireMarines.com*. It later became *HirePatriots.com* when the Admiral of the Navy for the Southwest U.S. called and asked us to change the name so that his sailors could use the site to get jobs. That site soon began receiving 10,000 visitors a week!

Now to be honest, this number of visitors did not show up all by themselves. It took a bit of leg work. My wife and I printed up business cards and fliers. We checked for all of the dates of Chamber of Commerce “sundowners” (evening events where business congregate to network) in the multiple cities within San Diego. We attended these and shared with the dozens of business people at each about our free website. They loved it!

Soon, the people we met at these Chamber events began posting jobs. They were overjoyed with the experience and we began receiving multiple emails everyday about how extremely pleased they were with the Marines they hired. Everyone thanked us profusely for creating this opportunity to hire and to get to meet and know the Marines and sailors we all saw everyday in our communities. And the US Armed Service members and their spouses in San Diego were overjoyed too!

We contacted every local newspaper, TV and radio News affiliate and told them our story and sent them the replies we received from our site’s users. Soon, they began showing up at our house with photographers, cameras and reporters.

Almost overnight, we were recognized wherever we went. Our truck had a HirePatriots banner on both doors and the rear end. When we went to the store, there often were veterans and their families waiting at our vehicle for us in order to thank us. They hugged us and told us what a 'life-saver' our simple job board had been to them. Their appreciation has been enough for us to dedicate the rest of our lives and all that we have to this mission. Serving them has been the center piece and the fulfillment of our lives.

In 2008, the local newspaper, serving the communities around Camp Pendleton Marine Base, declared us the Number 1 news story of the year. The Chamber gave us their "Extra Mile" award. The County Supervisor, Bill Horn, a former US Marine, gave us \$25,000. Dick Cheney, the US Vice-President, called and asked if he could have a picture taken with me. President Bush gave us his highest civilian award, the *Congressional Medal of Merit*. The National Chairman of the Republican Party made us Honorary Chairmen of the California Economic Council. A Colonel from the Pentagon made a video about HirePatriots. We were on the most popular radio show in San Diego, the Roger Hedgecock Show, every week for about 20 minutes. And the TV News stations kept having us on to tell more of the heartwarming stories created by the people who hired US veterans on our website. FOX National Business News interviewed us on Veterans Day. 400 San Diego businesses and 1,500 executives held a dinner for us and presented us with the county's most significant business award: The LEAD Award's 'Visionary Trophy' for creating economic development.

(Post Script: By the time this book is published we will have been featured in People Magazine as their "Heroes Among Us.")

From Generals, Admirals, enlisted ranks, veterans, military spouses, CEOs, entertainment personalities, news producers, newspaper editors, residents, senior citizens, and everyone else we were known and beloved. Both political parties contacted me to run for office. Neither my wife nor I sought after nor in anyway expected such a response. We were overwhelmed. All of the ideas and plans that we had thought would take us to the end of our lives completely

changed. It was seismic shift, equal to the state of California having an earthquake and ending up between the US and Hawaii.

Job Fairs

But Tori and I had to find a way to earn money. The life savings we had put away was decreasing rapidly. There were posters, fliers, business cards, bumper stickers, new phone bills, employees, advertising and website expenses that we had not considered. We created a plan to use the grant Bill Horn had given us to create military job fairs. It would help our local veterans. And it might get more companies to purchase banners from our website, and create enough income to keep us going.

We had never held a job fair before. We just did it. US veterans are more accustomed to this. They have always told me that the key to survival is to *“Adapt and Overcome.”* We attended a few job fairs, took a guess at how it was done, and then gave it our best try. Here is a motto I learned growing up: *Necessity is the Mother of Invention.* We applied it.

We had difficulty at first getting permission to host a job fair on Camp Pendleton. It is always safer to say NO than Yes in the military. But I went to the local Chamber President who played golf with all of the top brass on the base. He spoke with the commanding General and we were given permission.

It is very labor intensive to host a job fair. Besides reserving the hall, the tables, the tablecloths the coffee, and all of the basics; most importantly we had to get companies and veterans to attend. We stayed on the phones all day everyday for 2 months. We spoke with and left messages for over a thousand HR people.

We got 132 companies with jobs to fill to attend our first event. All of these companies also paid to have presence on our website, so we were able to turn a little profit.

The day after our first job fair on the base, there was a picture of a Marine paraplegic coming out of our job fair. She was a Marine Captain who was blown up in Iraq. Her severe injuries caused her to stay in coma for months. When she

awoke, she discovered that the doctors delivered her first born child during the time that she was unconscious. Unfortunately, she also discovered that her husband, also a Marine, had been killed in Afghanistan. She was a new mom and a widow in one day. I remember seeing her coming into the job fair. She was in a motorized wheelchair and had her baby in her arms. She looked very distraught. But the picture on the front page of the North County Times the next day, showed a happy and beaming woman. She was holding up several job offers in her hands as she left our event. The quote said that she went in thinking that her *'life was over.'* And she had no idea how she would support herself and her child. But now that she knew that companies still wanted her, life looked a lot better. She believed that she just might make it after all. That made all of our hard work and effort completely worth it!

After a couple of hiring events, we noticed that many of our veteran job seekers were not talking to any recruiters. They would just gather info and leave. We then began enlisting the help of volunteers, mostly from those posting chores on our site. These citizens, mostly senior citizen ladies, met the job seekers at the door. They would take them in hand and lead them into the fair. While doing so, they would ask what kind of job they hoped for. Then they would take them to the appropriate recruiter and introduce them by name. After that we did not see any more quick exits. (Thank you, dear ladies!)

After that, we held 11 more job fairs. But as our efforts to help veterans increased with new programs, the time consumption, cost and risk of hosting these events was too overwhelming. However, we have been honored by having a retired US General join HirePatriots recently who is about to host 2 day hiring events: *"Warriors to the Workforce."* He already has donations from hundreds of companies that have pledged to support his effort and attend. We have made his new job fair initiative a program of Patriotic Hearts, (HirePatriots' 501(c)(3) non-profit). Several job fairs are already planned this year! More may be on the schedule soon.

Military Marriage Retreats

An article appeared in the local newspaper claimed that the “multiple deployed enlisted rank marriages” were taking a huge toll. It claimed the divorce rate was as high as “90% on Camp Pendleton Marine Base!” The article said the wives on Camp Pendleton referred to the numbers of marriages that were breaking up as “the Plague.” This broke our hearts to read.

We knew many Marine wives. We worked with the Family Readiness Officers (FRO) at Camp Pendleton. They were dear military wives who loved and supported their Marines with all of their hearts and souls.

We had to take action. Something had to be done. These dear families did not deserve this. But the stress, separation and hurt feelings created by military life and compounded by two wars and months and sometimes years of not seeing each other, created huge misunderstandings and distance when troops returned home. These young, patriotic couples and citizens did not know how to deal with their mixed up emotions. They did not know how to reconnect and to reignite their romance and love. And that frustration was causing their families to split up, despite their mutual love.

I wrote to San Diego Supervisor Bill Horn again. Each County Supervisor is given a yearly stipend to grant to people and organizations that they feel help San Diego be a better place. I told Supervisor Horn about what I had read and asked if he could help us to host a marriage retreat for the veterans in San Diego. He responded with \$20,000!

Just as we had never held a job fair before, we had never hosted a marriage retreat either. Once again, we were “flying blind.” But once again, *Necessity* was impelling us to do so.

Across the street from the main entrance to Camp Pendleton is a beautiful gem of a boat harbor. At its very tip, jutting out towards the Pacific Ocean is a wonderful luxury resort, Marina Inn Suites. We rented 22 amorous suites facing the harbor or ocean. Each was a richly furnished suite that had a separate bedroom with a canopy bed, kitchen and hot tub. We placed a romantic gift basket on each bed and strew rose petals all over the covers and floor.

Then we made reservations at the fine restaurants in the harbor. Everyone we asked was glad to participate. They gave us discounts when they could and greeted our veteran couples with great cordiality when we arrived.

It was easy to enlist couples. Our website, HirePatriots.com had 10,000 military members a week from San Diego visiting it. Within a few days, the marriage retreat was filled. We even had two military couples from the East coast sign up to attend.

Military members who have been in combat feel particularly hardened and are difficult to get to come to a retreat for help with their marriages. -- We asked everyone for 3 positive confirmations that they were definitely attending the retreat. And we made a call to everyone the evening before the retreat to get final confirmations. But the next day, some of the veteran couples who confirmed did not show up!

But 16 combat experienced veteran couples did show up. On the first evening, as couples arrived and greeted us, the wives were open and vocalized their feelings first. Some could not resist expressing the hurt and anger they felt. Their military husbands, on the other hand, were mostly like emotionless blocks of ice.

It is challenge to get the couples in the right frame of mind sometimes for these retreats. And since then, we have found a simple way to make that happen.

There is enough room for all of our couples to fit into our Master Suite at this Inn. Most sit on the floor. The husbands lean against a wall, and because of limited space, the wives naturally sit in front of their husbands and rest against their chests. The husbands responded by putting their arms around their wives. For some couples, this might be the first time that they have been this close since returning from combat. It is like watching ice melt on a sunny day! Tears begin to flow.

We spend Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning watching the *Love & Respect* videos and discussing each. The narrators in the DVDs are a “mustang” Colonel and his wife. They have been through everything our couples have experienced.

Local veteran groups, mostly retired people, volunteer to help us. They bring delicious home-cooked meals. Then they sit and talk with the young troops.

Sometimes we get WWII veterans who have been married for more than 60 years! Thank God for their enduring affection and wisdom. It is so encouraging and convincing.

For the conclusion of our retreats, we present each couple with a collage of pictures taken of them during the retreat. We frame the pictures. In the middle of the frame, surrounded by all of the pictures, is a big picture that we take of them cutting a wedding cake, beneath a flowered bower, with the ocean in the background. On the back of that picture is our personal contact info. Whenever these couples have a bad fight or difficulty, they are to take down the picture and call us. In eight years, not one couple has split up. They are all still married and together. This is not stated to praise ourselves. But I think we have proven that at least the majority of endangered military marriages and families can be saved. But it requires small peer groups. It cannot happen nearly as effectively in large auditoriums.

The US military Chaplains have received many millions to host marriage retreats. And we have attended some. They do their best. They rent out fabulous hotels we could never afford. They bring in a hundred couples from nearby bases. And they run an excellent government sponsored video seminar of the basic truths of successful marriages. But their effectiveness does not come close to using our historically proven method of recovery. – Let people who have witnessed the same trauma heal each other.

No doubt about it, HirePatriots was having a tremendous effect upon veterans in San Diego County. But as these military members would get transferred to other bases in the country, we would hear from them. “Hey, where is HirePatriots in my area? I need to earn some extra money!” -- Their need created the *necessity* for us to create a plan for expanding across the country, in order to serve veterans everywhere, as we were doing where we lived.

Cause Marketing

Companies that wanted to hire veterans purchased banners on our website. We had over a hundred of their emblems scrolling on HirePatriots. But we really did not have any more of a relationship with these companies after that. Of course, the hope and goal of these businesses was to have veterans click their banners, go to their webpage, find the jobs and apply for them. And that worked

sometimes, yet not often enough to fill all of these companies' positions. They needed banners on a lot of websites in order to get enough clicks from job seeking veterans.

Then one day the thought occurred to me: "What if they had their own, customized HirePatriots website and job board?" Ours was now getting visited by 40,000 veterans a month. What if they could get that many too? They probably would be able to fill all of their jobs.

I realized that this could also provide a solution for our own dilemma. If we could select a business in each location that is near an active US military base to represent us with their own HirePatriots site and job board, then we could help veterans all across America. And we would not have to disappoint our local military who get re-stationed to other parts of the country.

I wrote up our *Steps to Success*. This is a detailed account of what we did in San Diego to make our site so popular. It plainly lays out the path to follow in order to spread the news and to regularly get on TV, radio and press. And it explains how to turn the residents who post jobs into avid volunteers. In other words, this document tells how to become the most popular business in their region, and especially well known by every veteran in their area. (See the link to our *Steps to Success* at end of this chapter.)

So we began contacting businesses that were located near US military installations, all across America. We offered them a customized HirePatriots website, job board and blog. Anyone who came to their site to post or to search jobs would find out all about their business. Plus, they will have the contact info for all of those job seekers, because to use our site all users must create an account and register first. Hence, they could recruit from within their own data base and get tremendous media advertising for free, and save many thousands of dollars each year. What a deal! But better than all that: They would also be offering essential support to the US veterans and their families within their network.

Soon, our corporate supporters were much more than advertisers. They were HirePatriots regional and local leaders. They had their own, separate HirePatriots web address. We were working together synergistically. We were spreading the news about them, and they were spreading the news about us. It was a *hand 'n*

hand relationship. We promoted them through our website with banners, blog posts and links to their own HP site. And they spoke on TV, radio, the Press and at local clubs and conventions about HirePatriots, while passing out fliers with a link to their own HirePatriots URL. They became famous in their area, and so did we. –Most importantly, the more they followed our *Steps*, the more veterans found out about HirePatriots’ job openings and were hired.

It was a synergistic relationship. They solved their recruiting problems at a fraction of what they were spending before. They also sold more products as their reputation and fame grew. And we had a spokesperson and representative who was going around that region spreading the word about HirePatriots.

Cause Marketing Examples:

If Wally from Wally’s Widgets buys advertising on a TV or radio station, his message will basically be this: “Hi everybody, if you need widgets come to WallyWidgets.com and buy yours today!” He may also mention how much better his widgets are over his competitors and offer a special deal. There a million pitches like this in the media everyday. That is why TV remotes have *fast forward*.

But instead, what if Wally asked the TV station if he could come on not on his behalf, but on behalf of the local active duty, veterans and their spouses? If he tells them that he has a free job board for the communities within that region to help veterans find jobs or earn extra money by helping residents, they will put him on for free! And what will these tens of thousands people see when they go to his site to post and search? They will see everything that has to do with Wally’s Widgets. Plus, they will leave their contact info for his newsletter.

Wally will definitely sell more widgets, and he will not have to pay to advertise. He will be making a lot more money. At the same time, he will be stimulating the economy in his area by getting thousands of veterans hired, for a day or for a career. He will be providing a way for local citizens to support their troops in a practical and meaningful way. Wally will be known and loved as an exemplary patriot. And that will be good for his business too.

Recently, we had a veteran owned franchise in Georgia join us. A few days later, I put a key executive of that company on the radio with me. He got to introduce that franchise as a new HirePatriots leader in that state. And he got to introduce himself and share about their turn-key opportunity. We received a call a few days

later. That radio interview resulted in him getting more franchise requests in a week than he had before.

Here is the comment that company's Development Director wrote on my LinkedIn page: *"I recommend Mark and the HirePatriots higher cause marketing system with no reservations. Mark is the rarest of animals, an honest person that cares about and delivers results. Mark has been outstanding! It's been a pleasure working with and getting to know him both personally and professionally."*

A trucking school became a member. They were frustrated because a nearby base allowed a competitor to bring their truck into the base and recruit for their school, but they would not let him do so. He asked us how being a HirePatriots member might help his case.

We put one of his instructors on a couple of radio and TV stations in that area when that base was about to hold a big job fair. He promoted the fair and encouraged companies and veterans to attend. And of course, he also talked about posting jobs on HirePatriots. It was a huge success. The base held the biggest and best job fair ever! And the competitor's truck was replaced with his. It also resulted in 600 jobs getting posted on his HirePatriots site from the residents and businesses that saw him on the News.

A retired Colonel's business joined us in Colorado. A Ranger whose injuries forced him out of the Army got a One Day job off of his site. He helped this wealthy man set up for a big party. Then he stayed and served. And later, he cleaned up when the guests left. He earned \$300 for that night's work. But it gets better!

Once all of the work was done, the Colonel had a cup of coffee with this Ranger. He had watched him work all day and night and was impressed. He asked the veteran questions and was even more impressed. When that soldier left for home, he was also that man's new Operation Director for the company he owned, at a starting salary of \$65,000!

HirePatriots' Vision

I am driven by this mission: To create a **nationwide employment safety net for veterans and their spouses**. I hope the readers of this book will embrace this dream as their own and participate in making it happen. What if every US region had their own HirePatriots job board? Then every willing and able US veteran

would be able to work and earn money everyday. I believe that they have earned it and that they deserve it. And I am sure you agree.

BIO

Mark and Tori Baird are devoted to helping US veterans and their families in every way within their means. Currently, they are trying to obtain a donated RV with which to spend their lives traversing the USA and spreading HirePatriots into every region, county and town. If you have a good RV to donate; or, if you want a HirePatriots Leader, please contact them.

About HirePatriots

HirePatriots is a program of Patriotic Hearts a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Here are the others: Vet-Entrepreneur Program, Military Job Fairs, Welcome Home Parties, Military Marriage Enrichment Retreats, Veteran Job Placement, and Job Training.

If you want to read a few comments from the people who use our website go here: <http://www.hirepatriots.com/news-and-blogs/entry/what-people-say-about-hirepatriots-job-program>

And if you are a business that is interested in becoming a HirePatriots Leader in your location, here are our simple 10 Steps to Success:

<http://www.hirepatriots.com/news-and-blogs/entry/hirepatriots-steps-to-success-in-business>

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Past Chairman: CA Economic Council
Past Secretary: United Veteran Council

From President Bush: The Congressional Medal of Merit
From President Obama: President's Volunteer Service Medal

From San Diego: The Visionary Award for Creating Economic Development
From the Chamber of Commerce: The Extra Mile Award

From ABC TV: The Leadership Award
From U.S. Veterans & Families: Liberty
From Jesus Christ: Purpose & Eternal Life