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How serving in the U.S. Army assisted me in my career in construction - by Mikael Reckley

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I was raised in Somerville, Mass., attended Somerville High and graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1996. After graduation I served as an officer in the Army from 1996 to 2001 in the Air Defense Artillery branch. My first position was platoon leader of a Bradley Stinger Fighting Vehicle platoon. I also worked on division staff, and was a battalion adjutant. While serving in the military I was deployed to both Bosnia and Kosovo. After leaving the service I worked for Turner Construction for several years filling multiple roles such as assistant superintendent, area superintendent, project engineer and project manager. The last 6 years at Turner I served as the virtual design and construction manager where I was exposed to several technology topics such as BIM, electronic document control and punchlist. I now fill the role of regional marketing manager for Procore.

Many ask how my experience in the military has assisted in my career in construction. To be honest I was nervous about the move not having a construction background but it turns out the transition was seamless. I found there were many parallels between the Army and construction which eased my transition and here they are:

1. Safety- In the military you deal and manage people and equipment and this goes the same for construction. When you working with these elements safety is paramount. While I was in the Army we had to work closely with OSHA to ensure our facilities and vehicles were safe. While I was at Turner we worked closely with OSHA to ensure the workers and jobsite were safe. I believe my time in the Army help me understand better how important that people your working with always remain safe and go home at the end of the day.

2. QA/QC- As an officer in the military I had many inspections that I was either preparing for or conducting myself. It was literally a daily function of my life and this experience helped me understand the importance of QA/QC and inspections in general. Combine the importance of safety and the experience of inspections helped me during the times when I was required to conduct safety inspections on the jobsite.

3. Lean Construction- In terms of the realm of Lean the parallel that I recognize is the principle of workplace organization. In the Army everything had a place to go and it was labeled both in our facilities and in our vehicles. This is similar to the process of 5S that is part of Lean Construction.

4. Leadership- With both my experience at West Point and my time as an officer I have experienced both good and bad leadership and had similar experience in construction. The good leaders I have had coach and mentor the people that work with them, they want their people to excel and they do everything possible to ensure they are in the best position to succeed. Good leaders push accolades downstream and credit their people for the success of the team, they also accept responsibility for the team's shortcomings. In my experience there is a differentiation between leadership and management. I've always tried to be a good leader in construction.

These element helped me become a better builder, it's not to say that a person without military experience can't hold these qualities. I have encountered many great people throughout my career in construction that possess all of these and more, however I do see these as great parallels that assisted my transition from military to construction.

Procore Technologies, Inc., is a leading provider of cloud-based applications for construction. Through Procore Construction OS, the company connects people, applications, and devices through a unified platform to help construction firms manage risk and build quality projects, safely, on time, and within budget. The company has a diversified business model with products for construction project management, construction financials, and quality & safety. Headquartered in California, with offices around the globe, Procore has more than 2 million users managing billions of dollars in annual construction volume.

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