



Service Members' Stories Share Common Themes of Mission, Growth, Acceptance

NOVEMBER 13, 2018

Winston & Strawn marked Veterans/Remembrance Day 2018 with a firmwide teleconference on November 9 featuring a discussion with firm members who serve or have served in the military around the world.

The program opened by recognizing the more than 30 distinguished veterans who work at Winston and noting the UK remembrance poppies and bluet de France badges the panelists wore on their lapels. During the next hour, panelists provided a lighthearted look at their favorite on- and off-duty experiences and lessons learned while stationed in locations from the islands of East Timor, Adak, Alaska, and San Clemente, California, to the countries of Afghanistan, Japan, Italy, and beyond.

Others on the panel followed—or defied—their family path, were enticed by the GI Bill, or were in need of focus and polish. “I was glad to serve my country and would do it again,” U.S. Army veteran **Leonard Glower** told the firm members, clients, and alumni in attendance.

All panelists agreed that focus on the mission and attention to detail are key benefits of military service and have had a significant impact on their careers. U.S. Marine Corps veteran **Michael Ballard** parlayed his knack for Morse code into advanced military assignments and ultimately a civilian career in information technology. For [Todd Thorson](#), another veteran of the U.S. Marines, his work as a port observer taught him “how to tell truth to power” through his interactions with the battleship captains who were his superiors.



According to Todd, the Marine Corps formed his adult view of the world as it relates to diversity as well. “The military is a more effective incubator of diversity because of the force of law,” he said, recalling the absolute power of his Latino major’s command. Michael concurred: “No one cared what you did outside if you could do your job.” “You can join the military, and you’ll be accepted,” Leonard added.

The panelists also provided advice to attendees on how best to honor and show respect to those who serve. “There’s a general sense you were forced to go into the military,” when people ask how much longer you have, Tom said, but “I stay in because I’ve met some of the best people.” Leonard encouraged attendees to do more than say “thank you” to service members returning home from war by saying “can I help you” to those in need. With training and extra duties, many service members work a 70-to-80-hour week, Michael explained, so “it’s important that you’re there for a vet.”

This program was part of Winston’s annual series that celebrates the diversity that exists at the firm and helps foster an inclusive work environment. Visit our [Diversity & Inclusion](#) page for more information.

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