



Perspective / Opinion

Being a Veteran Affects How I View My Upcoming Internship

By Clayton Sweeney, MCW-Milwaukee Class of 2022

A chilling refrain throughout medical school is, “Internship is coming.” While alarming, I am not new to this type of notice. I spent years in the Army, always notified of the next challenge. At the onset, the recruiters cautioned that Basic Combat Training would be tough as I transitioned from civilian to soldier. Next, the drill sergeants warned that Officer Candidate School would eliminate the weak, and only about one-third of us would graduate. Then, the cadre warned that the infantry leader’s course would harden me as I learned the heartless tactics of combat. Finally, the infantry instructors told me leading a platoon would be an enduring test of discipline.

Like the other training environments in which I was challenged, I anticipate a tough intern year. In all events, camaraderie was, and will be, the basis of my success.

On Day 3 of basic training, my battle buddy, Tom, and I started making our bunks together. We were faster, and our sheets measured more consistently for inspection. My novice rifle skills improved to the squad’s top shot when another battle buddy shared his marksmanship exercises. When we were tasked with the culminating twenty-one-mile ruck march to an infantry mission, we all jumped to carry a heavy weapon. When we experienced a failure or a loss, none of us were alone.

While internship demands I improve myself, I will be keeping an eye out for my fellow interns. Like a mission’s after-action review, I will ensure the post-rounds debrief acknowledges the questions we got right before researching the wrong ones. Snacks, breaks, and good news are always shared. Trading shifts to get someone out on their birthday/anniversary is always worth the effort. Holidays with my family will remain open to those away from their loved ones. Finally, when the days break us down, none of us will be alone.

On Veterans Day, Americans appreciate those who donned the uniform defending our country. As a Veteran, I feel an additional degree of indebtedness. I know I am a better version of myself for having served with them.

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