

Borne the Battle

Episode # 139

Jennifer Marshall—Actor / Petty Officer, Second Class

(Link to webpage: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/58598/borne-battle-139-jennifer-marshall-navy-veteran-actress/>)

(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music

[00:00:10] OPENING MONOLOGUE:

(Tanner Iskra) (TI): Let's get it. April 10th, 2019. Borne the Battle brought to you by the

Department of Veterans Affairs. I am you host, Marine Corps Veteran, Tanner Iskra.

Another wonderful week outside of podcast land. Uh, as I've mentioned in previous episodes, I am in the middle of building a house, working on getting out of my in-laws' basement. Took the wife to the design center this weekend for the house and let me tell you that is an experience that is a test in every marriage. If you want to excite your wife, take her to a design center for a house. And uh, if you want to take away her joy, show her how much everything costs. [Laughter] Um, haven't started the VA home loan process yet. [VA home loan webpage: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/>] That actually happens closer to uh, the house being built, so when that starts, I will start sharing that as well. All right got a news release for you. [Crinkling noise] For immediate release: VA increases contracting with service disabled and Veteran owned small businesses. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie announced today an increase in

the Department's goals of contracting with service-disabled Veteran owned businesses and Veteran owned small businesses. For fiscal year 2019, VA seeks to- VA seeks to award at least 15% of its total contract dollars to service-disabled Veteran owned small businesses, representing an 5% increase in both goals, a significant change not noted since 2010. Think it was about three years ago, the US Supreme Court underscored our mandate to do business with service-disabled Veterans and other Veteran entrepreneurs. Wilkie said "We have increased the dollars each year, but now it's time to update the goals to reflect this new commitment. We need to lock in the gains- the gains we have made and continue to build for the future. In fiscal year 2017, the last year for which official data is available, the VA awarded 5.1 billion, with a b, in contracts to service-disabled Veteran owned small businesses and 5.4 billion to Veteran owned small businesses. In fiscal year 2017, VA awarded more than ¼ of the dollars given to service-disabled Veteran owned small businesses by the federal government, more than all other federal civilian agencies combined. Which is pretty cool. Previously the service-disabled Veteran owned small business and Veteran owned small business goals were 10 and 12% established by former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki in fiscal year 2010. For more information on the press release, you could always go to

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel . So, we're up to 60% of our goals for ratings and reviews.

First of all, thank you. It mean- it does mean a lot and it does help me in looking at how better to improve this show. Second of all, we're at 60% and that means Adrian Cronauer of Good Morning Vietnam fame interviewing Mel Brooks, that episode is 60% the- on the way to you. Um, how about this, when we get to 75, I'll give you a snippet, a

snippet of that episode, uh, cause it's hilarious, they talk about Mel Brooks' service, time in ser- when he served, and they talk about his time with the USO among many other hilarious things. So, again thank you and when we get to 75% at 75 ratings and reviews, I'll release a snippet of that episode, and when we get to 100, I'll release the full thing. One thing that is the full thing right now is Vet-Tech. Vet-Tech is a new five-year pilot program that trains Veterans in the skills needed by employers in the high-tech sector. VA's looking for training providers to train Veterans in computer software, information science, media application, data processing, and computer programing. VA pays the program costs to the provider, and the Veterans can receive a housing stipend while in the program. The Veterans pay nothing. Applications for the first year are now open for training providers. To participate, your facility must have been in operation for at least two years and have successfully provided your high-tech program for at least one year. Veterans need one day, that's just one day of GI Bill entitlement to apply and training doesn't count against your GI Bill entitlement. For more information, go to the GI Bill website at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill and look for Vet-Tech at the top of the page. Applications for Veterans will open early this summer.

[00:04:47] INTERVIEW:

(TI): So, this week's guest is a great one. Her and I have been trying to link up to do a podcast, whether it be mine or hers for a number of years now. She is a veteran in some movies and shows that you may have seen. She has a recurring role on Stranger Things, she had a guest appearance on **Hawaii Five-0**, she was featured in this years A Dog's Way Home,

Commented [a1]: Just thought I should mention that on Apple Podcast's description for this episode, it is incorrectly written Hawaii Five-0 instead of Hawaii Five-0

she's been on Timeless, and Nickelodeon's Game Shakers. She also shared how the military community in Hollywood helped her on this new journey. She is Navy Veteran Jennifer Marshall.

[00:05:19] Music

(Jennifer Marshall) (JM): Thank you so much. I mean thank you for being flexible cause kids throw another dimension in it.

(TI): Sure, I bet. You know I, uh, I kno[unintelligible] I know we've tried to do this a couple times, even when you had your podcast, so-

(JM): We have right?

(TI): It's nice to finally be able to- it's nice to finally be able to do it.

(JM): I know right? It all came, it all came back around so.

(TI): Absolutely. Are you still doing the- that podcast, uh, Military Veterans in Creative Careers?

(JM): No. So, what happened was, umm, Trevor went to medical school. Trevor went to pre-med.

(TI): Okay.

(JM): And Justin was in Northern California, and so it was just kinda difficult. My schedule was getting kinda crazy, so we put it on hiatus. Trevor went to medical school, or pre-med, and he just got picked up for a commission. And so, he's going back in the Army as a doctor. [Laughter]

(TI): Oh, that's great. That's really cool.

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): [Unintelligible] I hope it comes back cause that was a pretty cool podcast.

(JM): Yeah it was good. I think that people don't necessarily think that Veterans work in the Industry, so it opened, it opened a lot of people's eyes.

(TI): So, whenever I talk to, when every I'm with my father-in-law, uh, he's watching the news and, uh, your New Day commercial comes on. I was like yeah, I know her, and my father-in-law's always like no, no, no you don't, so I was like yeah, so now, now that we finally can do something together, I can finally say yeah see I told you, we had a-

(JM): See? I know that mortgage girl.

(TI): [Laughter] So, um, you were a Navy Logistics Specialist, correct?

(JM): I was, I was an Aviation Storekeeper, which is now considered a Logistics Specialist, so I did logistics on the aviation side, uh and then I was, my last command I was at, uh I was on the USS Theodore Roosevelt, in AIMD, the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department. So, um, it was funny cause after 9/11, uh, the Navy, much different than the Marine Corps as you know,

(TI): Sure.

(JM): The Navy never really taught anyone how to shoot, and so after 9/11, they were like "Oh we need security and we need MAs and we need all these things and oh no nobody knows how to shoot so basically anybody who knew how to shoot they pulled us for Ship Security Defense Force. And so, I did a lot of that after 9/11.

(TI): Great. What is a- what was a- so your original MOS, was that not, has that been rolled into a different one now?

(JM): Yes. So Aviation Storekeeper just became Storekeeper and then after that they wanted to make it like a fancy name, so now it's Logistics Specialist, which I, which I think is better

to be fair because when you get out of the Navy, you know if you're seeking a career and they say "What did you do in the Navy" and you say "I was a storekeeper" that's not really...

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): [Laughter] But it's like okay so you minded a store? [Unintelligible]

(TI): [Laughter] So then you, I'm sure you would run into, well how is that, how was that, were you actually in the Navy? Cause that does, it sounds like a shopkeeper.

(JM): It does. Yeah very much so. And I, when I got out of the Navy, I wanted to run as fast and as far away from what I did in the military because it was not, you know I kinda fell into it but I wasn't challenged by it, I didn't really enjoy it.

(TI): Sure.

(JM): I was good at what I did, but you know, I, it just wasn't for me.

(TI): I tell people now, uh, I'm old Corps, because my MOS is currently, was last year was, uh, rolled into Public Affairs.

(JM): Oh.

(TI): So, Combat Cameras, Combat Videographers, that was rolled over into Public Affairs. So, you just say that you were old Navy,

(JM): That's right. We can be old and that's okay because old means wise. [Laughter]

(TI): [Laughter] Exactly, exactly. So, what originally prompted you to join the Navy?

(JM): You know I was from this super small town and I was like I need to escape, I need to escape, and I always knew that I wanted to join the military. So, I think I had nine [one, two, three] nine Veterans in my family, and so basically it was whatever recruiter called

me first. And thankfully it was the Navy recruiter. And I remember him on the phone, he was like "Jennifer, I want to talk to you about possibilities in the US Navy" and I was like "Yeah I'm game" and he's like "So what do you want to talk about?" and I was like "No I'm good" and he said "Yeah but we can talk about..." and I said "I'm a sure thing. You don't need to sell me on this. Let's just go to MEPS and just get this done. I am the easiest sell you will ever have. Let's just go sign this paperwork."

(TI): You knew you were going into the service you just didn't know what service, but you just knew you were going to serve at some point.

(JM): Yes, yes.

(TI): Got you. So, um, so what was the hometown, what was the hometown's name?

(JM): It's a small town, it's still pretty small. It's called Carbondale, Colorado. It's in between Aspen and Glenwood Springs. So, it's up in the mountains and at the time it had one stop light now I think it had three. But at the time it had one.

(TI): Nice, nice. Nice I can relate. I was born in a town called Hump Tulips, Washington. Which is a...

(JM): What was it called?

(TI): It's Hump Tulips, Washington.

(JM): Oh, okay. Hump Tulips. Wow.

(TI): Actual name, true story. Population 300. So, know, know a little bit about growing up in a small town with one or-

(JM): Right? [Laughter]

(TI): one or zero stoplights, so I think you and I can relate about wanting to get out.

(JM): Must escape now.

(TI): Of that hometown, so. So, when you were in, who was either a, your best friend or your greatest mentor?

(JM): Oh, gosh. I had a Senior Chief, um and it's funny I still text him to this day, I haven't seen him in 20 years but um, well probably less than that, 17-

(TI): Really?

(JM): Yeah, and I still text him and his name was Andy Anderson and he was a Senior Chief at my first command on St. Nicholas Island and he was just a Senior Chief who took care of his people. You know there's a lot of politics in the military and there's a lot of people jockeying to get ahead, and he was just somebody that, you know, to the detriment of his own career cause he, he said, you know I've pissed too many people off, I'll never make Master Chief and I'm fine with that. But I saw him-

(TI): Trusty.

(JM): Yeah, yeah, oh yeah. Oh yeah. And I saw him stand up for people time and time and time again and I just have so much respect for him. I had so much respect for him then, and I do today, you know looking back on what I know now. Just a true, a true chief, what you want in a chief that's what Senior Chief Anderson was.

(TI): That's great. That's really good to hear, really good to hear that those mentors that you know it was like your first enlistment, right?

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): And how you still remember those people and that you can still connect with those people today even though you haven't actually physically seen them in years.

(JM): Oh yeah. I remember I had gone over to his house one day, once I had gotten... I wasn't out of the Navy, but I was transferring to my next command. So, I had went over to his house just to say hi, introduce him to somebody, uh, that I was dating at the time and his kids were teenagers and we just talked the other day and he said his kids are 26 and 24, so it's just crazy, like his kids were older than I was when I went over to say hi to his family, so it's pretty crazy.

(TI): That's interesting. That's amazing.

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): So, you did mention that being a shopkeeper was challenging, what was the final straw that broke the camel's back, why did you finally decide to leave the service?

(JM): Oh, you know I never wanted to get out, um I ended up getting sick from the anthrax shots, and so-

(TI): Oh my gosh.

(JM): I was deployed in supportive Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, and we were all mandated at that time I believe by the Secretary of Defense, anybody who was deployed had to get a series of six anthrax shots-

(TI): I remember.

(JM): Yeah, and so after the first shot, I just felt like I had the flu and I didn't put two and two together, I just thought, you know, I'm not feeling well. And then after the second I went to medical and I said I think maybe I have mono; you know I don't know. And of course, mono, they call it the kissing disease, but people get it on ships because we're in close quarters-

(TI): Makes sense.

(JM): And, uh, you know after the third one I realized I don't know what's going on, but I never went to medical before and now I'm at medical all the time. I couldn't get up, I couldn't [Stuttering] I was just a mess. And when it came time for my 6th shot, I went to the senior medical officer, and I said please don't make me do this. And he said you know this is mandatory and I said I, just, I just want you to look at my medical records and just tell me if you think that there's any connection. He looked through it and he said you've really never been to medical prior to this, my medical record was very thin, and then by that time it was big. The size of a big book. And he actually signed off and said no, and I remember one of the Corpsmen kind of respectfully arguing with him, like sir this is required. And he said this is poisoning her, what part of no don't you understand? I signed it, it's the end.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): And once again, leadership. Like that was something where I saw leadership. Where he said yes, I understand that this is supposed to happen but I'm making, I'm making an executive call based off the fact that I'm a medical doctor and the directive is what the directive is, but I know that this is not good for her. So, I'm still not sure exactly what happened. I know when I got out the VA did not recognize that at the time, and I've since talked to people who got out and that is one of the things when you get out it says do you have any reactions to anthrax shots, to the burn-pits, to,

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): So now they recognize that it's a possible issue with some people. But if it wasn't for that I, I would have been in for 30 years probably. [Laughter]

(TI): Wow. So that's what you-

(JM): I didn't like my job, but I loved the Navy.

(TI): Sure, sure. But you, you go everywhere, right? So-

(JM): Yeah, yeah.

(TI): So that doctor, that Navy doctor, uh so the last episode John Buckley, he's the military relations manager for Koch Industries, and he was on the last episode and he was talking about uh, uh, never take no from a pissant. That was one thing he learned in the military.

(JM): [Laughter]

(TI): So that was like your doctor-

(JM): That needs to be a bumper sticker. [Laughter]

(TI): He didn't take no- [Laughter] Sounds like he didn't take no from a pissant.

(JM): Right?

(TI): That's good. So, how did you start your transition, how'd you finally get to LA, how'd you start your career?

(JM): Oh, gosh, so when I got out, I didn't really know what I was going to do. I knew that I could possibly be the first college graduate in my family on my father's side, um it-

(TI): That's cool.

(JM): The thought of going to school, it's kind of too good to pass up because you know they give you money every month to live on and they pay for school, so I have never intended-

(TI): [Unintelligible]

(JM): What's that?

(TI): You, yeah, you're getting paid to go to college-

(JM): Oh, yeah, so how can you turn that down? And I had never intended to go to college. I had joined the military thinking I'll probably never go to college, I'm not cut out for college, so I went to a local community college in Virginia, and thankfully they had a wonderful student Veteran's Affairs office because if you don't have a student Vet's office, a lot of Vets just get intimidated, they don't know what to do, they don't know the difference between quarter hour, semester hour, what you need, an associate's, a bachelor's, a master's, nobody knows-

(TI): Sure.

(JM): Cause that's not really what we do, so, um, you know when you first get out, you don't know these things, and yeah so I had started there, I went to school, I transferred to Virginia Wesleyan University, I double majored in International Politics and Spanish with a minor in History, and then I transferred-

(TI): Oh, wow.

(JM): I went to ODU, Old Dominion University in Norfolk, and I did a year of graduate work there and in International Politics and then by that time my husband had retired from the Navy and we relocated to Los Angeles, so I left for Los Angeles in 2011, that was

about one year into my master's program and the once I came out here I started a different master's program, International Politics was not for me. [Laughter]

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): And I discovered this after the first semester because as it, as an undergrad it's great because you're dealing with real life scenario, in graduate work it's all theory-

(TI): Okay.

(JM): And I was like oh no this is terrible, escape, escape.

(TI): [Mumbling] that's big brain stuff.

(JM): Oh, big brain stuff, yeah. So, I left and then you know, I came out here and I said, well, let me try this acting thing. I'd been doing a little bit of acting in Virginia and I'd worked on some non-union shows, I had about four commercials running, and so I said well, you know I'm the type of girl I like the big leagues, so let me come out here and see what happens.

(TI): Cool, that's awesome. ... So, you start your career out in LA in what year?

(JM): So, I actually started acting, probably my first credit was in 2005, but that was all in Norfolk,

(TI): Gotcha.

(JM): It's a very small market. And then by the time I moved out to Los Angeles, I came in 2011 and then I started acting again probably in 2013. So, I've been out here hitting the pavement pretty hard for about six years now.

(TI): Yeah you have. Everyone in the Veteran community I talk to they're like talk to Jennifer Marshall, she is a hustler. She is a hustler; she is a hard-working woman.

(JM): [Laughter] I think I'm; I think if you look up hustler in the dictionary there's a picture of me in regards to this. Because I always tell people, as Vets we will never be the skinniest or the most beautiful or buffest or the most well connected or the richest, like we will never be any of these things but one thing that you can do if you can just work your ass off and out-hustle everybody. Just use your work ethic that you had in the military because a lot of civilians don't have that. You know I've literally talked to people who had a meltdown in acting class over having to memorize three pages for the next day. Like a literal meltdown. And I'm like three pages, try being on deployment, try working for 18 hours a day, like it doesn't even compare, you know?

(TI): [Laughter] Yeah. You know I was looking at your IMDb, I mean you start out with one credit in 2012, then you had five in 2013, you have 15 credits in 2014, five in 2015, five in 2016, another seven in 2017, which includes Stranger Things, uh which uh, uh, all of us that knew you were excited when you, when you got that-

(JM): Mmm, thank you

(TI): Got that gig. Eight, eight, another eight in 2018 including a very good scene, a really great scene in Hawaii 5-0-

(JM): Oh, thank you.

(TI): I recently watched, I mean what a great way to showcase, um, the, the honor transfer.

(JM): Yes, yes. And I knew, Tanner, when I auditioned for that, um, it's funny because my agent had submitted me for some reason, I was not called in, which I was like, oh my gosh this is so me, this is Jennifer, as Lieutenant Colonel Bailey. I believe they rereleased the role, they saw people, they didn't like anybody, they rereleased the role, I got the script, or

the sides, which is the portion of the script that we audition with. I got it at five, but I was going out to eat with a friend of mine I hadn't seen in a year, Michael Schlitz, who is an ambassador for the Gary Sinise foundation, wonderful guy. And uh-

(TI): Gotcha.

(JM): So, I said okay I'm going to go home and work on this. So, it was nine pm and my audition was at 9:30 am the next morning and it was two hours away. So, I ended up, more than that in rush hour it's probably three hours away. So, I ended up leaving my house at 6:30 for a 9:30 audition and I went in and I knew like how would a civilian audition for this role because it's got the slow salute, it's got you know she's calling commands, and I knew it would be difficult-

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): For a civilian, so I thought as long as I have a good audition, my audition's going to be much different than a civilian's audition because I actually know what's going on in the scene. And so, for them to cast as a Joint Mortuary Affairs Officer in this scene, it was so important to me that this was done right, and it was done beautifully. And I'm very appreciative that they saw the benefit in hiring a Veteran who's an actor for this because it wasn't a random actor wearing a costume-

(TI): Sure, yeah.

(JM): I was wearing a uniform that means something. That's important.

(TI): Mmhm. And you saw in your, in the scene, you saw, you saw you know it was shot really well, the writing was well, um, how everything was handled in that scene was, you know if I was, when I watch it I took myself in as if I was a civilian watching, I feel like if I was, I

may have probably learned something about that role. Which I think is, is, the best thing-

(JM): Right.

(TI): Um, I just wanted to complement you on that, I think that was just a really, really, really, really great scene. So-

(JM): Thank you, thank you. And what was important to me about that is the military's less than one% of the population, so for a lot of people, when our brothers and sisters die abroad, it's someone else's war. It's a thing that happens, and maybe we know somebody, oh that's a shame, too bad, people don't really understand. And that ended up being one of the highest rated episodes in Hawaii 5-0 history. And that scene-

(TI): Oh wow.

(JM): In particular was tweeted out so many times and reposted, and I think it's because it brought the sacrifice home for the average American-

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): And people understood ... this happens. This is not just a TV show with a fake scene, this happens on a regular basis. And the comments that I got and the emails and the texts that I got showed me that people do care and it did make a difference. And it was touching not only for Vets who watched it but also for civilians who are far removed from that.

(TI): Hats off to you, that was just a really, really good scene. I hope, I hope the uh, I hope the compliments keep coming in. So, you got, uh, three in 2019 and, including Sony's A Dog's Way Home, uh I think that might be this generation's Homeward Bound.

(JM): [Laughter] It so is. It so is, yes.

(TI): [Laughter] And you've got a couple more projects that you gotta come up, that are coming up, and we'll talk about that in a sec, but before we do, I just, I want to ask you, what were some of the challenges as a Veteran, breaking into LA?

(JM): Well, LA is a very isolated and isolating place. So, without the Veteran community, I would have really struggled here. When I first came here, I didn't know of any other Veterans, um, you're basically trying to make headway, nobody wants to help, everybody's, you know, guarded with their information. It's a clique here and it's hard to break in so once I found my Veteran family and my Veteran community, it's strange because a lot of people say oh Los Angeles, you wouldn't think Vets live there, there's a huge thriving Veteran community here, huge. Um, some of my best friends are Veterans, I- I don't, my brothers both live far, one of my brothers live in Asia, my other brother lives in Colorado, so, some Vets who I have here who are friends you know are the aunts and uncles of my children, that's who they see, so, the Vet community is amazing, um-

(TI): How did you- how did you find that community-

(JM): You know it's weird because when I first moved here, I said there's got to be a Vet group or something-

(TI): Sure.

(JM): So, I looked something up on Google, nothing. It was just like the regular like VFW. And I went to the VFW and it was all a lot of older men, everybody was smoking, I just said w- this is not for me. And that is not indicative of all VFW posts, but it was definitely something where I didn't see a Veteran under 40 and I said, you know, this is not for me

I just need to keep looking. So, I kept looking and then it was probably a year later, a friend of a friend reached out to me and said hey, are you a Veteran? And, in Los Angeles, I wasn't used to hearing that in the military sense, so I said and acting Veteran? You know I've been in the business a while and he said no a Veteran and I said yes, of course I'm a Veteran, and he said, well there's this group called VFT, Veterans in Film and Television, and I think you'd be interested.

(TI): [Unintelligible]

(JM): So, I went to my first meeting, and I literally was that annoying girl, I sat down at every table and was like hi, I'm Jennifer, who are you?

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): What do you do? And I went to every meeting after that with the exception of one, and the one that I missed unfortunately, Stan Lee was our guest. [Laughter] But, I know, I was in Africa-

(TI): Aww.

(JM): I was like no, I love Stan Lee. So, I never got to meet him unfortunately.

(TI): Okay, I, I've got to toot my horn on that one because I got to interview him a year before he passed.

(JM): Oh what?

(TI): He, yeah, he, he, and it was for NASCAR, for NASCAR Digital Media, in the NASCAR building, it's the, it's connected to the convention center in Charlotte. At that convention center was a Comic-Con that had Stan Lee, and I told my boss, I was like, gimme a press pass right now-

(JM): [Laughter]

(TI): I'm gonna go interview this man.

(JM): Right now.

(TI): And, I mean I didn't wear NASCAR anything, I didn't have a NASCAR flag on my microphone, but I had my credentials. I went over there with a press pass, I waited for three hours while he signed every person's, uh, everybody else that paid, you know, eh, you know, he signed, took a picture with them. Then he took a nap, and I still waited.
And-

(JM): [Laughter] Well he was like what, 94 at the time?

(TI): Yeah, he was, yeah I mean I totally understood, and I had a camera guy and he understood too, like what this meant, and, and so we waited, and we finally got in there and we were able to do a, um, about a 10 minute interview with Stan Lee-

(JM): Wow.

(TI): And we asked some, and we asked some questions like which superhero would be the greatest NASCAR driver? And of course, he chose Tony Stark, Iron Man, cause, you know-

(JM): Right. [Laughter]

(TI): But, uh, we went back with the footage, and they did nothing with it. But I still have it, I still have it.

(JM): [Gasp] Well you still have it so who cares, you still have it-

(TI): Exactly, exactly. They didn't, it didn't go out anywhere, so-

(JM): Well, and he was a member of my American Legion post in Hollywood-

(TI): Was he?

(JM): And, yeah, he's probably the most famous member of recent note, and he, I was so bummed cause I never met him, and uh, yeah then when he passed, he's with his wife now and he's at peace and he, he's probably one of the most successful and revered Vets of all time, so I have nothing but respect for him.

(TI): Absolutely, absolutely. Who, who else, uh is, is uh, a mentor for you out there in LA as far as Veterans?

(JM): You know, when I first moved here, I, I had met someone in the group, um, Allen Petrashevsky, he's a retired Navy commander, he was a Top Gun instructor, he was a navigator on F-14s, um, a back-seater, and he had said, you know I've been here a long time, these are some of the pitfalls that I've been through, and I didn't listen to 100% of the advice because we all have our own paths, but I took probably 80-85% of that guidance and said okay I'm, you know I'm going to square my stuff away here, I'm gonna probably not do this, I'm gonna look into this-

(TI): Sure.

(JM): And that's what you need as a Veteran, when you come into the business, you need to connect to somebody who's been there done that because otherwise you're just trying to reinvent the wheel, you're wasting time, you're wasting money, and as Vets coming into the business, we don't have time to waste. There are people that have been here since they were 10, 16, 18, and you're competing against them.

(TI): Wow.

(JM): I know that there was a guest star that I was up for, and it was a role of a disgruntled Army Veteran, and, uh, she had quite the backstory, and I went in and I auditioned, and the casting director came out and held my hand and said you've got this. And people don't do that, it's very disconnected, it's like okay, thank you for your performance, bye, and you leave.

(TI): Mmm.

(JM): Everybody was pulling for me in there. And, um, they pinned me, which is basically they'll say we're trying to decide between you and somebody else-

(TI): Gotcha.

(JM): And they ended up casting this other actress. And I went back, and I looked at her IMDb, and she had a ton of guest star credits. So, of course, it comes down to a fiscal, uh, a fiscal decision. Okay this person is tried and true, and this was before I booked Stranger Things, before I booked Hawaii 5-0, Gameshakers, they looked at her resume and said, we know that she'll come on set and deliver. Jennifer, mmm, she has credits, but she doesn't have credits of this magnitude.

(TI): Mmm.

(JM): So, she, you know, she went, and she shot it, and I was just kind of, you know, crushed, like ugh, and I thought, if I had moved here at 18, I wouldn't be in that predicament. But then again, you know when I was auditioning with those lines, I knew what those lines meant, and I knew what it would be like to be kicked out of the military after 18 years-

(TI): Ugh.

(JM): With nothing to show for it. Like I felt that pain that the character felt.

(TI): You've probably seen it.

(JM): The actress, not so much. Oh, I've seen it, yeah. The actress not so much. So, I just think we need to realize that if we're coming here, later, we, you don't try to reinvent the wheel. Connect yourself to somebody, you know, humble yourself, don't say, well I was this rank in the military because that doesn't apply in entertainment.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): It just doesn't. I mean look at Adam Driver. Adam Driver was an E-2 or an E-3 when he ended up getting out due to his injury-

(TI): Exactly. [Laughter]

(JM): And he's in Star Wars, hello. There's people who are E-9s, O-6s, they get out and you know, they're struggling and they're doing extra work and they're trying to go somewhere, so-

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): One does not equate to the other at all.

(TI): Was it hard to find representation? Or, or, call, to get callbacks as a Vet, I mean from a Veteran perspective or from a female Veteran perspective? Was it, was there-

(JM): Well, no, for me it was not hard to secure representation because I, throughout my career I've worked for a casting office, I've worked with an agent, I've worked with a manager, so I know what these people expect. I always had said I am going to be the type of actor that I would want to represent if I was an agent. So, if somebody asks me to do something, my agent or my manager, there is no try. You either do it or you don't.

(TI): Mmm.

(JM): And if you don't, don't give them an excuse because excuses are like you-know-whats, and everybody has them and they stink. Nobody cares. So, I had always just been an actor who just does what's asked of her and that generally doesn't happen, you know. Actors are artsy fartsy people and they're flighty, and they're oh but I've got this show and I got this, and it's like okay but it's showbusiness it's not show-art. And if you don't provide your reps with the information that they need in order to adequately pitch you and represent you, you're really doing yourself a disservice and them. So, I never had a hard time getting reps, I had a hard time finding the right reps for me, and after I've been, after I was here five years, after I was here three years I found the right manager, after I was here five years I found the right agent. So now everything's perfect; I've got a great team, amazing, wonderful. And then as far as, you know, getting into rooms, into casting offices, that's difficult. It's very cliquey, it's who you know. Now once I'm in an office, uh, I tend to go in that office a lot, I tend to get brought back. But there are some offices it's almost impossible to get into in Los Angeles. It's almost impossible and I'm still struggling with that. Um, when I booked Stranger Things, my agent kind of used that as a pitch, and he was like, you know once it had been released because I shot it and I had to just be quiet about it for months and months and months, which killed me.

(TI): Yeah. [Laughter] I'll bet.

(JM): Which killed me. He could, he could like call and say, you know my client's on Stranger Things and then offices would see me, which was kind of infuriating because I was like I'm the same actress I was before this and I had booked, I had shot Stranger Things-

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): A long time before that, so I was frustrated, and everybody said you should be happy, and I said I'm happy don't get me wrong but I'm still the same actress-

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): Still the same person.

(TI): Yeah. Hm. Jennifer Marshall, dropping truth bombs.

(JM): Yep.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): It's true. Well it is, it is an industry where you have to be careful because if you rock the boat, like people don't want to take a chance on you or bring you on set.

(TI): I mean there's, I mean it doesn't matter where you go, it seems like there's politics everywhere.

(JM): Mhm. I do want to give a shout out though, about something you talked about earlier.

(TI): Sure.

(JM): Uh, so A Dog's Way Home, I'm not sure if you know but all of the people in the scene who were playing Veterans with the exception of Ashley Judd and [inhale] who is the other guy who's in, with the exception of two people, all of the people playing Vets are actually Veterans.

(TI): Wow. I did not know that. That's very cool.

(JM): Yes.

(TI): [Unintelligible] So, what was the impetus behind that? Who, who made that decision?

(JM): So, I'm not really sure. John Papsidera's office cast that, and I'm sure the director clearly, um, had you know, input into that, but they, they flew us up to Vancouver. So, on the

paperwork in Canada, you have to specifically say why you're using American actors because they're like no, use Canadians and they said well we can't find American actors up here. So, my friend brought us, he's a Navy Veteran he, um, an American Navy Veteran, he actually lives in Vancouver, so they didn't have to fly him up, but Cezar, um, they flew a bunch of us up. It's mainly American Veterans and then Evan is a Canadian Veteran. And that to me just meant so much. Like you, you're allowing us to take part in the telling of our own stories and I appreciate that. And one thing that often frustrates me about Hollywood is, you know, we are so good about recognizing transgender community, people of color, Native American community, like we realize that people should be involved in the telling of their own narrative.

(TI): Absolutely.

(JM): And it's kind of insensitive-

(TI): Absolutely.

(JM): Yeah, and it's kind of insensitive to say we're going to do this movie about transgender people, and what, we have no transgender writer, we have no, nobody to talk to. We're just going to tell their story. That's not okay. But for some reason, it seems to still be okay in Hollywood to tell Veteran's stories without our input.

(TI): Sure.

(JM): Now is it getting better? It is, but there are still scripts that come to me and I'm like what is this script, this is insane.

(TI): Who wrote this?

Commented [a2]: There was no last name here so I could only guess at what she was saying

(JM): And I'll say who wrote this? And I'll say, do you have a Veteran in the writing room, do you have a Vet- no, no, no, no, do you have a Veteran advisor, no, no, no, no, you need one, trust me. Because if you're going to make money off of us, make money off our community and off of our stories, please invite us to be involved. Please.

(TI): Eh, you know, eh, you might wanna, if you want that community investment, you might wanna get a Veteran in the room. You know.

(JM): Absolutely. There's, there was a show recently, I'm not gonna put them on blast-

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): But there was a show, and they release their trailer, and there were glaring errors in this trailer.

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): And Marines in particular when after this show. And whoever was running the Twitter ended up blocking a bunch of people-

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): Rather than just saying, okay how can we fix this? Because-

(TI): Was it the uniform? Was it something about the uniform? Yeah.

(JM): The uniforms were insane. Were insane, and that's the thing is, you just need a Veteran advisor. I know a ton of advisors who are great. I've advised for the VA for a few of the PSAs that they've had.

(TI): Really?

(JM): I've advised on an HBO show. Like, you just need an advisor so they can push you in the right direction.

(TI): Your, uh, your commercial, your radio commercial's probably going to be on your episode.

So- [Laughter]

(JM): Oh really?

(TI): Yeah. I still use those for the podcast.

(JM): Oh, great.

(TI): So, if you, if you-

(JM): Which one?

(TI): Uh, there's, one's about Veterans in different times, in different eras. So-

(JM): Oh, yes, yes, yes.

(TI): I think you said you were a logistics in, uh, in the Navy, on that one. So-

(JM): No, I think, I think I was a random voice in that one. I think there's one where I say, Medic,

Kandahar, Afghanistan-

(TI): Yes! That's it-

(JM): Yep-

(TI): That's the one-

(JM): Now I think the commercial that it was attached to, the commercial that aired on TV, I

was actually me.

(TI): Yep.

(JM): I think for that voiceover, I was a random Medic in Kandahar.

(TI): Yep.

(JM): I've never been to Kandahar, but...proudly representing the Vets who've been there.

(TI): Absolutely. Yeah, we still use, we still use all that media, so-

(JM): Oh, that's great.

(TI): When I, when this podcast was, uh, was handed over to me about a month ago, I, that, one of those pieces of media actually came up across my desk and I was like, Jennifer Marshall, she'd be great-

(JM): That's funny, that's funny that you recognize my voice with one line.

(TI): Oh absolutely. It's easy, cause, cause, you know, again, I, you know, part of the running joke of the past couple episodes is that I'm still in my in-laws basement while I'm transitioning here to DC. So-

(JM): [Laughter]

(TI): I'm with my father-in-law a lot, and I always have those conversations about the New Day USA, so I hear your voice a lot-

(JM): Right.

(TI): And then, so, I'm listening to the radio ads here for the podcast, and I'm like, that's Jennifer.

(JM): [Unintelligible]

(TI): So, then I'm just like, oh my god, so like, I go through the archives, and I was like, okay, Tim never interviewed Jennifer, cool. Reach out to her. So, [unintelligible]

(JM): Tim did inter, Tim did interview a couple of my, a couple of my friends, and I always just think it's great to see, I just love podcasts like this because it shows Veterans who are doing well, and you know once again the media has kind of taken this narrative that we're all one way, we're all this, we're all that, and I think that's a disservice to all Veterans because there was a time definitely in my life where I was really, really

struggling, but we need those good stories of Vets who are doing well in order to help our brothers and sisters who are struggling.

(TI): Absolutely.

(JM): And I think that when people say all Veterans have PTS and all Veterans have MST and all Veterans, then that makes us unemployable as a community, undesirable. And so, I always try to challenge, you know, the narrative and say, you know, well there's a lot of Vets who are doing well, there's a lot of Vets. Does that mean that we can't take care of our brothers and sisters? Absolutely not, it's actually better that many of us are doing well so that we can help those who are not doing well.

(TI): Absolutely. I was, uh, I was talking some, some friends that are, that are in my community out here in DC and I actually wrote a paper on this. I was like you know what I like, you know, for every thank you for your service movie, you know what I would like to see is someone like, uh, in Modern Family, Al Bundy's character.

(JM): [Gasp] Amen. Ed O'Neil.

(TI): Ed O'Neil, he's just, he's just a Vet, he's just a Navy Vet.

(JM): I, I bring up this example all the time because he's a full, he's a fully functioning person whose Veteran status only comes in from time to time, it's shaped who he was, but he, that is the perfect example of, he's, he's a Vet, and he's living his life, and he's doing what he does. And that's what we need as representation. Yes.

(TI): [Unintelligible]

(JM): And that, we need more of that, because look around, you know we have Veterans in all echelons of leadership in our society. We have Veterans who are parents and coaches

and community leaders and business leaders and politicians. And so, to focus and say, well, you know, perfect example, my husband had put in his resume, this was a couple years back, and the hiring, he reached out to hiring and said you know what's going on, I keep hitting this, this wall, and she, to her credit because she could have gotten fired for having this conversation with him-

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): She said you know there was a lot of talk when we were looking, um, when we were looking at resumes and people just think that you know, you don't know how to talk to people, you'd be yelling at people, you'd be telling people to do pushups. And my husband was like what?

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): We're like this is something that only happens in boot camp. But these civilians thought that he couldn't work in HR, that he would just go in and start ordering people around and put them in pushup position. Now don't get me wrong, there are plenty of people who probably need to be in pushup position. [Laughter]

(TI): Sure, sure.

(JM): In general life. But it's just that sort of there where that's what people think Vets do. Now, granted that's a, that's a crazy scenario that most people probably don't think, but that's an actual thing. Somebody thought that.

(TI): Wow.

(JM): They're so disconnected they thought that was a possibility.

(TI): Wow.

(JM): It's insane. He ended up taking everything Navy off of his resume except for, he put everything in civilian lingo, except for at the bottom it said 23 years of, of honorable service in the United States Navy. Navy was only mentioned on his resume once.

(TI): That's a shame. So, you mentioned VFT, that's now, that's now VME, right? They-

(JM): Yes. Mmhm.

(TI): They rebranded. They opened up a New York office too, as well.

(JM): They did. Um, we've had, you know it's been a struggle with some of the other chapters because some many of the people live in Los Angeles, and it's really hard to kind of manage DC and New York, they just don't have the number that we have. Cause Los Angeles, huge.

(TI): Yeah, yeah.

(JM): Huge. I would say at least 50% of our numbers, if not more, live in Los Angeles.

(TI): So that's how, but the, VME, VFT, that's how I kinda connected with you-

(JM): Mmhm. Right.

(TI): Cause Paul moved out to Charlotte. Uh, Paul used to be the director for short [unintelligible] out in LA and came out to Charlotte. And I was like well, I guess you and I are the Charlotte chapter. [Laughter]

(JM): [Laughter] That's right. That's right. And, and Paul, Paul is amazing, I mean Paul's a perfect example of getting out of the military, starting a career that has nothing to do with the military, and excelling in that. Because the things that he was directing, they were not military movies.

(TI): No.

(JM): And a lot of people think that, you know, Vets get out, we only do military type things. He was doing horror, he was doing, I mean you name it. He was, he was doing a bunch of differing things.

(TI): [Unintelligible]

(JM): Yeah, yeah.

(TI): So, yeah now him and I are both in DC. We haven't reconnected yet, but, uh, that might be a future episode as well. So-

(JM): Definitely.

(TI): So, let's talk about what you're doing, uh, this year. Uh, I was looking at IMDb, because of course that's the, uh, one stop shop for seeing what-

(JM): Yes except, IMDb does not list things that you have signed a non-disclosure agreement on-

(TI): True.

(JM): So, there are five projects that are coming out that I have not been able to talk about.

Actually, IMDb generally doesn't list them until they've aired. So-

(TI): Gotcha.

(JM): It's so hard.

(TI): So, you've got five that you can't talk about. I'm excited to hear eventually.

(JM): Yeah. I have five that are coming out and I did a pretty controversial movie about three years ago that is still in post-production, but it's coming out. And, yeah. I had turned down a lead on that movie because it's really controversial and one of my friends had taken a lead role, and I said, you know aren't you worried about the blowback, and she

said, well, I'm at a point in my career where it's make or break, and I said I think I'm good taking a supporting role. Cause it could be really good press or it could be like what on earth?

(TI): [Laughter] Okay. Well let's talk about one that we can talk about.

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): Squadron 42.

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): It's your first video game. Is this your first video game?

(JM): It's my first and hopefully only video game. [Laughter]

(TI): Really? That, that, bad of an experience?

(JM): No, I mean it was great. I worked with one of the top directors in the business, but it was so difficult, so all of you gamers who don't appreciate what mocap people-

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): Go through, please appreciate it.

(TI): Oh, you had to do motion capture for it?

(JM): Yep. It was motion capture, and the character is my face, is my body, is everything. So, I flew out to London, I shot this game and it is really, really difficult. And for people who have never watched mocap behind the scenes, you need to do it, because we were getting into this spaceship that was made out of two-by-fours and it really was like not a spaceship-

(TI): [Laughter] Just imagine the spaceship.

(JM): And you have to imagine everything. Oh my gosh, you have to imagine everything like you're four and then the scripts are so technical. I, uh, I'm a mechanic in the game, and so I'm like a spaceship mechanic, and so they're coming to me and I'm like this, you know nerdy girl who knows everything about what needs to be fixed. And the dialogue is literally insane, so, I'm going through all of this and it's like, okay we're gonna do another one, and then we're gonna tweak it a little bit, and so you have to have really great memory, you have to be super versatile, and you have to be able to move really well, because mocap is very, very specific. Um, it's, it was a wonderful experience, I wouldn't change it for the world, but I will probably never do that again. [Laughter] Again.

(TI): [Laughter] So, you, but you got to interact with other actors and actresses in the game.

(JM): Yeah, I mean that was great-

(TI): Were you, really quick before I, before you, you explain what that was like, let me just give a, the listeners a rundown of the cast for this game.

(JM): Yeah, yeah.

(TI): Gary, yeah, I mean I saw the trailer, it looked amazing. Gary Oldman, Mark Hamill, Mark Strong, John Rhys-Davis, X Files Gillian Anderson, uh, the Onion Knight himself from Game of Thrones Davor Seaworth-

(JM): Liam Cunningham, yep. [Laughter]

(TI): [Laughter] And Golem Andy Serkis,

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): Even farther down the row there's names like Henry Cavil Superman,

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): What's it like to be on a project like that, though, even though, you know, motion capture not as fun as that was, what's it like to be on a project with that type of a rundown?

(JM): Uh, no pressure, right?

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): No pressure. Uh, I mean, it was crazy, so most of the people listed, I didn't shoot with, but I saw them on set.

(TI): Sure.

(JM): And it's one of those things, it's like I, [sigh], like I felt on Stranger Things. Like you look around and you say, is this real life? Is this real life, how did I get here, what is going on? It's very surreal. I mean I'm a huge Game of Thrones fan,

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): Game of Thrones fan, so when you go on set, the Onion Knight is there, you're like, what, who, what is this life, who is, who am I, who is this person? It's the weirdest thing. You know when we raise our right hand at 17, 18, 19 years old and swear to support and defend the Constitution, you never think you're going to end up where you end up. And that game, the reason I bring up the military thing with that game, is that casting process was covered in a show called Cast Me and um, actually, the, the, person who cast that video game, who cast me, is a former Marine, who's now a casting director.

(TI): Oh wow.

(JM): So, he brought me in, and there were three of us who were like in the final running. They had four thousand submissions, hundreds of auditions, about 20 people at the call back,

and they highlighted the stories of three of us who were auditioning for this. And I actually think one of the girls who auditioned with me was probably a little bit better, um, totally gonna be honest with you, Natasha, she's really great, uh, we've auditioned for similar things in the past. But I think my story was better. You know, she's an actress, she came here, my story was better for TV. So, you know, I think it was probably a toss-up, clearly if I was much worse, they wouldn't have cast me.

(TI) So this was a, this was a TV show that you guys were on?

(JM): This was a TV show, it was highlighting this casting director and the work that he did, so this was an episode of it. And, um, so that's how that came about, but it was an amazing experience, and when I came back and I said who the director was and that I had worked with him and he does all this mocap stuff, everybody in the mocap world was like oh my gosh you worked with Chris. Yeah, they were just blown away. Yeah.

(TI): [Laughter] That's really cool. Do you know when that game's supposed to come out, it looks really, like I said the trailer looks really cool.

(JM): I shot that game in 2015,

(TI): Oh my gosh.

(JM): So, yeah, so it was supposed to come out in 2017, got pushed back to 2018, got pushed back to 2019, and now it looks like it's going to be 2020 release,

(TI): Okay.

(JM): But I mean what goes into it is so, so ridiculous.

(TI): Look at the budget of a video game compared to the budget of a movie, it's like ridiculous.

(JM): Oh, it's insane, and they, I believe they had raised 100 million dollars on crowd funding for that game. So, it was really, really insane, uh really, really wonderful, and I guess we'll see. I'm not, I never get anxious about stuff, like when's it gonna come out, cause there's so many things as an actor, I've shot movies from five years ago that still have not come out-

(TI): Oh, wow.

(JM): So, that's where you want to get in your career, where you're booking enough so you always have things in post-production that will be coming out years later. Because when you look at credits on IMDb, like 2015, I think it's 2015 I have a lot of credits, or 2014, one of those years.

(TI): 14, yeah 15.

(JM): I did not shoot all of those things in 2014, I shot those things in 20, 2012, 2013, 2014, and then they all happened to come out then because of post-production.

(TI): Makes sense.

(JM): So that, that's what you want to do.

(TI): And like you said, that's not counting your hosting gigs, your, I mean-

(JM): Commercials,

(TI): Commercials, you've done comp-, you've done a lot of stuff in that industry outside of acting in film and television shows, so.

(JM): Definitely. I've been, I've been very, very blessed, um, I've been very blessed. And honestly, if Vets are thinking about going into entertainment, first of all, know that you will be broke and poor, and accept that.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): Cause that's just the way that it is. And two, never feel like you're too good for things. You know it's like I'm too good, I'm too good. I'll give you a perfect example, um, I'm not sure if you're familiar with the Drinkin' Bros Podcast, it's a huge, huge podcast.

(TI): Absolutely. That was one of the impetuses, reasons I wanted to get a podcasting, was that show.

(JM): Okay, yeah. So, so, it just goes to show, what can lead to what can lead to what. So, I just, um, I just did an episode of Drinkin' Bros Podcast that should be out pretty soon, and the whole reason that I ended up meeting those guys, there was an Oscar gifting suite that one of my friends had said, hey they're looking for people, this was probably four years ago, to kind of be with stars and take them around the Oscar gifting tables and carry their bags, and I said, well sure I'll probably see some crazy stuff, so I'm all about it.

(TI) [Laughter]

(JM): So, I went and I did that and I, you know carried bags like, okay, how can I help you, but it was cool because you got to see all these people, and I had just kinda moved here, and so I did that. I ended up meeting a producer at that time who, um, hired me for red, um red carpet gigs, cause he said you know, you're so effervescent, I want to bring you in, and you can interview people. So, I started doing that for Red Carpet Report, I started doing red carpet stuff, and then I met Ross Patterson on a red carpet and I was one of the only hosts who interview him because a lot of the hosts were like this guy is crazy

and they were just kind of backing away on the red carpet. And I loved it, I thought he was hilarious.

(TI): [Laughter] Yeah.

(JM): So, they ended up using that interview in a movie that's coming out of theirs, and then Ross, I ran into him the other night at JT's birthday party, and so he said, hey, he said uh, why don't you come out and, and come be a guest on Drinkin' Bros. And I was like, are you serious, Drinkin' Bros is amazing, yeah.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): So, so it all started from, yes, I'll carry your bags at an Oscar gifting suite.

(TI): That's a great piece of advice. You know, if you, you know Rick Robinson was my first interview, our listeners can listen to him in the archives [Rick Robinson episode link: https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/57434/btb_rickrobinson/], but his advice, he was a, uh, primetime Emmy award cinematographer, first AD, worked in Hollywood over 30 years, uh was on the Dangerous tour with Michael Jackson, a lot of good stuff in that episode, but he talked about getting a Corvette, this is how he said he broke into the industry, 57' or 58' Corvette, and just paid off the guard so he could get on the lot. And that's just how-

(JM): Oh my gosh, that's hilarious.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): I mean that would never work nowadays, but that's ingenious back then.

(TI): Right, right? I was like, I was like, he, I was like, how did you just, cause he was like oh I just walked on the lot at Warner Brothers. I was like how did you just walk on the lot at Warner Brothers, and he was like, well, you know it was before 9/11, and I kinda-

(JM): Yeah.

(TI): Had a 57 Corvette, everyone just wanted to talk about it. Oh my god.

(JM): Do you, do you remember Steve Guttenberg from Police Academy movies?

(TI): Yes.

(JM): So, he, uh, walked onto the set and he pulled chairs from something and he opened up an office on some lot. He just walked on the lot and opened up an office. That's pretty ballsy.

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): I mean you can't do that now, clearly, but that's pretty ballsy. You just take life by the horns and do what you do.

(TI): That's it. So, I, uh, I think what I was getting at is, uh, you know what Rick was saying is, just, like you said, be humble and he worked a lot for the camera department for free-

(JM): Of course.

(TI): Just to get into the union, you know, so.

(JM): And that is something that, I get it, people come here, and they say, I really don't want to work for free. Listen there are times I will still work for free. If I think it's an amazing script, and it, er, they're students at AFI, or USC and they're broke students but they're incredible and they're amazing,

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): I'll work for free. I will, because the Duffer brothers, who you know are the executive producers of Stranger Things, they were at Chapman College, and they did student films at Chapman College. Everybody's a student, everybody starts somewhere.

(TI): Sure.

(JM): So, I'm not saying come here and do everything for free, but you know, there are sometimes you have to pay your dues. You have to do what you're going to do. And I worked for, I worked for free a lot that first year, first year and a half,

(TI): Mmhm.

(JM): And I think that my career has done very well because of that because I never thought I'm too good for this, I'm too this, I'm too that. I was just like I'm here to learn and I'm humble, and at the end of the day, actors, we say lines for a living-

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): You know the real heroes are people who are deployed, emergency room doctors, police officers, firefighters. I get paid to say words, and I'm very, very fortunate, I'm very, very lucky, but alternately, you know, the fact that I only have to work two to four days a month because acting does pay very well, I'm able to volunteer for causes that are important to me and I'm able to work with the Veteran community. That's part of acting that I love and that's part of the reason I probably will never give up acting because I have so much time to dedicate to causes that I love.

(TI): What is, if you were to say one right now, what's one current Veteran nonprofit, uh, in the Veteran space that you're following or supporting or doing something for?

(JM): So, I am an ambassador for Congressionally recognized award-winning nonprofit called Pinups for Vets, and we visit Veterans, we dress up as World War two era pinup girls, very modest, but very colorful, and we dress up-

(TI): Very tasteful, very classy.

(JM): Yes, very much so, and we go, and we visit Veterans in VA hospitals, nursing homes.

We've visited over 12 thousand Veterans at their bedside, and we've donated over \$60,000 of rehab equipment to the VA centers. So that's something that's very important to me because a lot of times we go into rooms and those Vets haven't had visitors in days, weeks, months, sometimes not at all. So, to get to connect with these vets and sometimes they think oh these are pretty girls and good-looking men who are coming in, that's nice, but once we start talking to them and they realize we're Veterans too, that connection is there immediately. Wait, you're a Vet? Oh my gosh what did you guys do? We share stories, we give hugs, we sign calendars, we take photos. That to me is a very impactful organization because it shows, it shows Veterans that their service is not forgotten, that it's appreciated.

(TI): Yeah, you're seeing a lot of the, um, a lot of the newspaper stories come out, of, hey this Veteran didn't have any family-

(JM): Yep.

(TI): Come out and support him, so it's, the Pinups for Vets is a really good programs for, like I said, for those Vets that are in VA hospitals that have no family, that's, that's, you know you, to think about those men and women, that's a really great cause.

(JM): And honestly, some of the Vets that I love meeting with the most are older female Veterans, because our older female Veterans paved the way for women like me to serve. And they didn't get their due respect at the time. It was a really hard road for them, so, to connect with them, I just spent time with a 94-year-old Navy Veteran, um, up in one of the nursing homes in Ventura County, it was wonderful talking to her. And she was such, such a tough old broad, I loved her stories, I loved it.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JM): And to be able to just thank her and say how you made this possible for women like me, it's important, I think it's important work.

(TI): Jennifer, is there anything that I haven't asked that you, or that I'm leaving out that you think is important to share?

(JM): Yeah, I think, I think that you know we have some issues going on in our Veteran community, and I think that the main thing that I'm seeing over and over again, and I've worked with several Veterans' nonprofits, I ran a Veteran nonprofit, we have a problem with transitioning. And, you know we have two to three months as Soldier, Sailor, Marines, Airmen, and Coastguardsmen to learn how to become that, and then we have five days in transition assistance program to get out. For many of us, some people didn't have jobs before they went in. I came in at 17, I had a job, but I'd never paid a mortgage or anything like that.

(TI): Yeah.

(JM): So, we have a hard time when we get out. What I say to people if they are getting out or if they've just gotten out or if they're planning to get out down the road, you have to stay connected to the Veteran community. You have to volunteer somewhere. You don't get out of the Military and then that feeling goes away of wanting to give back and wanting to help. You have to stay connected, you have to volunteer somewhere, and you need that comradery. Especially for people who are either really invested in the way that the Military is, or people who've served 20 years. You can't get out, be surrounded by a bunch of civilians, and expect not to feel like you've, you don't fit in. I've dealt with this all the time. I got out in 2004. I've continued to surround myself with Veterans cause it's important, because they understand.

They understand me, and I haven't had that luck with many civilians. So, for those of you who are struggling, reach out, go to a legion, go to a post, Team Red White and Blue, Team Rubicon, find a local nonprofit where Veterans are, where Veterans are volunteering. And if you go to the Legion and say, hey, there's nobody young here, okay great, you be that first young member, you go out and recruit other members. We need the Legion, we need it, so go out and make that post the young, fun post. The Hollywood post, pos 43, it started with one young Veteran, and he brought in a ton, and now it's mainly young Veterans. We have Veterans from World War two to Vets who just go back yesterday. You have to surround yourself with members of the community and immerse yourself in the community, especially if you're struggling.

[00:58:16] Music

(JM): We're here for you, reach out.

[00:58:22] PSA:

Man one: I was a Gunner's Mate, Tonkin Gulf.

Woman one: Logistics, Ramstein.

Woman two: Medic, Kandahar.

Narrator: As a Veteran, it doesn't matter when or where you served,

Man two: Infantry, Camp Pendleton.

Narrator: Or what you did, the VA has benefits that may be useful to you right now. See what

VA can do for you. To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit www.va.gov. That's

www.va.gov

[00:58:51] Music

(TI): Medic, Kandahar, that was her. That was Jennifer also in that ad. Um, again, thanks to

Jennifer Marshall for taking the time out of her extremely busy schedule to have that conversation. And you can see exactly how busy she is at www.jennifermarshall.com . On there is all her social media, her Twitter, Instagram, uh if you want to follow her on anything that she's doing, and she is doing a lot out there in Hollywood. So, this week's Veteran of the Week is Colonel William Andrews. William served from 1980 to 2010 and took part in Operation Desert Storm, Operation Southern Watch, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the war in Afghanistan. William applied and was accepted to the Airforce Academy where he received a four-year college education and pilot training. He experienced combat for the first time in the Persian Gulf War where he was tasked with leading a squadron of F-16s to strike Iraqi targets throughout Operation Desert Storm. During the heaviest aerial bombardment, William flew multiple missions a day for 13 days straight. On one mission William and his squadron were called to provide close air support for US Special Forces who had been pinned down behind enemy lines. As a result of their precision, William and his team were able to successfully drop cluster bombs against targets within 100 yards of the US forces saving the lives of eight soldiers. On February 7th, 1991, one day before the end of the Gulf War, William's F-16 was struck by an Iraqi surface to air missile, while engaging retreating Iraqi forces. As a result, William was forced to eject over the battlefield, landing in the middle of a Republican Guard battalion. Despite being at enemy gunpoint and having broken his leg, William grabbed his radio and ordered his squad to take

evasive measures, saving them from being struck as well. After being taken prisoner by Iraqi forces, William was transported around Kuwait in Iraq and narrowly avoided being hit by US bombs. After eight days in captivity, William was returned to the US where he received treatment for his injuries. Undeterred by his capture, William returned to flying as quickly as he was allowed, and again flew combat missions during Iraqi Freedom and the war in Afghanistan. William ended his career serving on the Joint Staff at the Pentagon and retired as a Colonel in 2010. After retiring, William became a professor at the National Defense University. During his service, William earned two Distinguished Flying Crosses, a V for Valor, a Purple Heart, a POW medal, and the Airforce Cross for Heroism. Sadly, William passed away from brain cancer in 2015 at the age of 56. We honor your service William. That's it for this episode of Borne the Battle. Again, if you would like to contact the show directly, you can reach us at podcast.va.gov (<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/podcast/>). Go ahead and send us an email, let us know how we're doing, how we can improve the show. If you have a comment on a previous episode, I will read that on the air. If you would like to follow us on social media, we are at The Department of Veterans' Affairs on Instagram (Instagram web link: <https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/>), Facebook (Facebook web link: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/>), YouTube (YouTube web link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBvOzPLmbzjtpX-Htstp2vw>), Twitter (Twitter web link: <https://twitter.com/deptvetaffairs?lang=en>); Dept Vet Affairs, Dept Veteran Affairs, US Department of Veterans' Affairs, you will always find us with that blue check mark. And as always, the best place for VA news is on our blog VantagePointblog.va.gov

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(VAntage Point blog web link: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/>). Thanks again for listening, see you next week.

(Text Transcript Ends)

