

12-10-2014

From the Air Force to Ice Cream, Navigating a Transition out of the Service

Allison M. Loy
Wright State University - Main Campus

Will Davis
Wright State University - Main Campus, william.davis@wright.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/wyso_veterans_voices



Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Radio Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Loy , A. M., & Davis , W. (2014). *From the Air Force to Ice Cream, Navigating a Transition out of the Service.* .

This Multimedia is brought to you for free and open access by the Local and Regional Organizations at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Veterans' Voices on WYSO by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact library-corescholar@wright.edu.

From The Air Force To Ice Cream, Navigating A Transition Out Of The Service

by Allison Loy

Today we begin a new, local series called Veterans' Voices. You will hear military veterans from the Miami Valley interviewing their fellow veterans. The project is a collaboration with the [Wright State University Veteran and Military Center](#).

Vets have a lot in common, no matter when they served and one issue they all confront sooner or later is re-entry into civilian life. Air Force veteran Allison Loy is a Wright State student now. She separated from the military 15 months ago and knows the challenges first hand. She interviewed fellow airman Lieutenant Bobby Walker, who's making his transition out of the Air Force in a few weeks.

Lieutenant Bobby Walker isn't your average ice cream man. Wearing his happy yellow bowtie and his ice cream scoop at the ready he asks passersby if they'd like a sample of Fronana. "It's an all-natural, dairy free alternative to ice cream that I make out of bananas," he explains. But this isn't his day job. Bobby is a behavioral scientist in the United States Air Force. At least for now he is

"It's actually really hard to become a behavioral scientist right out of the Air Force Academy. So, to have that opportunity, I was pretty fortunate I guess."

In August of 2014 Bobby found out he is being involuntarily separated from the Air Force because his career field is over manned. This is called Force Shaping, and it's meant to restructure personnel based on the needs of the Air Force.

"And I think that, you know, if I were retiring or choosing to separate, my life would have been better planned and prepared for the next step but having been force shaped makes it a little bit different," he says.

When I was getting out, although I chose it, I compare it to getting a divorce, and here I'd committed fifteen years of my life to the Air Force and separating from that and leaving that was huge and very emotional. Even though I wanted out, I remember, they had the military and family life counselor person, the people that you can just go, drop in, talk to, they don't even write anything down, and I started talking about all the stuff that I was feeling really apprehensive about and she said, "Yep, that makes sense, it's not abnormal to feel that way."

I asked Bobby to reflect on what he was feeling about his separation from the Air Force.

"Anxiety and bouts of depression, these were things that I had never pinpointed before or really knew what it felt like. Especially the anxiety. That overwhelming and incapacitating feeling in my chest and in my mind where it just feels like I can't do anything, and I just don't want to do anything all day. And then that just comes down to talking to somebody about it, and then you realize this is what anxiety feels like. It overtakes you, and that's something that you have to work through and I think the best thing to do is exactly like you did and just go talk to somebody about it. Stress and anxiety and depression are all things that are in the normal realm to talk to a mental health professional about, so do it. I guess is what I have to say for other transitioning people in similar places in their lives, absolutely. They can help you make a plan and get things on track so that the transition is smooth and I won't say it'll be easy but there are plenty of resources [and] to find the resource that works for you is a good idea."

Bobby will be officially separated from the Air Force by the end of the month. He doesn't know exactly what's next. But he started his Fronana business with the future in mind.

"Maybe Fronana will take off. I'll go full time into this, we'll see how it goes."

For more information on counseling services available to veterans, [visit the resource page at the Wright State University Veteran and Military Center website.](#)

Veterans Voices is part of [Veterans Coming Home](#), a public media effort to support veterans, made possible by the [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#).

Photo Caption: Lieutenant Bobby Walker

Photo Credit: Allison Loy