

## ***Not Every Man in Uniform is a Navy SEAL!*** **Developing Military Characters to Steal Readers' Hearts**

*Presented by Rogenna Brewer, AJ Brewer, Geri Krotow, Heather Nickodem, Jo Anne Pinney and Taylor Reynolds*

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### ***Part 1: Creating a real military character***

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- ❖ What career best suits your character?
- ❖ What kind of background might your character have?
  - **Rank:** *How much responsibility did s/he have?*
  - **Age with rank:** *What age did your character leave the military? How long did s/he serve?*
    - **Education:** *How educated is your character?*
    - **Women in the military:** *How tough is your female character?*
- ❖ Does your character need deployment experience?
- ❖ Does your character need full-time active duty experience, or part-time Guard and Reserve time?
  - Reasons to use Guard/Reserve background:
    - Can cause conflict in job and personal life to answer the government's call
    - Guard and Reserve members tend to be part of the community: small town stories
    - Members can go inactive by not completing annual training requirements
    - Can access base facilities even when not on duty
- ❖ Was your character wounded or have job-induced injuries before leaving the service?
- ❖ Does your character have criminal background?
- ❖ What did your character do when s/he wasn't in uniform?

### ***Part 2: Where to seek information***

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- ❖ Seek the lowest level of support
  - Local base public affairs shop will give tours, answer general questions, send speakers to your group
  - Guard/Reserve units are more willing to help
  - Recruiters can supply information about careers and training
  - Veterans' organizations (example: American Legion, VFW, IAVA, American Women Veterans)

❖ Online resources

- Army: <http://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/browse-career-and-job-categories.html>
- Navy: <http://www.navy.com/careers/>
- Marines: [http://www.marines.com/main/index/winning\\_battles/roles\\_in\\_the\\_corps](http://www.marines.com/main/index/winning_battles/roles_in_the_corps)
- Air Force: <http://www.airforce.com/careers/>
- Coast Guard: <http://www.uscg.mil/top/careers.asp>
- Photos/Videos: [www.defenseimagery.mil](http://www.defenseimagery.mil); <http://www.dvidshub.net/>

❖ National assistance, service Public Affairs Offices

- **Army:** Will consider working with uncontracted authors on a case-by-case basis. New York Army Public Affairs, Master Sgt. Betty L. Thompson, [bertha.l.thompson2.mil@mail.mil](mailto:bertha.l.thompson2.mil@mail.mil), 212-784-0112. Check for updated contact names at <http://www.army.mil/info/institution/publicAffairs/ocpa-northeast/contacts.html>.
- **Air Force:** New York Public Affairs Office handles author requests, though you *must* be contracted. For full instructions, go to <http://www.afoutreach.af.mil/booksupport.asp> and fill out the request form on the page. You'll need to return it with a contract or letter of commitment. Main number is 212-784-0147; email requests to [Big.SAF@us.af.mil](mailto:Big.SAF@us.af.mil).
- **Navy:** Will generally not support a project until you are in possession of a publishing letter of intent. Visit <https://www.chinfo.navy.mil/chinfo/> and follow the link to the Navy Office of Information East. You can then fill out a "Request for Support" form and submit it to [navinfoeast@gmail.com](mailto:navinfoeast@gmail.com).
- **Marine Corps:** Headquarters Marine Corps, Division of Public Affairs, <http://www.marines.mil/ontherecord/Pages/contact.aspx>, is the point of contact for all book projects. Please email [ontherecord@usmc.mil](mailto:ontherecord@usmc.mil) or call 703-614-4309.
- **Coast Guard:** Requires a letter of intent or at least a letter of interest from a publisher. However, in some instances they do arrange interviews or other limited research support for authors who are earlier in the process. The support they provide will vary based on operational demands and what kind of access/support the author is seeking. Contact Nadine Santiago, Community Relations Division, U.S. Coast Guard Office of Public Affairs, 202-372-4646, [Nadine.A.Santiago@uscg.mil](mailto:Nadine.A.Santiago@uscg.mil).

❖ Last resort: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)