

Jeffrey L. Keller, ACE
United States Army, Retired-88M3PF7 (20 years active)

Jeff Keller is the Technical Services Director for Burns Pest Elimination in Phoenix, Arizona, an Associate Certified Entomologist, and a Past President of the Arizona Pest Professional Organization (AzPPO). A successful career by any measure. But before his prestigious career in pest control, Jeff served his country for 20 years in the United States Army as a, Transportation Operations Specialist, Airborne & Pathfinder, and AIT Instructor/writer.

Jeff's deployments include Operations Just Cause in Panama, Desert Storm in Iraq and Kuwait, Operation Sea Signal in Cuba JTF 160, Restore Hope in Somalia, Operation Sea Signal JTF 160 for a second time in Cuba, to NATO Joint Service as a Peace-Keeper with a Russian Rifle Regiment and SME instructor for Bosnia, and 4 Humanitarian missions. Jeff Keller's breadth of experiences and service to his country transitioned seamlessly into a career in pest management; however, Jeff didn't exactly plan it that way.

"When I was on my last 120 days – in the TAP program for exiting soldiers, I saw in the help wanted section of the newspaper an ad for an exterminator – AZ Exterminating Company. I wanted a break from government jobs, applied, and did an interview on the spot," said Keller. "They convinced me that I could go far in the company if I applied myself. I was offered and accepted the job right then and there after hearing that I could go far—fast in the industry. The funny thing that I remember is that the gentleman said, 'What's your wife going to say when you go home and tell her that you're a bug man now!?' I still remember that moment until this day. She was skeptical at first but came around when she saw how quickly I found success." That opportunity provided Jeff the steppingstone he needed. Within 2.5 years, he became a service manager and then rose to a branch manager shortly after that.

Discussing what advice Jeff would give to someone looking to make the transition from the military to pest management, Jeff asserted, "Trust your abilities and apply the skills that you developed from the military. You picked up something without knowing it. Go with your gut. I'd absolutely recommend that Veterans work in the pest management industry. Every organization is structured. The training and support you get in the pest management industry are phenomenal."

When asked, how has your military experience shaped your everyday life? Jeff replied, "It makes you proud to be an American and taught me how to interact with people. We believe the same goals most of the time. It made me understand people better. What does it take to convince a customer to pay X amount to solve the pest problem? You got to know how to communicate effectively and know what makes them tick. Additionally, being a leader in the military is similar to being a leader in this industry. Veterans will find that if they are able to motivate and lead soldiers, they will use those same skills to motivate employees."

If you are a Veteran interested in joining the pest management industry or are already in the pest management industry and would like to connect with Jeff please email him here: jkeller@burnspestelimination.com