

SAVING LIVES WORLDWIDE

Army vet got a late-life MBA and now counsels organizations on rescue plans



Retired Army Lt. Col. Scott Hume, now director of security operations at Boston-based Global Rescue, "overlooking the Point Salines runway in Grenada where the Rangers jumped in" in 1983

Sometimes things can go wrong on a major scale.

Think sudden storm on Mount Everest, avalanche on South American ski slopes, safari disaster in Africa. For Americans caught in the thick of it, quick, competent aid is essential.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Scott Hume helps to ensure that aid arrives.

As a 20-year infantry officer, he saw his share of urgent action. Today, as director of security operations at Boston-based Global Rescue, he's part of a team that assembles emergency support for a range of circumstances worldwide.

Good work if you can get it.

"I like the people I work with. I enjoy doing what I am doing. I feel like there's a future for me," Hume said.

But getting here wasn't easy. It took some schooling, and an unsavory detour through the corporate world.

CONTRACTING BLAHS

When the Egyptian government collapsed, Hume sprang to the aid of a client with about 100 people in danger of being trapped on the ground. Using organizational skills he learned in uniform, he helped to get them out in time.

"We had done the planning. We had been through the decisionmaking processes. We saw it coming, we sent guys in early, and when it finally went down, we got everyone to a safe location," he said. "They were all on a chartered plane the next day."

Hume didn't anticipate this kind of work when he left the Army. He first took a job with a defense contractor working alongside his former military colleagues but soon found that there was no career track there, no future direction.

That led him to enroll as a late-life MBA student. "I could have been the father of all my classmates," he said. But the degree took him into the corporate world, just as planned: He got recruited into a Fortune 500 insurance company. Yet life in a necktie wasn't all he had imagined. "I didn't know what I was getting into. It wasn't a very dynamic organization," he said. "I came into work every day and just kind of kept the ship on course."

A year and a half of that boring routine was more than enough for a man accustomed to action.

GETTING IN THE DOOR

Hume had come across Global Rescue while doing a research project in school. When he soured on corporate life, he returned to the company, sending in a résumé — even though the firm had no active job listings. Sometimes, he said, you just have to take a shot.

"Define what you want to do, find a place that you think is interesting, and tell them what you can do for them. There's a lot of stuff going on inside a company besides what's on their job board," he said.

The cold call worked, and Hume found himself in a 200-person firm that was just the opposite of his corporate gig. "There is a lot of change. Every day is different," he said. Just as in the military, "you get tasked to do thousands of things that have nothing to do with your branch. It's all about getting things done."

His military background helped, but Hume said he would not have made the grade without his academic training to back it up. "It took a huge piece of my military skill sets over here, but that alone would not have made me successful," he said. "By the time I came here I had some business experience in my back pocket."

Hume doesn't just know how to manage logistics in a crisis; he understands what it means to make money. "It's about relationships, contacts, agreements and how all of that impacts the ability to serve the client, which impacts profits," he said. "Every interaction affects business."

That basic business background in turn helps him to get the rescuing done, when the clients need it most.

"The things our clients think are going to be hard - the logistics, the actually getting to the airfield - those are not the hardest parts," he said. "The hardest part is understanding their own decision-making process. Who can really decide whether to abandon the factory? What are the circumstances that would justify making that decision? We help them to do all that planning."

Hume is not just a safety consultant - he's a business consultant, guiding clients through those tough decisions. That combination has proved a winning mix.

"I feel like this is something that has a purpose, he said. "I just feel like I fit."