



NEWS RELEASE

MILITARY SERVICE PREPARED PUBLIC LANDS GUIDES TO INSPIRE NEW ADVENTURES

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During a recent team-building exercise at the Public Lands store in Pittsburgh, Pa. the guides were randomly paired up with one another and challenged to see which team could pitch a tent the fastest.

There was a clear winner in the tandem of Brian Sirnic and Steve Kessler, who shared a similar trait: they are both veterans.

Our Public Lands guides are knowledgeable about all things outdoors and many of their skills were learned, strengthened and honed in the military.

"The military taught me a deep respect for the outdoors and provided me the tools necessary to navigate and survive even in some of the harshest conditions," said assistant store manager Jesse Kindelberger. "Since being discharged, I have continued to push my limits in the outdoors and seek new growth."

Jesse Kindelberger helps a young explorer navigate the climbing wall at Public Lands.

Kindelberger was a wheeled vehicle mechanic in the Army who can do anything required of him within the store. Whether it's gearing up explorers for the 35-foot climbing wall or tuning up a bike to conquer a trail, Kindelberger

and his team learned many of the skills and attributes needed to be successful while serving our country.

Sirnic said that traits he learned while in the Army have helped him extend the life of the gear he now uses as a bike tech at Public Lands and also work well within the greater team.

"Working to maintain your equipment and the use of tools always help in other mechanical fields," said Sirnic, who credited his experience in the service with opening new worlds and finding new places to explore. "Though more important is the communication skills learned and leadership skills."

Brian Sirnic, pictured, and Steve Kessler are veterans who can pitch a tent in record time.

Serving in the military also instilled in our guides a sense of empathy for their teammates and problem-solving skills needed to understand and work with one another in their shared mission to celebrate and protect public lands for all.

"I feel like my military experience and training helps me relate better to my team at Public Lands," said Kessler, a crewman cannoneer in the United States Marine Corps who was inspired to enlist after the Sept. 11 attacks. "It's important to know your team and what they are capable of if you want the team to be successful and to keep the business running smoothly. It's also important that your team knows that you value them individually and that they can feel comfortable talking to you about any concerns they may have."

Being a veteran is not a one-size-fits-all experience. Each is a unique person who learned vital lessons from their experience.

"I think everyone should know that every veteran is different," said Kessler. "We have all had unique experiences, and even those of us who have experienced things together may have different reactions to it. Many veterans have a difficult time adjusting to regular civilian life after their experiences in the military and are often misunderstood."

The one thing they all have in common is a shared passion and love for their country and the natural world.

"Being a veteran means being part of a close group of individuals with similar experiences and a shared value for a greater purpose," said Kindelberger. "A purpose to support, defend, and bear allegiance to the country we love, a nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

On Veterans Day and every day, Public Lands sincerely thanks each of our veterans for their service and commitment to protecting our country and the land we share, together.