

**My Transition from Military Police to Cybercrime Professional**

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### **Abstract**

This paper outlines my transition from being a Military Police Officer to becoming a professional in the field of Cybercrime, combining my background in law enforcement with cybersecurity. Starting with my foundational experiences in the U.S. Navy, I share how military discipline, leadership, and problem-solving shaped my approach to security. As I transitioned into civilian life, I pursued a Bachelor's degree in Cybercrime at Old Dominion University to bridge the gap between practical and foundational academic knowledge. Throughout my journey, achievements such as membership in the Tau Sigma National Honor Society, earning industry-standard certifications, and working as a Cybersecurity Consultant Intern have furthered my career path. Viewed through McAdam's theory of narrative identity, this path showcases both professional and personal growth. Looking ahead, I'm excited to continue safeguarding assets, leveraging a foundation built on service, flexibility, and a genuine dedication to security.

## **My Transition from Military Police to Cybercrime Professional**

On a quiet night onboard a U.S. Naval ship, I stood watch with my gaze sweeping across the horizon. I couldn't help but reflect on whether this was what I wanted to do for the next 15 years before retiring or what else existed beyond the physical vulnerabilities in front of me. I was responsible for safeguarding multi-million-dollar combat resources, ensuring no tangible threats breached our perimeter. Yet, what lingered in my mind were the growing intangible threats in this world, the unseen and new digital dangers out there. No alarms blared to warn me, but a deeper thought on what else life had to offer grew with each mission I completed while deployed as an Embarked Security Intelligence member with Coastal Riverine Group 2. As I encountered this shift in security dynamics from the physical to the virtual world, my determination to defend against cyber threats motivated me to finish my contract and pursue a Bachelor's degree in Cybercrime from Old Dominion University, bridging my experience as a Military Police Officer and Security Operations Manager with cybersecurity principles. Transitioning from defending physical assets to combating cyber threats felt like a natural progression. My goal remains the same: to confront and neutralize threats, whether tangible or digital, with commitment.

## **Early Foundations in Japan**

I started my security journey in Japan, where I was enlisted in the United States Navy as a Patrol officer and Training Officer from 2015 to 2018. Here, I am outlining not only security maintenance but also proactively contributing to the development of the security force in the future by training personnel on force protection procedures. The fact that we maintained a near perfect readiness rate within the patrol unit informed me about the need to plan methodically in handling any security matters. When overseeing cases and collecting evidence for legal cases, I gained the analytical approach that would be useful when completing my cybersecurity courses.

**Leadership Development in Bahrain**

My first major career progression was my promotion to Security Operations Manager in Bahrain from 2018-2019. Supervising security measures in complex operations, I was also in charge of safeguarding millions of dollars in combat resources and communication equipment. The management of \$500,000 in communication equipment was another way of appreciating the integration between physical security and information technology. This role further showed me that security is not just a product of a fortress approach but a blend of conventional security tools and technological security tools.

**Advanced Security Operations in Italy**

As the Patrol Supervisor in Italy, from 2019 to 2021, I was able to advance my knowledge of security. Supervising 15 personnel, I ensured that there were no cases of security breaches by strictly following standard operating procedures and conducting regular threat analysis training. This position required a manager and someone who could skillfully navigate through changing security environments and threats.

**Academic Pursuit: Bridging Practice and Theory**

The process of leaving the military service behind and entering the civilian world as a student at Old Dominion University was a significant step in my career. Choosing a Bachelor's degree in Cybercrime was not only my career move but also the natural evolution of the security profession into the digital environment. Networking, programming, digital forensics, and interdisciplinary writing classes have helped as the academic aspect complements my practical knowledge in security.

Tau Sigma National Honor Society membership represents my goal for academic achievements, as well as the CompTIA Sec+ CE certification, showcasing my professionalism in the cybersecurity field.

### **Current Role: Applying Military Precision to Cyber Defense**

My current position as a Cybersecurity Consultant Intern at the Coastal Virginia Center for Cyber Innovation (COVA CCI) represents the integration of my military background and cybersecurity education. My work with the City of Suffolk, Virginia in partnership with Valor Cybersecurity and COVA CCI to guard municipal networks in Suffolk has been an invaluable hands-on experience with cybersecurity knowledge. Conducting risk assessments for the City's SQL servers and reviewing the security record for data storage procedures for classified information comes directly from my military experience in risk management and designing safe operating procedures.

This role has assured me that all the values I learned when I was in the military, such as paying attention to details, conducting threat analysis, and being systematic in protection, are similarly essential in cybersecurity. While analyzing the weaknesses in the phishing aspect or strengthening security measures against DoS attacks, I often switch to the techniques used while following military security strategies.

### **The Intersection of Experience**

Analyzing my experience through the framework of McAdams' narrative identity theory, I understand how each role has influenced my professional development and self-identity (Smith, 2017). Joining the military provided more than the technical wealth of security and leadership skills. It was the confirmation of how I can remain focused and make life-altering decisions when things are not going as planned. The transformation from Patrol Officer in Japan to

Security Operations Manager in Bahrain is the kind of sequence McAdams considers a “redemptive sequence” (Smith, 2017). Now, at Old Dominion University, as I pursue a degree in cybercrime, I am able to gain the necessary technical knowledge, especially in the evolving world of cybersecurity. Blending professionalism through hands-on application, on one hand, and theoretical and scholarly knowledge, on the other, creates a distinct professional identity. The discipline that comes with serving in the military and the technical knowledge that comes with studying cybersecurity have combined given me a well-rounded foundation in both virtual and physical security. This blend of experiences has not only shaped my career path but also defines who I am as a security professional today.

### **Future Trajectory**

As I progress toward completing my degree, I see my role in cybersecurity as a continuation of my commitment to protection and service. The skills I developed in the military, such as leadership, strategic planning, and efficient execution, are now being directed toward safeguarding online resources and emerging technologies. My experience working as a Security Operations Manager has given me a global outlook on threats, while my current internship provides me with exposure to the application of cybersecurity solutions. My transformation from a military police officer to a cybercrime professional is not just a career change but a progression in how I can contribute to security in a world shaped by technological advancements.

My journey highlights challenges and threats in both physical and digital security. This is an indication that as advanced forms of cyber threats emerge, I can be useful in the study of cybercrime prevention. Discipline, leadership, and analytical thinking that come with military service and education, added to the growing knowledge of cybersecurity, create the foundation

for future work focusing on the protection of digital assets and infrastructure, in an increasingly digital world.

**Reference**

Smith, E.E. (2017) *The two kinds of stories we tell about ourselves*. Available at:

<https://ideas.ted.com/the-two-kinds-of-stories-we-tell-about-ourselves/> (Accessed: 19 November 2024).