

PUBLICATION

BakerSalute Spotlight

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Baker Donelson launched BakerSalute, the Firm's veterans' employee resource group, in 2023, and is proud to spotlight one of our own veterans – Frank Toub – in this edition of *Diversity Matters*. Tom Barnard, BakerSalute co-chair, interviewed Frank, an associate in our Nashville office, about his journey to enlisting to serve our country and transitioning to law school. Frank's story is an encouragement to go for your dreams as there is no single path for everyone.

Frank was born in Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania, which is near Philadelphia and Reading. He grew up as an Eagles and Phillies fan and attended Penn State University. He was an Electrical Engineering major and a member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, graduating in 2014.

After college, he went to work for Georgia-Pacific, doing project management and controls engineering, and managing process automation. It was during this time that he started thinking about what he would be doing if he wasn't concerned about making money. He had grown up during the era of 9/11 and had always thought about being in the military. He decided to make a change to do something he had always wanted to do, without the traditional pressure of going to college, getting a job, and making money.

He visited a recruiter and in 2017, he joined the Army. He enlisted, but as part of his contract, he would go to Officer Candidate School (OCS) because he had a college degree. He went through basic training and straight to OCS at Fort Benning (now Fort Moore). From there he went to the Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course and joined the infantry branch.

His assignment was to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served until 2020, before leaving the Army and heading to law school.

Frank notes as a key lesson from his Army experience, "There is nothing you can't do if you put enough time and energy into it. You are capable of a lot more than you think you are; you need to get started to see what you can do."

Frank also notes a classic "Army moment": "We were out doing a platoon training exercise, I was on a gun team, setting up a patrol base in between missions. We were eating lunch, rehydrating, and we noticed suddenly it had gotten really quiet. We heard nothing. We looked at each other – did they forget about us? It turns out the rest of the platoon had left for the next mission and left us behind. We had no idea where they went – I called the platoon trainer (who was the person evaluating the unit) – and said, "Sir – I think they left us behind." He responded, "I know, I'm waiting to see how long it takes them to figure it out!"

Frank says the thing he misses the most is the comradery, adding that there's nothing like going through a "bunch of crap" as a group. He also misses how different all the people were, with totally different backgrounds and experiences. He met some of the best people and that will always stick with him.

Frank's comments about the impact of having diverse perspectives and backgrounds through experiences is an excellent reminder that our differences make us stronger.

