

Michael Murphy's Inspiring Journey Into Cybersecurity: A Path of Service and Resilience



Michael Murphy's journey has been anything but linear. Born in California and raised in Colorado, he grew up with a strong sense of discipline and service—his father worked for the Department of Corrections (DOC), and Michael would later follow in his footsteps. But before stepping into a correctional facility, Michael embarked on a different path: the U.S. Army.

Joining the military at a young age, Michael worked in satellite communications, immersing himself in the technical aspects of networking. However, his service was cut short when he sustained an injury, leading to his medical retirement. Returning to civilian life with an uncertain future, he found himself following a practical route—working for DOC, where stability and benefits provided security for his growing family.

Twelve years into his role, Michael knew he wanted more and spent years trying to determine which path to take next. He dabbled in business, criminal justice, and even pre-med courses, but none of these industries felt like home. In pursuit of a new profession that brought him life and purpose, he rediscovered his love for computers—something he had first explored

as a teenager when he built his own PC to optimize gaming performance. That old passion sparked a new dream, and he set out to make it a reality.

Education

- Cybersecurity Bootcamp (400 hours)
- Six industry certifications including:
- CompTIA A+
- Network+
- Security+

Career Path

- Started in U.S. Army in satellite communications
- Worked at Department of Corrections for 12 years
- Completed cybersecurity bootcamp
- Pursuing advanced training at Syracuse University

Key Experience

- U.S. Army Satellite Communications
- 12 years at Department of Corrections
- IT Security Compliance
- Veterans advocacy

A Leap of Faith Into Tech

Michael's transition into cybersecurity didn't happen overnight. While still working full-time at DOC in Cañon City, Colorado, he discovered a pilot program through the VA that covered the cost of attending a cybersecurity bootcamp. Over the course of six grueling months, he committed himself to 400 hours of intense training to become a penetration tester. The experience solidified his belief that he had finally found his calling.

Michael's learning didn't stop there. He pursued various certifications, earning six industry-recognized credentials, including CompTIA's A+, Network+, and Security+. He took advantage of every opportunity available to him—never paying out of pocket for his education, thanks to veteran-focused sponsorships and scholarships.

But balancing a demanding full-time job and his cybersecurity studies was no small feat.

There were long nights, early mornings, and endless problem-solving sessions. Despite the challenges, Michael refused to back down, driven by a deep-seated determination to build a better future for himself and his family

Giving Back to Those Who Served

While working toward his own career transition, Michael found another unexpected purpose: helping fellow veterans navigate the often-overwhelming bureaucracy of the VA benefits system. Having fought for ten years to receive the disability benefits he was entitled to, he knew firsthand how confusing and frustrating the process could be for those navigating it online.

Michael began offering guidance to others, free of charge, first through online forums like Reddit, where thousands of veterans sought help with their claims. What started as a few messages turned into something much bigger—he became a go-to resource, providing step-by-step advice on how to organize medical records, submit claims, and appeal denials.

His reach extended beyond the online space. At work, he found himself assisting fellow colleagues and even incarcerated veterans, helping equip them with the tools and knowledge to access the benefits they had earned. Though he never intended to become an advocate, his own struggles had prepared him to bridge the gap for others, making him an invaluable asset to the veteran community.

A Future Built on Passion

Michael's journey is far from over. With each new certification and hands-on experience, he moves closer to transitioning into a full-time cybersecurity role. He gained experience as an IT security compliance analyst through an internship and is furthering his expertise in an advanced cybersecurity training program through Syracuse University.

Through it all, his wife and family have been his biggest supporters. Whether it was picking up extra responsibilities at home or cheering him on through his studies, their unwavering belief in him kept him going during the toughest moments.

Looking ahead, Michael envisions a future where he continues to learn and grow in cybersecurity, always embracing new challenges. But above all, he wants to remind others—especially veterans—that opportunities exist for those willing to seek them out.

“There are so many opportunities out there—especially for veterans. I haven't paid for a single certification or training program because I took the time to look for sponsorships, grants, and scholarships. If you're looking for a change, keep your eyes open. There are ways to make it happen. Life is what you make of it.”

Michael Murphy's story is a testament to perseverance, adaptability, and the power of lifelong learning. From military service to cybersecurity, from overcoming personal struggles to helping others, he continues to forge a path that not only transforms his own future but also lifts up those around him.

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