



SUMMER 2012

U.S. VETERANS MAGAZINE

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Dennis Haysbert
A Voice for Veterans



A man in a black t-shirt and khaki shorts stands next to a tan and black dog sitting on a green plastic crate. The background shows a parking lot with yellow bollards and green trees.

NICK
WHITE

OFF THE LEASH

by Karen M. Sorrell

“As a veteran, a lot of business owners and business execs are very happy to talk to you because they are happy to see that you were able to make a transition out of the military and do something successful with it.”

Nick White

W

hen Nicholas White was in the Marines, his fellow soldiers relied on him. When he was in the Secret Service, the President relied on him. Now, the warm bodies relying on him are the furry, four-legged kind.

White is the founder, owner, and operator of Off-Leash K9 Training, a company that specializes in private lessons, dog behavior consultations, and teaching owners to understand why their dogs do the things they do—all with the aim of creating a stronger bond between the owner and dog. Based in Northern Virginia, Off-Leash K9 Training is the highest rated dog training business in D.C., Virginia, and Maryland, with 5 locations. White's plan is to continue expansion and ultimately develop a franchise of Off-Leash K9 centers across the U.S. The company has earned the endorsements of numerous celebrities, including UFC World Champion Jon "Bones" Jones and 8-time Mr. Olympia Ronnie Coleman.

White didn't just happen into the dog training business. Not only has he spent hours learning and practicing powerful techniques that can train regular household dogs to display the same level of obedience as military police dogs—his YouTube videos show how he's done it with dogs ranging from an eight-pound Mini Doberman Pinscher to a 140-pound Bernese Mountain Dog—but he also had to teach himself how to build, market, and operate a successful business. All that in the face of family and friends who told him he was crazy to quit a secure government job in a wavering economy.

White's interest in dog training began early—he first practiced his skills on his childhood German Shepherd, Deputy, teaching him basic commands and tricks. Later, during intense combat duty as a Marine in Iraq, White's interest in training methods grew as he witnessed the precision-trained dogs and their handlers carrying out life-saving acts, locating bombs and drugs and taking out bad guys. By the time he was a Secret Service agent for the Obama and George W. Bush administrations, White was spending his off-time studying everything he could find about dog training. He had no formal training, but relied on techniques learned from Marine and Secret Service canine handlers, books, CDs and DVDs, seminars, and trial and error tactics gained by working with hundreds of dogs. His hard work and passion paid off when he was able to open his own obedience school, which has reached \$250,000 in sales.

The trainers who work for White gained

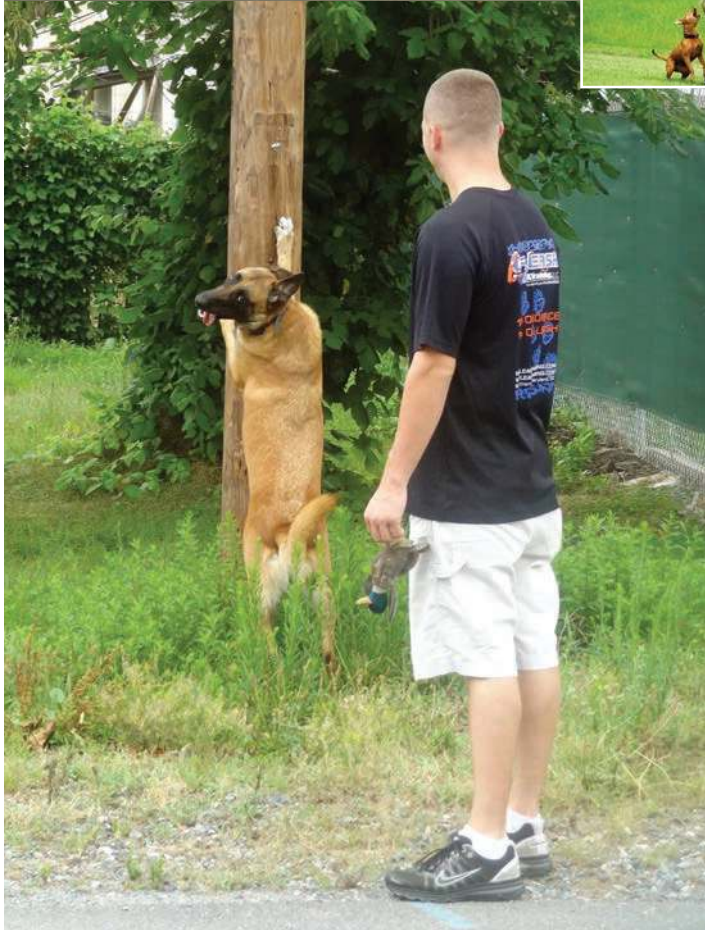


their training experience while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Secret Service, and private sector. White and his trainers use marker training, but specialize in using e-collars to train all dogs to have the same level of obedience as most police and military working dogs. In fact, they believe that 98% of all dogs can be trained to have amazing obedience, regardless of breed, size, shape, or age. Their goal is to teach dogs a level of obedience that allows them to be 100% off leash and 100% obedient, and they are so confident that they guarantee their results. Off-Leash K9's aim is to foster confidence and happiness in both owner and dog: "What we enjoy most is seeing dogs that have spent their whole life on a leash, now being 100% Off-Leash

and obedient! We thrive off of seeing the joy in both the dogs' and the owners' faces when they have mastered a new command without the restriction of a leash."

Through his passion, hard work, and dedication, this decorated veteran has combined his love of dogs with strengths and skills honed in combat to create a thriving business that benefits both man and his best friend.

Recently, White took time to talk with *U.S. Veterans Magazine* about the obstacles he faced on the road to starting his own business, and to provide advice for fellow veteran entrepreneurs ready to realize their own dreams of owning a business.



USVM: What have been your great successes in life?

NW: I've been fortunate to have quite a few successes in my life so far. After graduating from high school, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps in which I did really well. I was rapidly promoted to the rank of Sergeant in an infantry unit. Also, I received a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal while in Fallujah, Iraq. Then, I did executive protection for celebrities after getting out of the Marine Corps for approximately 1-1/2 years. During that time, I was hired by the U.S. Secret Service and I served on the Vice President's Detail and the President's Detail.

USVM: What obstacles did you face when trying to start your business?

NW: The biggest obstacle when it comes to starting a business is having faith and belief in yourself. So many friends and family around you may tell you that you are crazy for doing it, you're wasting your money, you're wasting your time, that the economy is horrible right now, and it's the worst time to start a business, etc. So it took a lot of self-confidence and belief in myself that I could truly make it work despite everything and everyone going against me.

USVM: Where did you turn for information and financial support?

NW: To be honest, that was one of the hardest things—I did not turn to anyone or anything for financial support. I was in the Secret Service when I started the business, so I was using every dollar I had left over and applying them to things I needed for the business (website, business cards, brochures, advertisements, products, logo, etc.). There were a lot of rough times when I was completely broke and my bank account was at zero, or even in the red.



I just kept reassuring myself that, one day, it would all pay off and be worth it. I wanted to do it all on my own and not rely on anyone else or owe money to anyone else.

USVM: What advice would you give to other service members trying to start their own businesses?

NW: Talk to a few current business owners; get advice. It's free advice from people who have done what you are trying to do. Also, I listened to, borrowed, and downloaded a lot of motivational and business CDs and videos. Those helped me greatly. A lot of them gave me the motivation to keep going, and the business CDs and videos gave me a lot of great information that I was immediately able to start applying to the business. I did all of this without any business degree, whatsoever. Using the CDs

and DVDs saved a lot of time and was much, much cheaper!

USVM: As a veteran, did you feel you were welcomed into the business world, or were there a lot of hurdles for you to jump over?

NW: I did and still do feel greatly welcomed into the business world. I think, as a veteran, a lot of business owners and business execs are very happy to talk to you because they are happy to see that you were able to make a transition out of the military and do something successful with it.

USVM: What would you say is the best and worst part about owning your own business?

NW: The best part about owning a business is that it is very financially rewarding and it gives you the opportunity to wake up and do something that you love every day. You create your schedule and your hours. The worst part about owning a business is there are no such things as "days off" anymore. The calls, meetings, emails, and texts are non-stop. As an employee, when you are off, you are off. When you own your own business there is ALWAYS something going on. It takes a ridiculous amount of work-ethic to run a successful business. You have to be prepared to work 70+ hours per week for a great while, initially.

USVM: At what point did you realize you were successful?

NW: I realized I was successful when I truly felt financial freedom. When I was not checking my bank account every other Friday to see what my balance was. The funny thing is, I tell my friends, "I knew I was successful when I could walk into Best Buy and there was nothing in there that I wanted, because I already had everything I wanted."

USVM: Do you have a favorite motto or quote that you live by?

NW: I have a ton of quotes; I am huge into motivation and success. Here are a few of my favorites: "Running a business is easy; running a successful business is hard." "Sleep is for people who are broke," by 50 Cent. "When you want success as bad as you want to breathe, THEN you will be successful," by Eric Thomas. I am a huge fan of taking risks—you have to, in order to be successful! One last quote: "The ship that plays it safe will never make it far from the shore." I think people are the same way!



Considered an expert in the off-leash dog training field, White has published a book entitled "Raising the Perfect Dog: Secrets of Law Enforcement K9 Trainers." For more information on Nicholas White and Off-Leash K9 Training, LLC, visit www.offleashk9training.com.