

Born from Tragedy, Built with Purpose

One Veteran, One Opportunity, One Community at a Time



On December 1, 2022, **Major Sean P. Leahy, USMC** died by suicide after battling the invisible wounds of war. A decorated Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, Sean was in the middle of transitioning from active duty to a civilian career in manufacturing. But time ran out. Major Leahy was the brother of Unturning Steel (UTS) founder, William (Bill) Leahy.

His death added another name to a devastating statistic—over 125,000 veterans lost to suicide since 2001—and highlighted the urgent need for better transition pathways. It also marked a loss to U.S. manufacturing, which faces a historic skilled labor shortage with over 500,000 jobs unfilled nationwide.

UTS believes these two crises are connected and are building the solution by bridging military experience with industrial opportunity.

Russ Parrish Consulting is excited to partner with UTS in their work to successfully transition our military members into their civilian roles.

Description: UTS is a groundbreaking 501c3 Non-profit that unites Manufacturing and Service Members through Mutual Aid. The mission is to combat veteran suicide, employ transitioning service members and revitalize the U.S. manufacturing workforce—one veteran, one opportunity, one community at a time. Veteran suicide rates are nearly double those of civilians. UTS works with government agencies, academic institutions, manufacturers, and professional societies to build scalable solutions that support veteran success and strengthen America’s manufacturing workforce.

Dual Mission: At UTS, they tackle two national challenges at once:

- **Veteran Suicide and Transition Stress:** UTS supports service members during the most vulnerable phase of their journey—the transition to civilian life—by providing community, certainty, and purpose.
- **Manufacturing Workforce Crisis:** UTS delivers reliable, trained, and mission-ready talent to American manufacturing, reducing costly workforce gaps and supporting long-term operational excellence.

What: Through the DoD SkillBridge program, veterans are matched with U.S. manufacturers to fill essential roles in operations, maintenance, and engineering. The partnership between SkillBridge and UTS offers active-duty service members:

- Education and training in reliability and operations best practices
- Professional certifications through academic and professional partners like SMRP
- Career opportunities with American manufacturers
- 3–6 months of real-world experience embedded at host companies
- One-on-one coaching and mentorship from expert reliability professionals
- These participants fill vital roles in operations, maintenance, engineering, and leadership—at no cost to the veteran or the host company.
- They also complete a reliability project as part of their curriculum, contributing directly to their host’s bottom line.

Timeline: Past, Present, & Future

- 2023-2024 – UTS completed two successful pilot programs.
- 2025: Serve 11 service members across the U.S. manufacturing sector.
- 2026: Expand program reach and strengthen national partnerships.
- 2028: Train and place over 200 veterans annually into high-demand industrial careers.

Operational Partners:

- DOD SKILLBRIDGE
- University of Tennessee R&M Applied Engineering
- Society of Maintenance & Reliability Professionals (SMRP)
- Traction - Gold Star Sponsor
- Eljen Corporation - Silver Star Sponsor
- UE Systems Inc. - Bronze Star Sponsor
- Limble - Bronze Star Sponsor

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