Workers' Comp

Veterans Day Salute

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In this special Veterans Day edition of Inside Workers' Comp, we talk to case manager Nicole Hurley, RN, BSN, CDMS. Aside from being a Genex Heart of Case Management Award winner, Lt. Col Hurley also proudly serves in the United States Air Force Reserve. She shares her unique experience in managing care for injured workers at Genex and overseeing the 315th Aerospace Medical Squadron at Charleston (SC) Air Force Base.

Tom Kerr (TK): I'm Tom Kerr. In this special Veterans Day edition of Inside Workers' Comp, we talk to Genex case manager Nicole Hurley. Aside from being a Genex Heart of Case Management Award winner, Lt. Col Hurley also proudly serves in the United States Air Force Reserve, and she's here today to talk about that unique experience.

To start, Nicole, could you tell us a little about your experience in the reserves?

Nicole Hurley (NH): I wanted to do something that was a little bit bigger than me and help serve my country. My whole family is military?oriented, and I just wanted to do something that kind of mattered.

I waited to get in until after I graduated nursing school so that I could go in and I was commissioned as an officer as a nurse. I wanted just a little bit more flexibility and with active duty you really don't have much of a

say on where you're going, so the reserves were a good fit for me.

TK: Did you have an idea of the role you would be serving? Were there any surprises along the way?

NH: I originally wanted to be a flight nurse. I wanted to work on the planes, but I was sent to a squadron which was an ASTS, which is an aeromedical staging squadron, which had a little bit different of a mission.

So, that was a big surprise to me, but I grew to love the ASTS mission, and so I never tried to transfer into being a flight nurse. I'm currently with Joint Base Charleston in Charleston, SC. And so, we have an AMDS squadron, which is, aeromedical.

Right now, my job, I am the operations officer. So, I oversee the squadron. I am, basically, the second in command, so I would step in if the commander needs to go somewhere and assume the role of commander.

TK: And I know one of the duties your squadron performs is conducting physicals to make sure airman are healthy to serve. Could you tell us about that process and other roles your squadron performs?

NH: Well, every person has to get a physical once a year and we have 1,300 people. We're here once a month on a Saturday and Sunday, so you divide those 1,300 people by 12, and, you know, we see a pretty large amount of people per weekend. So, if our active duty folks are activated and need to go to a hospital overseas, then they go, and then we provide the backfill and take their place.

TK: Are their similarities in being a case manager and a reservist?

NH: Being in the reserves, we do what active duty does in 30 days. We have 16 hours to do it. So, you can imagine that time management is pretty crucial. So, I learned early how to hone my time management skills, and I think that that transferred very well into case management.

But, just in general, it is two different beings. I enjoy both, but our mission is definitely different than case management with workers' compensation. But the general organization of it, making sure that you have a plan in place for what you're going to do the next day and how you're going to make all your calls in between your appointments, and the travel and the traffic and getting everything squared away in your mind the day before is probably something that I learned in the reserves.

TK: So, what would you say to case managers who are considering joining the reserves?

NH: I am a huge advocate of joining the military and being part of something. As a nurse, the great thing about being in the reserves right now, I can voluntarily deploy or not. It's not a mandatory thing, so I chose right now to be here with my family and work my peacetime mission.

But, if you want to deploy, and you want to go out, and you want to see the world, you can go and work as a flight nurse. I see pictures of my friends that are AES nurses, and they're posting on Facebook they were in Alaska and things like that.

It is a good opportunity to go see the world if you'd like to, and in the meantime, you're doing something really good for the country

TK: Thanks for your service, Nicole. In the next Inside Workers' Comp, we'll look at what factors sparks real change in the industry. Until then, thanks for listening.



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