# https://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/new-scheme-aims-to-help-czech-veterans-re-enter-workforce

# New scheme aims to help Czech veterans re-enter workforce

[Ian Willoughby](https://www.radio.cz/en/who-is-who/ian-willoughby)

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A novel database featuring thousands of companies has been created to help Czech soldiers secure jobs when they leave the army. Around 800 soldiers depart the force every year and for some it can be difficult to find their feet in the jobs market once they return to civvy street.



The Czech Army has been fully professional since the beginning of 2005, when a long tradition of compulsory military service was brought to an end.

At present the army has over 24,000 soldiers, with around 800 leaving every year.

Jiří Kašpárek signed up at 19 and, after serving in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo, eventually decided to try something else. He spoke to Czech Radio.

“I found myself in a situation where I didn’t want to continue for personal reasons. I decided to make the change. I had served for 25 years. I was at an age where I could start again so I decided to leave, voluntarily. But if you work for one firm for 25 years, it’s not so easy to make the change.”

Now the Ministry of the Interior and the Czech Confederation of Industry have teamed up to create a database of companies offering jobs to former soldiers.

The minister of defence, ANO nominee Lubomír Metnar, described the scheme.

“Things will be much easier for modern-day soldiers who have returned from international missions. They will have access to a database of over 11,000 companies. Depending on their fields of expertise, they will be able to find a position that suits them.”

The president of the Confederation of Industry, Jaroslav Hanák, told Czech Radio that veterans could be suited to employment in fields such as transport, energy or the auto industry.

“We post job offers in individual regions on a website. Then it depends on their experience. They may have been clerks who worked in an office or the military staff, military vehicles drivers, or paratroopers who are in great shape physically.”

Eduard Stehlik is the head of the Ministry of Defence department that oversees veterans’ affairs. He said ex-soldiers had a lot to offer.

“There are people who have served in the army for 15 or 20 years. During that time they have driven millions of kilometres with heavy gear. They’re capable of reorientation to road haulage, working cranes, in construction – to the kind of heavy machinery that is used in the army. They have so much experience. But they have to undergo basic courses to receive the papers they need in the civilian world.”

As well as the new database, former soldiers can also draw on dozens of existing retraining courses offered by the Czech Army.

# Tragic incident highlights care for war veterans

[Ruth Fraňková](https://www.radio.cz/en/who-is-who/ruth-frankova)

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The recent incident in Afghanistan, which claimed the lives of three Czech soldiers stationed in the country as part of NATO’s mission, has opened up several questions, including how the Czech Republic cares for its modern-day war veterans and whether it does enough to help them re-integrate into society once they have left the army.

Since 2002, more than 9,000 Czech soldiers have served in Afghanistan and several thousand undertook missions in other countries. At the moment, there are over 800 Czech soldiers serving abroad, most of them in Afghanistan, Mali, and Iraq and the Czech military presence should be further reinforced this year to over 1,000 people overall.

Miroslava Pašková, founder of the Vlčí Máky or Poppy Seeds organisation, which provides legal, social and financial support to war veterans, says the public attitude towards soldiers serving on foreign missions is gradually improving but the Ministry of Defence should do more to help them reintegrate into normal life after they leave the army:

“In the Czech Republic the care for war veterans is not complex enough. The Ministry of Defence focuses mainly on veterans from the Second World War and the Third Resistance.

“But since 1990, 16,000 to 17,000 soldiers aged 25 to 60 have been through various foreign and humanitarian missions.

“The Defence Ministry is not doing any proper monitoring of their situation and doesn’t provide them with complex care.”

The Poppy Seed organisation was founded four and a half years ago and among other things, it has been helping soldiers find new employment, which proves to be one of the most difficult tasks for them. Miroslava Pašková again:

“Czech soldiers usually serve for eight to 15 years, so it is often impossible for them to return to their previous field of expertise. They often want to continue serving the country, so we try to help them do that.

“We also help them solve financial problems and personal problems. Many of them spend a long time away from their families so their relationships are often strained. We even helped three veterans, who couldn’t cope with the situation and ended up on the streets.”

In 2014, the Defence Ministry established a Military Solidarity Fund, to help war veterans cope with unexpected life situations and support the relatives of deceased or injured soldiers.

After the attack in Afghanistan on Sunday, which claimed the lives of three Czech soldiers, the fund established a special public collection in support of their families, which has so far collected over one million crowns.

Since 1991, 28 Czech soldiers have been killed while undertaking missions abroad. Thirteen soldiers were killed in Afghanistan, with the first casualty in 2007. The deadliest attack so far happened in July 2014 in Afghanistan, claiming five lives. Thirteen soldiers have died on duty in the former Yugoslavia and another two Czech soldiers were killed in Iraq.

**Jobs database for former soldiers, military veterans launched**

[Brian Kenety](https://www.radio.cz/en/who-is-who/brian-kenety)

16-12-2018

The Interior Ministry the and Union of Industry and Transport have created a job database to help veterans of the armed forces find work in the private sector after ending their military service.

Defense Minister Lubomír Metnar said soldiers will have direct access to a database of more than 11,000 companies and applications. An estimated 800 soldiers leave the army every year, iRozhlas reports.

The Czech Army already offers exiting soldiers retraining courses for example to become professional drivers, social service workers and accountants.

Union of Industry and Transport head Jaroslav Hanák says there are many opportunities for soldiers in the transport, energy and automotive industry.

**Former soldier admits to killing Slovak journalist Jan Kuciak**

One of four suspects in the 2018 murder of [Slovak](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/slovakia.html) journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancee admitted to the killing in court on Monday.

Miroslav Marcek, a 37-year-old former professional soldier, told the jury at the Special Criminal Court in the western city of Pezinok near Bratislava: "I am guilty .. I knocked on the door, Mr. Kuciak opened, I shot him in the chest."

Referring to Kuciak's partner, Martina Kusnirova, Marcek continued: "Unfortunately, I saw that there was one more person, she ran into the kitchen and [I] shot her there.

"Seeing them on TV and seeing their pain made me tell what happened ... I'm sorry, but I can't undo it."

## PTSD contributes to violence. Pretending it doesn’t is no way to support the troops.

It’s a long way from invading a foreign country to stateside violence years later, but when you start looking at the individual cases of military veteran killers, a pattern begins to emerge: A rambunctious young man who never excelled in school joins the military; at first he loves the structure but eventually he begins to have trouble with his superiors. In time he goes off to war and is exposed to intense levels of violence. When he returns to the United States, he develops a substance abuse habit, partly to keep the horrific images of war at bay. This leads to a series of violent incidents and financial problems that seem trivial at first, then progressively worsen. Finally, high and/or drunk and unable to control his impulses, he ends up in an altercation with another soldier and ends up killing in what appears at first to be a random act of violence.

It is impossible to say for sure what drove these young men to commit murder, but the idea that combat exposure and post-traumatic stress could be contributing factors makes sense if you look at war for what it is at the grunt level: murder that has been sanctioned by the government. The simple fact is that war poisons some men’s souls, and we aren’t doing our veterans any favors by pretending that war is only about honor and service and sacrifice and by insisting that PTSD is completely unrelated to the problem of postwar violence. It’s not only morally irresponsible, it’s scientifically inaccurate