



**VETTED**

## David Liem

University of Texas at Austin Veteran Accelerated Management Program (2017-COHORT-1)



**Age:** 28

**Hometown:** Little Rock, AR

**Rank:** Captain

**Military Service:**

U.S. Army 2011-2016

### EDUCATION:

- Texas A&M University (2017)  
Master's Certificate in Advanced International Affairs
- United States Military Academy (2011)  
Bachelor of Science in Defense and Strategic Studies with Honors  
Minor in Terrorism Studies

### MILITARY EXPERIENCE

- Battalion Plans Officer, 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment
- Company Executive Officer, C Company, 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment (Afghanistan)
- Rifle Platoon Leader, B Company, 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment (Afghanistan)
- Company Operations Officer, D Company, 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment (Afghanistan)

**Tell us a fun fact about you:**

When I was a child, I used to spend hours jumping off the back of my parents' couch pretending I was a paratrooper and that my kindergarten backpack was my parachute. Even today, after spending five years on active duty in an airborne unit, that couch ranks among the most thrilling jumps in my memory.

**Why did you join the military?**

I'm from a family of Vietnamese immigrants that was rescued by the American military during the war. My father, now a naturalized U.S. citizen, always taught my brother and me to respect our soldiers for defending our way of life and protecting human rights around the globe. Consequently, American soldiers were always my childhood heroes, although I never thought I would be strong enough to join myself. After 9/11, however, I felt a duty to follow in my heroes' footsteps.

**What is the greatest single lesson you learned from your Military Service?**

The most important leadership attributes often have more to do with exercising self-control than possessing an inherent ability to "make people do things." Notably, such leadership virtues as empathy, work ethic, humility, kindness, and integrity are things good leaders cultivate in their own personal lives. A genuinely good person with average training is often a better combat leader than a tactically proficient narcissist.

**Why did you apply for the Veterans Accelerated Management Program?**

After my first few months of working in the private sector, I realized that I knew very little about business in general; almost all of my formal and informal training since age 17 had been military-focused. I worked hard at my civilian job and got the bills paid, but I knew that I would struggle to advance unless I went "back to school," so to speak. I applied for the Veteran Accelerated Management Program because it provided a solution tailor-made for people with my background to learn business fundamentals so that we could make the most of our talents in the private sector.

**What do you hope to accomplish in the next chapter of your life, both professionally and personally?**

I hope to eventually join the senior leadership ranks of my current organization, as I truly enjoy the job and like the people I work with. I currently lead the security analytics department for a venture group, and I would ultimately like to lead a venture project to make my hometown, Little Rock, safer. In my personal life, I hope to achieve a more stable work/life balance than I had in the military, re-establish my Arkansas roots instead of always being on the move, and be a good family man.

**What would you tell today's American public about our nation's Veterans transitioning out of the military?**

Many of our experiences—particularly since 9/11—have been very different from those of other Americans over the same time period. However, we're not victims of circumstance or damaged goods. We all volunteered, and many of us actually enjoyed getting to deploy and serve with our fellow soldiers in combat. There was no dark motive to it; rather, we liked the camaraderie, the feeling of being part of something worthwhile and important, and the trust we were given to solve difficult problems on civilization's dangerous frontiers. Now that we're civilians, we may need some constructive guidance to adapt to the requirements of new jobs and life circumstances, but we don't need anyone to pity us.