



## Helping Former Military Personnel Thrive in the Union Construction Industry

Helmets to Hardhats is a national non-profit program that connects National Guard, Reserve, and transitioning active-duty military members with quality career training and employment opportunities within member unions of the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO. The United Union of Roofers is proud to be a partner in this organization.

We recently caught up with Marlando James, a member of Local 22, Rochester, NY, who entered the union in 2004 through the connection that was made possible by Helmets to Hardhats. Marlando's story is one of success found after leaving the military and joining a union; one where he now finds challenges and fulfillment in his everyday life.

Navy where he served his country admirably for four years. He was honorably discharged after achieving the rank of Petty Officer Third Class.

Upon leaving the military, Marlando realized he had gained more skills than he had ever thought possible. "Not only did I have lots of technical experience, but I also had developed a strong work ethic and the ability to work well with others. I knew that no matter what career I chose for the next phase of my life, I would shine because of the traits I developed in the Navy," said Marlando.

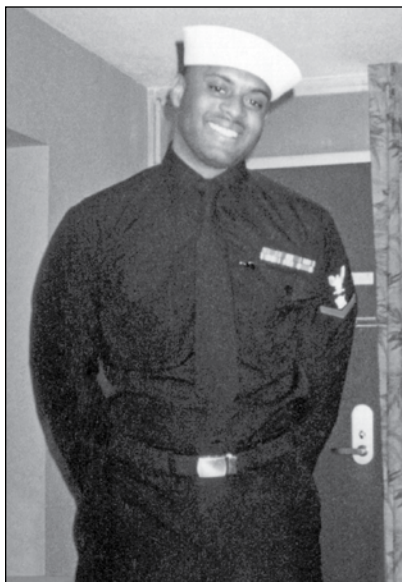
### Transition: From U.S. Navy to Roofers Local 22

Marlando eventually set his sights on the building and construction trades. He visited a local union hall where his information was forwarded to the Northeastern Regional Director of Helmets to Hardhats, Richard Eckler. After that, everything seemingly fell right into place. Richard contacted Marlando and talked to him about the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers.

Marlando's interest was piqued, so he was referred to Local 22 in Rochester, NY, and he was soon having discussions with Business Agent Robert Eade about entering the Local's apprenticeship program. Marlando could not believe how fast everything happened. "Those two guys were so helpful in getting me placed into the Roofers Union. Mr. Eade is such a good guy; he made the process easy." Marlando submitted his application on a Wednesday, they called him on Thursday, and he was hired that day.

### A Desire to Serve His Country

Marlando James was born in Kingston, Jamaica, but moved to Rochester, NY, when he was just two years old. He joined the military because he wanted to serve his country, but he also knew he would gain valuable



experience and training that he could take with him after he left the service. He joined the United States



## An Opportunity Becomes a Career

Marlando was taken into the apprenticeship training program as a first-year apprentice in November 2004. He is planning to graduate as a journeyman in March 2009. Meantime, he is enjoying his training with Local 22, while members of Local 22 benefit from Marlando's addition to their team. "Marlando is completing his apprenticeship and is a quick learner. He is a hard worker, very well-liked, a gentleman at all times, and an asset to our local," said Local 22 Business Agent Bob Eade.

Marlando appreciates the similarities between union life and the military: he is earning a good income while learning valuable skills from people he respects; he gets the chance to work with individuals from

diverse backgrounds; and the sense of teamwork and loyalty he finds on the job site makes him feel right at home. He says he didn't want a job when he left the Navy – he wanted a career. Now he's got a great one, and he looks forward to his future in the trade. "I have a great job that's hard work, but it's a lot of fun. I really enjoy being a roofer," says Marlando.

## They Defended America. Now Let Them Help Us Build It.

More than 250,000 men and women will transition from the military this year. A career in the building and construction trades requires the same hard work and dedication that our servicemen and women have already demonstrated, and Helmets to Hardhats provides them a streamlined opportunity. Nobody deserves the competitive wages, benefits, and security of a union job more than our veterans.

In order to qualify under the Helmets to Hardhats program, candidates must be at least 18 years of age, have an honorable discharge, have a high school diploma or equivalent, pass a drug test, conduct an interview, and be physically fit to perform work. So if you know somebody who is as dedicated to their future as they were to their military service, tell them to open a free account at [www.helmetstohardhats.org](http://www.helmetstohardhats.org) and start searching for a career today. Marlando would agree: "I would definitely recommend Helmets to Hardhats to any honorably discharged veteran. They helped me get into the trade, and once you learn a trade, no one can take it from you."

