

Resource guide: Tactical real estate investing for veterans

1. Choose your niche and strategy wisely

Before acquiring your next rental, specialize:

Strategy	Ideal For	Notes
Short-Term Rentals (STRs)	Vacation markets, travel nurses, military TDYs	High cash flow, but high regulation and turnover
Mid-Term Rentals (MTRs)	Corporate housing, traveling professionals	Lower turnover, high ROI; ideal in health care, defense contractor hubs
Section 8 / HUD-VASH	Impact-driven investors	Guaranteed rent payments; long wait lists in urban areas
BRRRR (Buy-Rehab-Rent-Refinance-Repeat)	Value-add experts	Requires capital access and strong contractor network
Turnkey or Leaseback Models	Passive investors	Let operators manage everything, but at reduced margins

Tip: Check out veteran-friendly STR-friendly locations like San Antonio, Texas; Norfolk, Va.; or Colorado Springs, Colo.

2. Location hacking: Not just ‘buy where you know’

Instead of looking only at your hometown or duty stations, analyze markets with:

- **High VA loan usage rates**
- **Military installations (for mid-term renters)**
- **Vacation demand plus zoning leniency (for STRs)**

Tools to use:

- [AirDNA](#)
- [Mashvisor](#)
- [Furnished Finder](#)
- [City-Data.com](#)

3. Infrastructure tools most beginners miss

Tool	Purpose	Notes
Guesty/Hostaway	STR automation	Sync calendars, automate pricing, guest messaging
Stessa	Bookkeeping for real estate	Tracks income, expenses, depreciation
PropStream or REIPro	Market & deal analysis	Pull comps, track owner history, off-market leads
Rental Arbitrage Contracts	For leasing properties you don't own	Use vetted legal templates, get landlord approval
Zinspector	Remote property inspections	Document conditions with photos and timestamps

4. Quality Assurance (QA) in property management

Most small investors ignore QA protocols. Consider:

- **Checklists for turnovers** (for example, kitchen inventory, linens, smoke detectors)
- **Digital welcome books** (via TouchStay or Canva)
- **Periodic maintenance logs** (filters, sump pump, HVAC)
- **Third-party cleaners with photo verification**
- **ADA compliance for inclusive STRs**

5. Partnerships and Mentorship (Atwell style)

Kirby Atwell emphasized the *value of* mentorship and niche networking. Veterans can benefit from:

- **VAREP** – [Veteran's Association of Real Estate Professionals](#)
- **REAP**– [Real Estate Associate Program \(REAP\) Program – Minorities in commercial real estate](#)
- **Local REIAs** – [Real Estate Investment Associations \(REIAs\)](#) – Many have [veteran-friendly tracks](#)

- **Bunker Labs** – [D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families \(IVMF\)](#)
[Bunker Labs](#) supports all veteran entrepreneurs, including real estate

6. Scaling: SOPs and exit planning

As you expand, create:

- **SOPs for property onboarding, tenant screening and maintenance**
- **A business credit profile** (NAV, D&B Paydex)
- **Capital stack knowledge**: DSCR loans, commercial loans, syndication
- **Exit strategies**: sell portfolio, convert to long-term leases, 1031 exchange

7. Advanced learning

Skip the fluff and go deeper with:

- **Living Off Rentals** Podcast (Kirby Atwell)
- **Short Term Rental Secrets** by Michael Sjogren
- **Real Estate Rookie** podcast by BiggerPockets
- **“The Book on Advanced Tax Strategies”** by Amanda Han & Matt MacFarland
- **“The Hands-Off Investor”** by Brian Burke (for syndicators)

Final thoughts

Real estate is more than doors and dollars, it's about building systems, serving others (like housing fellow veterans), and creating a life you own. Atwell's example shows that mission-aligned investing can be scalable and sustainable.