**Giving veterans a fighting chance**

A former U.S. Army airborne Ranger.

A six-time MMA world champion.

A sales and leadership conduit.

A founder of multiple churches.

A single father of four.

John Renken has worn all those hats and more. He paused recently long enough to chat with co-hosts Jeff Daly and Ashley Gutermuth as this week’s guest on [The American Legion Tango Alpha Lima podcast](file:///%5C%5CUsers%5Calhjh%5CDownloads%5Cthis%20week%E2%80%99s%20podcast%20episode).

Renken, a longtime member of The American Legion, is now the chief executive officer for Sales Platoon. He developed resilience as a fighter before becoming a Ranger.

“The mindset and the determination that you get in the ring or the cage with one other person who you are going to fight always lends itself to success; it doesn’t matter what direction you are going to go,” he said.

His mission is to give more opportunities to veterans seeking employment.

“After 20 years of war, our men and women are getting out and they are being offered $20 an hour to be on top of a roof or underneath the floorboard or to be patrolling the highways. I think that we are worth way more than that.”

He began working on a concept with another veteran for transitioning service members to enter the sales field where they could earn more money. After his partner died by suicide, Renken took over the company.

Renken didn’t pause when asked what traits make veterans ideal candidates for these jobs.

“Right now in our culture there is a severe lack of discipline to get up in the morning and get the job done, regardless of how you feel,” he said. “Everyone in the military also had to do some sort of teamwork or team-building. We used to do hip pocket training. So they would have to be able to come up with training plans on the fly. All of those skills directly correspond to sales.”

He also talked about his background in professional fighting and church managing.

“The first rule of fight church is punch somebody in the face,” he said jokingly. We think.

Daly and Gutermuth also discuss:

• Former Navy aviators who will be part of the Artemis II crew, which will launch into space next year.

• The nation’s best hiking trails and how veterans can [get a free lifetime pass](https://www.legion.org/magazine/258504/america%E2%80%99s-best-hiking-trails).

• A South Dakota post that has its own chorus. Is it the last remaining one?

Check out this week’s episode, which is among more than 170 Tango Alpha Lima podcasts available [in both audio and video formats here](http://www.legion.org/tangoalphalima). You can also download episodes on iTunes, Google Play or other major podcast-hosting sites. The video version is available at [the Legion’s YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHMR9MmnivfPkrqJehwCqij73e_blxrQs).