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NOVEMBER 2026

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A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a blue suit, white shirt, and maroon tie, is smiling and pointing directly at the camera. He is wearing a gold watch and a black ring. The background is a red brick wall, and he is standing in front of a green tufted sofa.

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Brian Gowdy and friends/colleagues Natalie Jostes (past-Region Director for Real Producers) and Andrew Schindler (Lincoln Real Producers) in downtown Chicago for The N2 Company national sales conference (September 2026)

► Publisher's Note

Welcome to our November Veterans-themed edition of *Colorado Springs Real Producers*!

In this issue, we recognize several real estate agents who have served our country. We celebrate not only their military service but also the values of discipline, perseverance, and teamwork they bring to their careers and communities. Their stories run far deeper than what is printed on these pages, and I hope you'll take the time to read each one and thank them for their service.

In real estate, the mindset of service—putting clients first, supporting peers, and strengthening our community—helps us navigate challenges and build lasting relationships.

I know there are many more veterans in our real estate community beyond those we've highlighted. If you'd like to

nominate an agent for a future edition, please reach out to me by email.

To our readers, thank you for prioritizing this magazine despite your busy schedules and for sharing in our mission to build a more connected real estate community.

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Reflections from the Editor

For many Veterans, leaving the military means more than changing careers. It can also mean leaving behind a built-in sense of community, purpose, and service. For Courtney Gibbs, Sean-Michael Kayga, and Daniel Padilla, real estate has provided a new way to carry those values forward while building lives and relationships in Colorado Springs.

Their stories offer different perspectives on what it can look like to translate military experience into civilian life. The uniforms may have come off, the missions may have changed, and the setting may now be a closing table instead of a deployment, but a familiar principle continues to guide each of them: service is still at the heart of what they do.



Tabby Halsrud
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I hope you enjoy reading the stories!



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Courtney GIBBS

Finding Her People

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For Courtney Gibbs, real estate has become about much more than helping people buy and sell homes. It has given her a way to rebuild something she once had in the military: community.

After more than a decade in the Navy, frequent moves, and years spent adapting to whatever came next, Courtney entered real estate looking for a profession that could give her both flexibility and connection. What she found was an industry that challenged her to define how she wanted to work, who she wanted to serve, and what kind of relationships she wanted to build along the way.

Originally from Sandy, Oregon, a small town near Mount Hood, Courtney grew up surrounded by the Pacific Northwest and still considers the Oregon coast one of her favorite places. She also grew up with a strong example in her mom, whose strength and determination shaped much of the way Courtney approaches life. Her mom remains her

biggest cheerleader and one of the people who taught her the importance of showing up for the people you care about.

Her direction changed during her senior year of high school when a close friend began considering the Air Force. The idea of military service had never been presented to Courtney before, but the conversation sparked her curiosity.

A Navy recruiter eventually introduced her to the Seabees, the construction and engineering side of the Navy. The role felt familiar. Courtney's stepfather owned a construction business, and she liked the idea of learning a trade that could translate into civilian life later.

There was another selling point: she wouldn't have to serve aboard a ship. "I joined the Navy as long as I didn't have to go on a boat," she jokes.

Courtney became an electrician, although the variety of work within the Seabees meant her

responsibilities extended far beyond electrical systems. During one assignment, she drove tractor-trailers and later taught others how to operate them. That constant change was part of what kept her in the Navy for 12 and a half years. "I never knew what the next thing was going to be," she says. "That was exciting."

Choosing Family and a New Direction

Courtney met her husband, who was also a Seabee, while stationed in San Diego. Their first two children were born there, and military life remained the foundation of their family until her

husband was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes shortly after their son was born in 2018.

His medical separation took more than a year, and Courtney remained in the Navy for one additional tour while the family figured out what came next. That assignment took them to Oklahoma, a place they unexpectedly came to love.

By the time Courtney was pregnant with their third child, however, the realities of military life had changed. Her husband was building a civilian career, and Courtney recognized that continuing to move wherever the Navy

sent her would make family life increasingly difficult.

Getting out gave them the opportunity to make those decisions together. The family initially moved to Indiana to be closer to her husband's relatives. Courtney stayed home and homeschooled their children until a job opportunity brought her husband to Denver less than a year later.

Another move meant another reset. Courtney took a contracting position near Peterson Space Force Base, using the top-secret clearance she still held from her final military assignment. The job was stable, but deeply isolating. Much of her time was spent alone in an office, and unless someone without proper clearance needed an escort, there was little interaction with coworkers.

She began studying for her real estate license at her desk during the quiet stretches. By May, she was licensed. By October, she had left the contracting job because she already had clients under contract and could no longer balance their needs with working in areas where she could not access her phone.

Finding Community Again

Courtney had considered real estate before, but what finally drew her in was not simply flexibility or earning potential. She wanted to find her people.

After leaving the military, she realized how much she missed the built-in community that came with service. In Colorado Springs, she found herself surrounded by REALTORS®,

including several in her own neighborhood. She began seeing agents hold study groups nearby and wondered whether the industry might offer the connection she was missing. "I was like, maybe this is how I find my community here," she says.

Early relationships helped. Fellow veteran Kristen Pinnock became someone Courtney could immediately relate to, while Courtney and Madison Lopez earned their licenses within roughly a day of one another and learned the business alongside each other.

As Courtney continued developing her business, she took pieces of advice from different agents and tested what felt authentic to her. One recurring recommendation was to establish a niche.

Her military background seemed obvious, but Colorado Springs already had many agents serving military families. Courtney wanted something that reflected another meaningful part of her life. That answer came through animal rescue.

Courtney had spent years fostering animals and helping nonprofit rescue organizations, so she created a local community called Leashed in Local with the small business owner of Leez N Co, Jasmine LeClair. Her first event came only three months after she earned her license and included 27 vendors and an unexpected visit from the local news.

The following year, the event grew to roughly 50 vendors. What Courtney discovered was that the

vendors themselves often became some of her strongest relationships. They were business owners and community members who cared about animals for many of the same reasons she did, and the shared interest made networking feel natural rather than transactional.

Education Over Lead Generation

Courtney's real estate niche continued evolving when her first transaction involved a VA assumable loan. She knew relatively little about assumptions at the time, but that did not last long. "I'm not somebody who

is going to do something and not know everything about it," she says.

That tendency has become something of a theme in Courtney's life. When something catches her interest, she tends to dive all the way in. One transaction became a specialty, a Facebook group became an educational community, and an idea for connecting animal lovers grew into an annual event involving dozens of local businesses.

She began researching extensively, joining Facebook groups, learning from experienced agents,



and reconnecting with Mike Robb, an officer she had previously served with who now runs a national VA assumable loan community online.

Eventually, Courtney created a Colorado Springs-specific Facebook group centered on assumable mortgages. From the beginning, she established clear standards around transparency. Listings had to provide useful information rather than withholding important details simply to force consumers to make contact.

That approach reflects how Courtney prefers to build her business. “I don’t want to trap people into working with me or giving me their information,” she says. “They don’t have to talk to me. They want to.”

Many clients discover Courtney by following her educational content before ever reaching out. By the time they contact her, they already understand how she communicates and what she values. To Courtney, that creates a fundamentally different relationship than working an internet lead with someone who has no idea who is answering the phone.

She experienced that model early in her career while working Zillow leads and quickly realized it was not a natural fit. Courtney wanted to give her full attention to people who had intentionally chosen to work with her.

“I don’t want to trap people into working with me or giving me their information. They don’t **have** to talk to me. **They want to.**”

That realization also influenced her move to Real Brokerage, where she saw an opportunity to continue learning while eventually teaching others. She credits agents including Daniel Padilla, Iris Burton, Candace Hollon, and Kyle Pettit with influencing her growth through training, mentorship, and their willingness to share information.

She hopes to offer the same openness to others. “If another agent calls me and says, ‘I see you’re doing this. Can you explain it to me?’ I will,” she says. “I’m not going to gatekeep information.”

Relationships That Feel Real

When asked how she wants clients to remember working with her, Courtney does not talk about production or negotiation statistics. She talks about friendship.

Most of her clients are people she could comfortably invite to a child’s baseball game or sit down with for dinner. She brings toys to appointments when clients have young children. She pays attention to the person behind the transaction and tries to make the experience feel personal.

“I don’t want the transaction to feel like a transaction,” she says. That philosophy also speaks to a challenge she experienced when entering the industry. After leaving the military, Courtney expected the professional community

to be easier to find. Instead, she discovered that some relationships came with an agenda—recruitment, production, or competition.

Military life had taught her something different. People did not necessarily have to like one another, but they still worked through difficult conditions together. Finding that kind of authenticity in real estate took time.

Today, Courtney values the agents who genuinely celebrate one another’s success, share what they know, and remain supportive regardless of brokerage or production level. Those are the relationships that have helped Colorado Springs begin to feel like home.

Outside of work, Courtney spends most of her time with her husband and their three children. Family life is full and busy, with Courtney juggling sports, dance recitals, school activities, and all the everyday chaos that comes with raising three kids. Between practices, performances, family adventures, and keeping up with a toddler, there’s rarely a dull moment but it’s a season of life she genuinely

loves. No matter how much her career grows, being present for her family and showing up for the moments that matter will always be at the center of who she is.

She recently rediscovered a love for paddleboarding after spending time on the lake with family in Indiana, offering a small substitute for the ocean she still misses. Animal rescue remains close to her heart, and she supports organizations including Dog Heaven in Woodland Park and Mattersville, which connects animal welfare with support for veterans.

In many ways, Courtney’s real estate career is still young. But the foundation she is building is already clear. She wants clients to choose her because they trust her. She wants other agents to feel comfortable asking her for help. And she wants the relationships created through the business to extend well beyond a closing table.

After years of moving wherever the military required, Courtney is building something different now: a community she chose for herself. ▀



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HOME INSPECTIONS

BUILDING TRUST, ONE INSPECTION AT A TIME

CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

For Nathan Liljestrand, a home inspection is about far more than identifying defects in a house. It's about helping people make confident decisions during one of the biggest financial and emotional investments of their lives. Every inspection is an opportunity to educate buyers, support real estate agents, and bring clarity to what can often feel like an overwhelming process.

That philosophy is rooted in a career that spans over two decades in residential construction.

Originally from the Detroit area, Nathan moved to Colorado in 2002 after friends encouraged him to make the leap. The move was something of an adventure—he and his soon-to-be wife, Melissa, relocated sight unseen.

Before entering construction, Nathan spent several years in the restaurant industry doing everything from dishwashing, cleaning tables, serving and bartending and eventually management.

This experience taught Nathan the importance of customer service through clear communication. After discovering that returning to the restaurant industry once moving to Colorado wasn't the right fit, he accepted an opportunity to work with a local contractor, learning finish trim carpentry while developing an entirely new set of skills. Over the next several years, he expanded into framing, project management, basement finishing, and residential remodeling.

When the opportunity arose to purchase the company he was working for at the time, Nathan began the process of obtaining his general contractor's license. Although the sale ultimately didn't

come together, earning his license opened another door.

On July 4, 2006, Nathan and Melissa launched their own construction company. Now, having celebrated its twentieth anniversary, that business became the foundation for everything that followed.

Over the years, Nathan's projects grew from trim carpentry to complete remodels and large-scale renovations. In 2020, he and Melissa began investing in real estate, flipping homes and gaining an even deeper appreciation for the buying and selling process.

Then an unexpected conversation changed the direction of his career

once again. Through his daughter's homeschool enrichment program, Nathan met the owner of A Buyer's Choice Home Inspections - Northern Colorado, who was expanding into the Colorado Springs market. With over twenty years of construction experience and a growing passion for real estate, the opportunity felt like a natural fit.

"I've always loved helping people," Nathan explains. "This combines construction, real estate, education, and business ownership all into one." While many inspectors simply document issues, Nathan approaches each inspection as a teacher.

He especially enjoys working with first-time homebuyers,

taking time to explain not only what he finds, but why it matters and how various concerns can be addressed. His goal isn't to overwhelm clients with technical language or create unnecessary anxiety. Instead, he wants every buyer to leave with confidence and peace of mind, whether they ultimately move forward with the purchase or decide it's not the right home.

That perspective is equally important when working with real estate agents. Nathan believes inspectors should be partners in the transaction—not obstacles to it.

"My vision is to be the most trusted home inspection company in the Pikes Peak region," he says. "Not because we're the best at marketing ourselves, but because agents know they can trust us to protect both them and their clients."

For Nathan, trust means conducting thorough, detailed inspections while communicating findings in a balanced, solution-oriented way. "There are inspectors who wear it as a badge of honor to find every possible problem and scare buyers," he says. "That's not how I see this profession."

Instead, Nathan focuses on helping clients understand what they're looking at. Every home has imperfections. His role is to explain which issues require immediate attention, which ones can be planned for over time, and how buyers can make informed decisions based on accurate information rather than fear.

That balanced approach has already helped guide buyers through some challenging situations.

One inspection involved an out-of-state buyer considering a home that appeared attractive in listing photos but told a very different story in person. Active leaks, damaged ceilings, and extensive water damage immediately raised concerns. Before proceeding with the inspection, Nathan contacted the buyer's agent to ensure the clients fully understood the condition of the property.

After spending nearly two hours walking the buyers through the inspection findings over the phone, Nathan explained not only what he discovered but also what repairs would realistically involve based on his construction experience.

In the end, the buyers did choose to move forward—with confidence. His objective had never been to convince them one way or the other. "I just wanted them to go into it with their eyes wide open," he says.

That combination of construction knowledge and practical experience is one of Nathan's greatest strengths. Having spent years renovating homes himself, he can often explain not only what's wrong but what it may take to fix it—giving buyers and real estate agents valuable context that extends beyond the inspection report itself.

He also positions himself as a long-term resource. Whether clients need recommendations for contractors, plumbers,

"I want to raise the bar across the industry."
The better all of us perform, the better experience buyers and sellers have.

electricians, or other trusted professionals after closing, Nathan enjoys connecting people with reliable local businesses.

For real estate agents, he offers another perspective that reflects his collaborative mindset. If an agent already has a trusted inspector they enjoy working with, Nathan isn't trying to replace that relationship. "I'd rather be the backup than try to take someone's business," he says. "If their go-to inspector is on vacation, booked out for two weeks, or retires someday, I'd love the opportunity to help."

It's a philosophy that reflects his broader belief in strengthening the profession as a whole. "I want to raise the bar across the industry," he says. "The better all of us perform, the better experience buyers and sellers have."

Nathan also recognizes that certain inspections

deserve extra attention in today's market. His Ultimate VA Package combines a home inspection, sewer scope, radon test, and required wood-destroying insect inspection into one comprehensive service designed specifically for veterans using VA loans. He also waives the deferred-payment fee through FlexFund and provides additional discounts as a small way of thanking military families for their service.

Outside of work, Nathan's passion for building community is just as evident. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, volunteers with Tri-Lakes Cares, and participates on the Monument Economic Development Committee. His love for entrepreneurship extends beyond his own business, and he finds genuine

fulfillment in connecting people and helping other businesses succeed.

Family remains central to everything he does. Nathan and his wife continue to pursue real estate investing together while raising two daughters, both of whom are beginning their own entrepreneurial journeys.

Whether he's inspecting homes, mentoring business owners, investing in real estate, or simply making introductions between people who can help one another, Nathan approaches every opportunity with the same purpose.

He isn't simply inspecting houses. He's building trust. And for real estate agents looking for a knowledgeable, steady, and collaborative partner, that's exactly the kind of resource that helps transactions—and relationships—stand the test of time. ▀

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Note from Brian Gowdy, Publisher of Colorado Springs Real Producers:

This page is to recognize the veterans we featured in the past year, since our 2025 Veterans-themed edition; I skimmed through all our features within that time window to compile this page. If I left out any veterans, I sincerely apologize! Please reach out to me if I did: brian.gowdy@n2co.com — I will make sure you get included in our 2027 version of this page. Thank you for reading!



Amanda Pacheco - U.S. Navy



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Sean-Michael Kayga



From
Service
to **SOLD**

CASA BAY
PHOTOGRAPHY

Born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Sean-Michael Kayga grew up as the oldest of five children in a family with a long but sporadic history of military service. From an early age, he described having a strong protective instinct, a mindset that eventually shaped the direction of his life. That sense of responsibility led him to Junior ROTC in high school and, ultimately, to the United States Army.

Just three days after turning 18, Sean-Michael signed his contract to enlist as a Field Artillery Cannon Crew Member. He graduated from Moon Valley High School in May 2013 and entered the delayed entry program until graduation. From there, he began his Army career, serving a total of 10 years. His assignments took him from Fort Sill, Oklahoma to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and eventually to Fort Carson in Colorado Springs in 2016.

Colorado quickly became home. While stationed at Fort Carson, he met his wife Christine in 2016, and over the course of his service, including a deployment to Afghanistan in 2018, the couple built a life and community in the region. After weighing the decision of whether to return to their respective hometowns or stay in Colorado, they ultimately chose to remain. “We decided to make it home,” he said.

After separating from the Army in 2023, Sean-Michael transitioned into civilian work that aligned with his degree and technical background in computer science. He worked in systems engineering supporting the Air Force through contracting roles. While the work was meaningful, he found it lacked the direct, face-to-face impact he had been accustomed to in the military.

That missing connection became a turning point. Throughout his military service and contracting work, Sean-Michael had developed a growing interest in real estate. He observed how differently real estate experiences could unfold, sometimes seeing positive outcomes and other times hearing

frustration from service members who felt they had not been fully informed during the homebuying process. Those contrasts stayed with him.

“I saw that it wasn’t just a transaction,” he said, reflecting on what ultimately drew him to the industry. “Even if it looked like that on the surface, I know how much really goes into that.”

At the same time, Sean-Michael had formed a close friendship with fellow veteran and real estate agent Charles Beaton through their involvement with the Colorado Warriors, a disabled veterans hockey team. That relationship became a bridge into real estate conversations.

As he explored his next steps, he leaned on that connection, asking questions and learning more about the industry from someone he trusted.

Eventually, the conversations became more serious. Charles had recently started his company and encouraged Sean-Michael to pursue real estate if he was willing to commit fully. He made the decision to step away from a secure contracting role with strong benefits and clearance access in order to enter the unknowns of a new career.

“It’s gonna be rough for the first couple months,” he recalled being told during those early discussions, “but guess what, you’ve got to do it right.”



Sean-Michael earned his real estate license in May of the previous year and quickly discovered that the early learning curve was steep. He balanced studying for exams with his existing job responsibilities, often navigating complex topics for the first time while maintaining a demanding schedule. He described leaning on the discipline and structure he carried from the military, breaking information into smaller, manageable systems to help him learn.

His first transaction came unexpectedly close to home. A longtime coworker from his Department of Defense contracting role reached out after a planned move fell through. Now needing to purchase a home in Colorado

Springs, he turned to Sean-Michael shortly after he had been licensed.

That first showing resulted in a contract. “We show up to the first house... and he looks at me after we explain everything and goes, ‘Sean-Michael, I’m ready to sign on the second house we saw. Let’s go,’” he recalled. That moment marked his first closed deal in real estate.

One of the biggest surprises in his early career was learning how interconnected the real estate ecosystem truly is. Coming in, he expected more separation between agents, lenders, title companies, and brokerages. Instead, he found a highly interdependent network where communication and

professional relationships directly influence client outcomes.

He pointed to experiences working with title companies, mortgage professionals, and other agents at industry events as examples of how collaboration shapes results beyond the transaction itself. In his view, success in real estate is not only about individual effort but also about how effectively professionals work together to serve clients.

Outside of real estate, Sean-Michael’s life remains deeply active and community-driven. He is married and has been with his wife since 2016. She has been a consistent presence throughout his military deployments, career transitions, and now his real estate journey. The couple shares life with their Cavapoo named Archie, a 20-pound dog he described with humor as “small, but he’s got a lot of bite to him.”

He stays closely connected to the Colorado Springs community through sports and outdoor activity. He plays in both disabled veterans hockey through the Colorado Warriors and competitive softball leagues with the Disposable Heroes. He also spends time fishing, camping, riding his Harley, and traveling with friends and family. Fitness remains a consistent part of his routine, something he credits as essential for maintaining balance in a high-energy lifestyle.

For Sean-Michael, real estate is less about a career shift and more about a continuation of service in a different form. The motivation he describes most clearly is not centered on transactions or production, but on long-term relationships and impact.

“At the end of the day, when you have me... you have me,” he said, emphasizing the importance of loyalty and ongoing support. “My sole goal is to just help people.”

In transitioning from military service to real estate, Sean-Michael Kayga has carried forward a familiar mission: showing up for people when it matters most, whether on deployment, in community, or at the closing table. ▼



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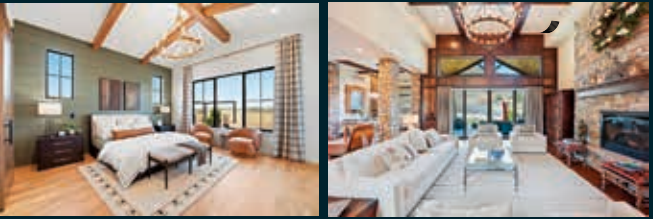
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WICKHAM'S WORKBENCH

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When Greg Wickham looks back on the career he imagined for himself, construction was never part of the plan. Born and raised on Colorado Springs' west side, he graduated from Coronado High School before serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. After his military service, he attended college in Denver to study commercial art, envisioning a future in visual communications and design.

Instead, a conversation with his father changed everything. Greg's dad had spent his career in construction and proposed that the two start a general contracting business together. In May 2003, they opened Wickham's Workbench. More than two decades later, Greg still credits that decision—and the years spent working alongside his father—as the foundation for both his career and the company they built.

"We worked side by side for six or seven years," Greg recalls. "Looking back, that's really where I was being formed and forged." Growing up, Greg had already spent countless hours helping his father on construction projects, but owning a business required an entirely different education. Rather than learning only how to build, he immersed himself in construction management—contracts, scheduling, estimating, project coordination, and customer communication. It was there that he discovered something unexpected about himself.

"I thought I'd enjoy being out in the field building things," he says. "It turns out I'm an office guy."

For many people, contracts, schedules, and work orders sound like the least exciting part of construction. For

Greg, they're exactly what he enjoys most. He thrives on organization, detailed planning, and seeing dozens of moving parts come together into one finished project. It's the challenge of coordinating people, timelines, and craftsmanship that keeps him energized every morning.

That operational mindset has become one of the defining characteristics of Wickham's Workbench. While the company offers an unusually broad

range of services—including kitchen and bathroom remodels, basement finishes, concrete work, handyman repairs, additions, and even custom home construction—Greg believes what truly separates his team isn't the variety of work they perform. It's the level of involvement they maintain throughout every project.

"If I had to describe our mission," he says, "it would be quality construction built right in at a reasonable price."

Equally important is the personal attention clients receive.

Rather than handing projects off after a contract is signed, every customer is assigned a dedicated project manager who serves as their primary point of contact from start to finish. Questions are answered quickly, communication stays consistent, and clients always know who is overseeing their project.

For Greg, that level of oversight isn't just good customer service—it's how quality is maintained. The company has also built long-term relationships with trusted craftsmen who have worked together for years. That familiarity allows projects to run more smoothly while producing consistently reliable results.

Although Wickham's Workbench is capable of constructing custom homes—one of their current projects is a large custom home in Crystal Park—Greg is quick to point out that they enjoy the smaller jobs just as much.

He laughs about a saying he and his father developed over the years. "We always joked that we'll do anything from changing your faucet to building you a new home." While said with a smile, it accurately reflects the company's philosophy.

Many homeowners assume they need multiple contractors to complete a constantly growing list of repairs and improvements around their home. Greg's team enjoys being the single resource that can tackle everything from a simple faucet replacement to an extensive remodel.

That flexibility has made Wickham's Workbench a valuable partner for real estate agents as well. Some clients purchase homes specifically because they have room in their budget to customize them afterward. Others need repairs completed before a listing hits the market or before closing can take place. In both situations, Greg understands that timing is often just as important as the work itself.





“If I had to describe our mission it would be *quality construction built right in at a reasonable price.*”

now that their children are grown, joking that it’s even more fun without having to keep track of the kids.

Those kids are now building lives of their own. His daughter is studying biochemistry at Utah State University, while his son previously worked alongside Greg as a project manager and draftsman before accepting a position with a large concrete company in Denver. Greg has also entered a new chapter of life as a proud grandfather to two young grandchildren.

Greg also loves being a “dog dad” to his rescue, Pippin. Greg found Pippin at Mill Dog Rescue; he had been poorly treated for the first five years of his life and now he enjoys a good life in a happy home. “Day by day, he is continuing to learn ‘how to dog,’” Greg says.

One value that continues to shape both Greg personally and professionally is his appreciation for military service. Having served in the Marine Corps himself, he enjoys supporting fellow veterans whenever possible and offers discounts to military clients whenever he can. In a community like Colorado Springs, where military families make up such an important part of the population, it’s one more way he gives back.

More than twenty years after opening Wickham’s Workbench, Greg remains just as enthusiastic about the business as when it first began. Whether coordinating a custom home, completing a small repair, or helping a real estate transaction stay on schedule, he approaches each project with the same attention to detail, organization, and personal involvement that have defined the company from the beginning.

For real estate agents, that steady, hands-on approach makes Wickham’s Workbench a trusted resource for projects large and small—and a reliable partner when getting the job done right matters most. ▀

“When real estate agents call us,” he says, “it’s usually because there’s a deadline.” Inspection objections, buyer requests, repair negotiations, and listing preparation often leave only a short window to complete the work. Greg recognizes that contractors are frequently brought into the process near the very end, when the schedule is already tight.

His team’s goal is simple: help keep the transaction moving. Whether addressing inspection items, updating a property before listing, or completing repairs after closing, Wickham’s Workbench focuses on finding practical solutions while working within the timelines that real estate transactions demand.

Greg also encourages agents to invest in long-term relationships with contractors rather than searching for someone new every time a project arises.

“When we’ve worked together for a while and someone calls saying they’re in a pinch, it’s much easier for us to rearrange our schedule and help them out if there is history there,” he explains. “Building those relationships benefits everyone.”

Outside of work, Greg enjoys many of the activities Colorado is known for. He spends his free time hiking, camping, fishing, mountain biking, and snowboarding—Snowmass being his favorite destination. He and his wife also enjoy traveling to theme parks

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DANIEL PADILLA

BUILT TO SERVE

CASA BAY
PHOTOGRAPHY



For Daniel Padilla, service has never been just a career—it has been the common thread connecting every chapter of his life.

Whether serving his country through multiple deployments, helping military families navigate relocation, mentoring agents on his team, or quietly paying a community member's utility bill when they fall on hard times, Daniel approaches each opportunity with the same mindset: people first.

That philosophy has guided him from the battlefield to the closing table, helping him build one of Colorado Springs' most recognizable real estate teams while never losing sight of why he started.

From Military Service to Colorado Springs

Born in Salt Lake City and raised primarily in Utah, Daniel's childhood included several moves as

his grandfather established Spanish-speaking churches throughout the western United States. His own path eventually led him into military service, joining the Army in 1998.

His career coincided with one of the busiest operational periods in modern military history. Over the next two decades, Daniel deployed multiple times to Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations, serving as a targeting officer responsible for coordinating artillery, air support, and other fire operations.

"It was a very operational career," he says. "We were at the height of the war my entire time."

Even today, he credits much of his professional approach to lessons learned during those years. The military's decision-making framework—decide, detect, deliver—continues to shape how he serves clients through every transaction.

The Army eventually brought Daniel to Colorado Springs in 2012. After retiring in 2019, he and his family decided to stay.

"We just fell in love with Colorado," he says.

An Unexpected Introduction to Real Estate

While preparing to retire from the military, Daniel attended a networking event hosted by Team Red, White &

Blue. Naturally outgoing, he spent much of the evening introducing himself to everyone in the room.

Another real estate agent in the room asked him if he was an agent himself. "I told her I wasn't an agent—I was still active duty." Instead of being discouraged, she invited him to interview with her brokerage. That conversation opened the door to real estate.

Daniel began his career with EXIT Realty before eventually moving to Keller Williams, where he continued developing both his business and leadership skills. Later, he joined Real Brokerage,

a move he describes as another turning point.

"The technology and systems have allowed us to scale in ways I couldn't before." Today, after seven years in the industry, Daniel and his team have served more than 650 families.

Trust Earned Long Before the First Transaction

Daniel's earliest clients weren't strangers—they were fellow soldiers. His first client was his former operations officer. "If the Army trusts you to drop bombs on the enemy," his former commander told him, "I can trust you to help my family buy a house."

That relationship has now resulted in multiple transactions spanning several members of one family. Soon, word spread throughout the military community. Personnel officers, logistics officers, fellow service members, veterans, and military families all began reaching out. The trust Daniel had built over decades of military service naturally carried into his new profession. Rather than trying to reinvent himself, he leaned into the relationships he had already earned.

Telling His Story

As his business grew, Daniel recognized another opportunity: social media. Instead of creating polished advertisements, he simply documented what he was learning, where he was serving, and how he could help others. "I would just tell my story."

Over time, those consistent videos created something far



“WHEN THINGS
DON'T GO THE WAY
PEOPLE ENVISIONED,
IT HURTS ME TOO.
I TRULY DO CARE.”



more valuable than views—they created familiarity. Recently, Daniel closed on a \$1.1 million home for a client who had followed his content for seven years before ever reaching out. “He told me, ‘I feel like I already know you.’”

That kind of relationship has become one of the defining characteristics of Daniel’s business. His YouTube channel, now approaching 10,000 subscribers, continues introducing families to life in Colorado Springs while serving as another avenue to educate and build trust.

Recognition along the way—including being featured as a Rising Star in *Colorado Springs Real Producers* and appearing on local news—has further reinforced that credibility, but Daniel still views those opportunities as extensions of the same mission: helping people.

Leading Through Service
Daniel’s team reflects much of his own background.

Many members have military ties—whether through prior service or family currently serving—which allows the team to naturally connect with the large military population throughout the Pikes Peak region.

Leadership, however, extends beyond recruiting. Daniel enjoys mentoring newer agents, conducting weekly coaching sessions, organizing lead-generation competitions, and creating an environment where everyone continues improving together.

“I love training people,” he says. “I love seeing someone grow.” Watching former team members develop into successful business owners themselves has become one of the most rewarding parts of his career.

Giving Back Quietly
Community involvement has always been an extension of Daniel’s business rather than a marketing strategy. His team regularly participates

in local charitable events like the Angel Run while also finding quieter ways to help families facing financial hardship.

Sometimes that means paying a utility bill. Sometimes it means organizing school supply drives. Recently, after hearing about a local need, Daniel purchased 120 backpacks for students at Wildflower Elementary School. “There wasn’t a big plan,” he says. “I just knew we could help.”

Those moments don’t always make headlines, but they reflect the way Daniel prefers to serve—responding to needs as they arise and looking for opportunities to leave people better than he found them.

The Heart Behind the Business

When asked how he hopes clients remember working with him, Daniel pauses before answering. “The people who truly know me know my heart.” Real

estate can be emotional. Transactions don’t always unfold as expected, and challenges inevitably arise. Daniel doesn’t pretend otherwise.

Instead, he wants clients to know they aren’t navigating those moments alone. “When things don’t go the way people envisioned, it hurts me too,” he says. “I truly do care.”

Outside of work, Daniel enjoys CrossFit, challenging himself physically, catching movies with a bucket of theater popcorn, and, most importantly, spending time with his wife, Edith, and their children.

Looking back, it’s clear that while Daniel’s career has evolved—from soldier to REALTOR®, from team member to team leader—the underlying mission has remained remarkably consistent.

His profession may have changed. His commitment to serving others never has. 🏡

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Think about the people who matter most to your business. The client who became an advocate. The agent who became a friend. The introduction that opened a door. The conversation that somehow became something much bigger. *There was a time when you didn't know any of them.*

They were strangers.

That's the part of business we don't talk about enough. We talk about leads. Units. Valume. Conversion. Market share.

But some of the most consequential opportunities in your career will begin before there's anything to measure.

They begin in the unknown space between two people.

THE PERSON ACROSS THE ROOM.

You walk into an event and see someone you've wanted to meet.

Your mind starts negotiating with you. So you grab a drink. Talk to the people you already know. And maybe you leave without ever crossing the room.

WHAT IF YOU DID?

Walk over. Say hello. Ask the question. Because you have no idea what might exist on the other side of that conversation. Sometimes the greatest opportunities in our businesses begin with having the courage to walk toward something we can't yet see.

“
Your future isn't empty simply because you can't see it yet

”
That's why I don't believe relationships are something we turn toward only when we need more business. **They're the business we're building every day so opportunity already exists when we need it.**

DO THE SCARY THING.

Meet the people you think you're too small to walk up to and talk. Ask the impossible questions. There will always be someone in the room who seems more successful than you. Walk over anyway.

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Walk into a room where nobody knows your production. Talk to someone who can't do anything for you - yet. Ask the question you worry might sound ridiculous.

ALL THINGS COME AND GO.

Markets change. Deals come and go. Great years will challenge us, and difficult years will give way to something new.

But there are still people you haven't met. Conversations you haven't had. Rooms you haven't entered. Opportunities you can't see from where you're standing today.

Look forward like a child looks forward. With wonder. With expectation. Then walk across the room.

Someone you haven't met yet may be waiting on the other side.

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