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## Program helps wounded vets become brokers

Operation Wall Street is an effort by Wall Street War Fighters Foundation, started by a local firm.

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INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Friday may not have been the best day to launch an employment program in finance - even one with the great intention of providing job training for wounded veterans.

After all, Friday was the day the U.S. Labor Department announced the loss of more than half a million jobs in November, including 32,000 from the financial-services sector.

Still, that didn't stop retired Marine Gen. Peter Pace, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from showing up to launch Operation Wall Street at the Armory in Center City, the headquarters of the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry.

It also did not stop John Jones, a wounded Marine from Colorado, from enlisting in the program. When he graduates, he hopes to work as a licensed broker on Wall Street.

"It's a cyclical fact," Jones said. "We have our ups and downs. The economy is going to do a big circle, but we are the safest place in the world to invest and to save. And it's going to keep coming around. It'll get better shortly."

Operation Wall Street is an effort by Wall Street War Fighters Foundation to help a small number of wounded military members earn the federal certifications necessary for trading.

Jones, 31, lost both legs in Iraq in 2005 when his Humvee hit an antitank mine. The blast sent him 25 feet into the air.

The foundation was started by Drexel Hamilton, a Philadelphia brokerage firm chaired by Lawrence Doll, a disabled Vietnam War veteran. Despite its old-money name, it is a relative newcomer, founded in 2006. Pace heads the foundation advisory board and is a partner in the firm, whose executives mostly are veterans.

The program will cover academic preparation for securities-licensing exams, a formal internship and all expenses, including room and board in Philadelphia, and in-house training at the Goldman Sachs Group Inc., of New York.

Jones and Army Master Sgt. George Holmes, from Schuylkill Haven, will begin the program in January. Holmes, 37, was wounded in Afghanistan in June and is finishing rehab. He was leading a 41-man infantry platoon during a rocket attack. The two men next to him were killed. Bleeding badly, he saved his life by using his hands to clamp down on a severed femoral artery.

Drexel Hamilton expects an upswing in business because of the financial crisis and because it operates in a unique niche.



CLEM MURRAY / Staff Photographer

Retired Marine Gen. Peter Pace (left) and Lawrence Doll (right) of Drexel Hamilton talk with Army Master Sgt. George Holmes (second from left) and Marine Staff Sgt. John Jones.



CLEM MURRAY / Staff Photographer

Marine Staff Sgt. John Jones addresses a gathering of Wall Street executives and military officials at The Armory in Philadelphia. He is taking part in Operation Wall Street.

Because Doll, who also is chairman of United Bank in West Virginia, is a disabled war veteran, his company qualifies for shares of federal contracts, similar to the way minority- and women-owned businesses obtain parts of federal contracts.

S. Brooks Hulitt, a Drexel Hamilton partner, hopes that as major Wall Street finance houses such as Goldman Sachs turn to Washington for help, they can better curry favor if they can show they are using firms run by disabled veterans like Drexel Hamilton.

Hulitt hopes the program will expand to cover about a dozen veterans a year.