

# ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE

## BEST VETERAN ENTREPRENEUR

# Casey's willingness to ask for help when needed set him apart

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Contributing Writer

**Sean Casey's** entrepreneurial bent began at the age of 13 when, as a gas-dock attendant in Rochester, N.Y., he began selling doughnuts to fishermen.

That desire to be his own boss, however, would temporarily be put on hold when Casey joined the United States Army a few years later. In the Army, Casey served four years as a gunner on an M1 Abrams tank. During his enlistment, Casey was promoted four times to achieve the rank of corporal and was recognized for achievement and meritorious service. He was stationed in Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort Stewart, Ga., before being reassigned to Germany. While in Germany, Casey was deployed to Bosnia as part of the NATO IFOR and SFOR missions.

It was during his time in the military that Casey further developed the leadership style he would put into practice when he got the opportunity to start his own business – **Rotorcorp LLC**, an authorized Robinson Helicopter Co. service center at the Fulton County Airport.

"I learned that you feed your men and your horses (which were M1 Abrams tanks in this case) first, then yourself. I learned that the most respected leaders lead from the front – not the back," Casey said. "Obviously, these principles are somewhat softer in civilian life but the principles of taking care of my people and my customers must come before I am rewarded, not after. I have to be in the office every day tackling the toughest issues and the rest of the team will do the same."

That leadership mantra has served Casey and Rotorcorp well. In 2017, the company's revenue was \$5.8 million. It is projected to



Sean Casey

BYRON E. SMALL

be at \$6.4 million for 2018. Operating with only five employees, Rotorcorp is the largest provider of parts, engines and major components in support of the global Robinson Helicopter fleet. Since its inception in 2011, Rotorcorp has grown to serve over 1,000 customers in 45 countries around the world, with over half of its sales international.

Casey won the Best Veteran Entrepreneur category in the 2018 Small Business Person of the Year Awards sponsored by Atlanta Business Chronicle in partnership with the Metro Atlanta Chamber.

"After serving in the military and working in the corporate world for several years, I realized that I would never be able to achieve what I wanted to achieve in life working for someone else," Casey said.

He sees a key professional achievements

## SEAN CASEY

- ▶ **AGE:** 45 years old
- ▶ **BORN IN:** Rochester, N.Y.
- ▶ **LIVES IN:** East Atlanta
- ▶ **EDUCATION:** High school diploma
- ▶ **CURRENT JOB:** Owner and president of Rotorcorp
- ▶ **PRIOR JOBS:** Real estate agent/broker; worked at CNN, Gilat Spacenet, U.S. Army
- ▶ **FAMILY:** Wife, Susan, and four sons: Liam, 18; Ethan, 15; Spencer, 13; and Drake, 5
- ▶ **HOBBIES:** Enjoy being a dad; Exploring outdoors, camping, cycling and anything on the water

as recognizing he needed help and reaching out for it during a difficult time in 2014. He realized "this business commanded more from me than I had been giving at that time," he said.

Casey asked The University of Georgia Small Business Development Center for help getting Rotorcorp's finances in order. He was accepted into the rigorous eight-month Small Business Administration.

"Accessing these two resources have helped us move forward with a clear plan and solid foundation for growth," he said.

Recognizing the need for help and actually seeking it out sets Casey and Rotorcorp apart, according to **Zaheer Faruqi**, president of **Aventure Aviation**.

"Sean is aware of the business principles and has no hesitation in reaching out to local resources such as SBDC or his peers in the industry to gain knowledge or simply grasp a better understanding of a challenge he may be facing in business," said Faruqi.