

## Track Lines

*Alumni share their career journeys, as well as some useful lessons learned along the way.*



### *Max Sivohins '13*

**Left Active Duty:** 2021

**Last Active Duty Job:** Program Reviewer / CG-9 Acquisition Directorate

**Academy Major:** Management

**Advanced Degrees:** Master of Science, Real Estate Development

**Current Job:** Entrepreneur & Real Estate Investor

**Describe your job in 25 words or less.**

I am an entrepreneur primarily focused on multi-family real estate investing and government contracting. I have founded numerous start-ups, including an outdoor skydiving center.

**Briefly describe your post-CG career and what led you on this path.**

I am a serial entrepreneur and invest heavily in real estate, primarily to preserve the wealth I have built through my entrepreneurship ventures. I also recently started investing in and acquiring businesses.

**Knowing what you know now, how would you approach your transition differently?**

I started planning my transition five years prior to separation. I highly suggest everyone does the

same, especially if you are looking to be an entrepreneur. For the smoothest transition you need to ensure you have a very solid plan and enough income to live potentially without a paycheck.

**Top tip for alumni looking to transition into entrepreneurship and/or real estate investing?** Don't be scared! I have not met a more disciplined and skilled group of individuals than military veterans. Sometimes I will take a risk and simply invest because the person is an Academy graduate and I know we share a lot of the same values.

**In your current job, what keeps you up at night?** Ensuring all employees are well taken care of throughout all of my ventures. A good, talented team is hard to build and is vital to your success, so you must ensure all their needs are met.

**Professional accomplishment that you're most proud of?** I made my first million dollars just before I turned 30 years old. I was born four months before the Soviet Union collapsed in Riga, Latvia, and to be able to do that when I came from nothing has made the move to the United States for my family worthwhile. My parents took the risk moving to the United States and I did not waste my shot at the "American Dream."

**The one thing you learned while at the Academy that has set you up for success within the Coast Guard and beyond?** Discipline, responsibility and meticulous attention to detail were key, but creativity and problem solving were of the utmost importance. We are a small service that must always figure out creative ways to accomplish our many missions.

**What was your most impactful CG assignment and why?** Honestly, it wasn't an assignment, but rather my role as a culture and linguist expert in support of the many USCG delegation visits we completed to Russia. Always

walking a fine line and trying to hold that relationship together by focusing on things that we can agree on and were united on was a fantastic learning experience and challenge.

**Book or podcast that you can't stop thinking about?** *Make Your Bed: Small things that can change your life... and maybe the world* by retired Admiral William H. McRaven. I always have a notebook handy where I like to put blank boxes next to tasks I need to complete. Checking them off gives me so much satisfaction. First task of the day is make your bed - right away you are starting your day by winning and completing a task which sets the tone for your day.

**Anything else you'd like to share with our readers?** If you truly want to be an entrepreneur, ask yourself if you are ready to be vulnerable and start from nothing. When I finished working at CGHQ during my last tour, I hopped in my car and drove Uber eats to raise capital for my first venture and pay off the expensive ring I bought for my wife (haha).

Also, Chelle Gassan (below) is a Coast Guard spouse that has been a realtor in the DMV (D.C., Virginia, Maryland) for over 20 years. She has personally helped me and my family over the last five years find and buy three different homes. First it was a condo, then a townhome, and finally a single family home. She is amazing at what she does and you won't find anyone better. Trust me, I know, having worked with numerous agents on the investment side and having acquired 100+ units.

# Hi, I'm Chelle Gassan, your next Coast Guard HQ Real Estate Agent!

**REALTOR® & Coast Guard Spouse**

Why choose me? With over 16 years of residential real estate experience, I've had the pleasure of helping hundreds of Coasties just like you with their move to the DC Metro Area. Whether you're looking for a Virginia country home, a DC row house, or a Maryland suburban community- I'm here to help!

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