

The Informer



From the Chair: *Tommy Simpson III, Department of Health, Health Services Consultant, US Army Veteran*



Thought to have originated in the United Kingdom, it has often been remarked, “April showers brings May flowers!” In fact, the entire phrase goes something like this: “March winds and April showers bring May flowers and June bugs!” Although this may not hold true across the entire hemisphere, having had the pleasure, and opportunity to travel around the world literally thanks in part to my military service, and some well-timed vacations, I can say with certainty I’ve experienced the entire catch-phrase on multiple occasions over the years. Also, since arriving to the Pacific Northwest in ’02, I’ve definitely experienced the full phenomenon aforementioned. Who remember that one strategically timed field training exercise (FTX) every year in the spring, where literally, the four seasons may be experienced in one day?!

Moving on, although there are no official holidays in April, this month has been traditionally designated as “The Month of the Military Child”, and with spring break being observed the first week of April this calendar year, where applicable, I’m sure many of you, like me, are planning some sort of get-away, or other fun activities to do with your kid(s), grandkids, nieces, nephews, cousins, etc. Did I just hear someone whisper Great Wolf Lodge? Finally, it was also mentioned in last month’s Informer, on April 30, 1975, the U.S. officially ended its occupation of Vietnam, thus bringing this long, and extremely unpopular, war to an end.

Thanks to daylight savings time, the days are getting longer and warmer, and the nights are getting shorter and less cool. This means many may have a renewed since of hitting the local fitness center, or even venturing out-of-doors for a refreshing walk, run or jog, in anticipation of the PNW’s beautiful summer. Please remember to be safe, remain aware of your surroundings at all times. In addition, drink plenty of water as dehydration usually peaks this time of year, and do your best to maximize the state’s vision of a concerted work-life balance. Finally, I’d be remiss if I didn’t end by acknowledging my fellow VERG members for all you do each and every day to reflect our state agencies’ commitment to diversity, inclusion and gender equality. Together, let’s continue to move the needle.

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Veteran Spotlight – Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

William Montoya, WDVA, Intern / Apprenticeship Track Program Specialist / US Army Veteran



William Montoya, is currently an active duty officer and began a 12-week internship at WDVA on 17 January 2018. During his internship he supported the development and submission for a permanent American Job Center (AJC) / WorkSource Affiliate Site in the Hawk Transition Center at JBLM. He also completed ten informational interviews at different State Agencies and learned about Apprenticeship opportunities for veterans. William was offered a job to serve as the Apprenticeship Track Program Specialist at WDVA, which he will start May 1st, 2018. William will retire from the U.S. Army in June 2018 after serving 20 years. He is originally from Colorado but loves life in the Pacific Northwest: “the summers are beautiful with so many outdoor activities.” William has a Master’s Degree, Bachelor’s degree, and is a Certified Wellness Life Coach.

William entered the military service in 1998 as a Private First Class, with his first duty assignment being at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. He became commissioned in 2006 and served in the 82nd Airborne Division for over six years, before coming to JBLM. William love’s the outdoors of the Pacific Northwest, spending as much time with his family as possible, and helping others achieve their goals. William also spends October- February every year volunteering as the President of the Board for the Olympia Wrestling Club which involves coaching youth wrestlers and planning events for the club.

Veteran Spotlight – Washington State Department of Health

Richard Infusino, Reaccreditation Project Manager, Center for Public Affairs (C4PA), US Army Veteran



Rick Infusino works in the Office of Performance and Planning as a Project Manager for the agency’s Reaccreditation efforts. He also helped with a number of small projects such as managing the publication of the 2018 State Health Assessment. He’s only been with the DOH for seven months now, and feels very fortunate to have landed on such a terrific team.

Rick spent 20 years’ in the Army, living 13 of them in SE Asia and Europe. During his military career, he worked as an intelligence analyst, a Special Operations medic, and a Blackhawk pilot. Since Rick left military service, he has worked as a Federal Employee for Army Aviation, and as an Operations Manager for a local veteran and military spouse employment company, and has volunteered numerous hours with local organizations.

Rick lives near Tacoma with his wife, three children, and their unusually quiet dachshund. He loves sharing stories about his three children: two adopted and one “surprise” child. His pursuits include mountain biking, travelling, hiking, and any activities that help his children feel special.

Rick is currently enrolled at the University of Washington – Tacoma in the Master of Cybersecurity and Leadership program. The program finishes in August, at which point he’ll be dazed and confused by all the extra time he has. He is very appreciative of all the support he receives from DOH leadership and coworkers while he works towards this very time-consuming goal.

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WDVA Vet Corps Program Recognized

(WDVA Director & US DVA Representative pictured below - Originally published March, 13, 2018 in [Veterans Voices](#))



Recently, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs presented Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Lourdes 'Alfie' Alvarado-Ramos with the Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award. The award recognizes outstanding state programs that support veterans within their states. This year's award is for WDVA's innovations in the development of the nation's first Vet Corps program. Alfie remarked "here in Washington State, we wanted to be sure that military personnel transitioning from active duty to our higher education campuses had the level of support and sense of belonging that they needed."

Read more at <http://www.dva.wa.gov/wdva-receives-pillars-excellence-award-vet-corps-program>

Spotlight Article: Crystal Marlatt, former West Point Graduate & U.S. Army Logistics Officer, willingly shares her transitioning journey & lessons learned

I served in the military for five (5) years as a Logistics Officer (Transportation). I left the military as a Captain and transitioned to my new role as Veteran, Spouse, and Civilian Employee. I restricted my career search to the Thurston County area because I recently purchased a home in Lacey, WA and relocation was not an option. This restriction limited my job opportunities. Expanding my search to Seattle quickly allowed me to find a position.

1. Nurture Your Network- Your network is your most valuable resource. Start forming relationships with people in your industry of interest at least 6 months prior to your ETS. Attend hiring events, networking groups, and actively engage in online resources (Facebook, LinkedIn). This may be an uncomfortable process, but a simple conversation with a hiring manager where you express curiosity may lead to an offer. I was able to lock-in two offers with this approach.

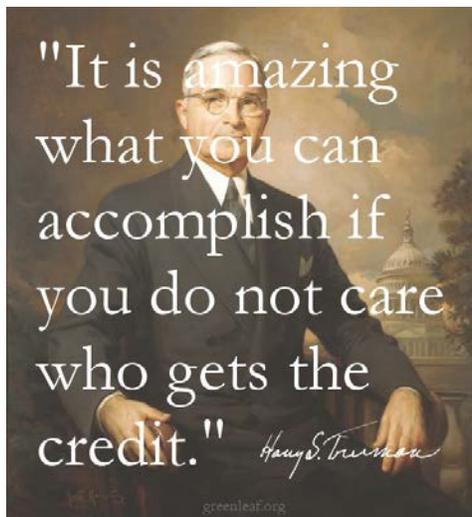
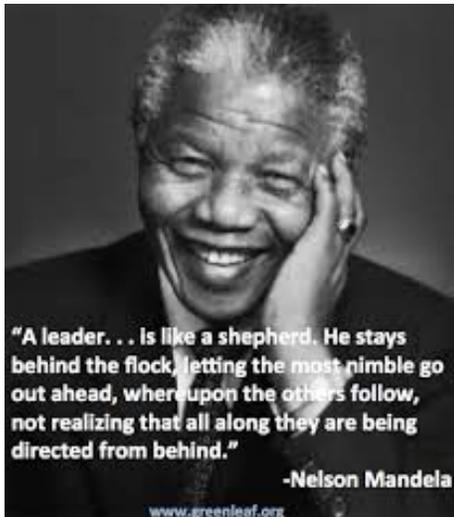
2. Appreciate Advice but Recognize Relevance- I left the Army with a false sense of confidence. Military leaders who never held a professional career outside of the military are not the best source for transition guidance. I often heard "you're a Veteran, a woman, a West Point graduate...you will easily find a position in the civilian world." I quickly learned that these descriptors held very little weight. Finding a new career was *hard*. Perhaps these qualities helped to solidify offers, but what allowed me to be noticed was the support of my network. Be humble and manage your expectations.

3. Understand Hiring Trends of Civilian Companies and Plan Accordingly- I began applying to positions in September and found a high volume of positive job opportunities. I delayed my job-search until November and I encountered a significantly different experience with less responses to my inquiries. I found that companies are allocated funds quarterly and will hire new employees in waves. Know your job-market and plan your ETS with regard to these trends. As a general rule, avoid leaving the military November-January (unless money is not an issue) because these months are holiday heavy.

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Feature Article: In my "Own Words", what does it mean to be a "Servant Leader?" By Tommy Simpson III, VERG Chair



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Reflecting on my life past and present, whilst I do not declare to be half as intelligent as the two distinguished leaders above, I am confident in saying I share each's views and ideologies of servitude leadership. In every leadership position held over the years, I always strived to convey (whether completely successful or not), I serve without ulterior motives save to say that everyone "on my watch", may benefit.

I remember to this very day, Republic of Korea, Area IV, Camp Walker, Daegu, July 2008, right before the Fourth of July holiday weekend when I (and my family), was tapped to serve as First Sergeant (1SG) for the 75th Medical Company (Area Support) - "Warriors on the Move!" During my change of responsibility speech, I spoke about running the company as one would run bank, that is, "Return on Investment". Utilizing a participatory leadership style built upon engagement and by-in, in the two years I held this position, I can count on one hand, the number of [Article 15s](#) issued during my tenure.

One story in particular that stands out in my mind, involves a troubled motor-pool Soldier who was reassigned to my company as a last resort prior to sending him to "OCS", who went on to become the "Distinguished Honor Graduate" from the Warriors Leaders Course was promoted to the rank of Sergeant within one year of his reassignment to my unit. At the time of mine own change of responsibility ceremony, my CSM remarked, "The one thing I'll always remember about 1SG Simpson is, he never sought the spotlight, no matter how great the accomplishment. He always gave FULL CREDIT, to the men and women on his watch."

So in reflecting back to the two original photo captions, as in everything I've done in my career, during and post service, even now holding the coveted distinction of Military Liaison within your (our) Washington State Department of Health, and State VERG Chair, two positions which directly allows me to continue to serve the deserving men and women (and their families) of the Armed Forces residing in Washington, my only ulterior motive is to simply "Pay-It-Forward!"

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One final thing I forgot to clarify. I used the term “OCS” earlier and some of you might still be wondering, what the heck was Tommy talking about when he stated he would send a troubled, sub-performing Soldier to OCS? Did he really mean “Officer Candidate School?” Of course I did... **SYKE!** Or better yet, **APRIL’S FOOL!**

I gave many “OCS” speeches during my service, and though those around me (including the addressee), always displayed discerning, puzzled looks initially, they all eventually came to the understanding that “OCS” for me, equated to “On City Streets!” Thanks for reading and hope I made you laugh, as I truly believe, a smile, or better yet, laughter, is still the best medicine in this ole Soldier-medic’s remedy book.

BRGs/ERGs connect to discuss Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Ethics in the Workplace: *By Tommy Simpson III, Department of Health, US Army Veteran*

Ann Reiter, State HR, US Army Veteran, March 20, 2018



On March 20, the Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW) met with multiple Employee and or Business Resource Groups (ERGs/BRGs) across the state with intent to continue to build collaboration efforts in regards to creating diverse, inclusive, discriminatory and harassment-free work environments for employees across the entire state regardless the setting. Our very own Veterans Employee Resource Group was proudly represented by Christine Dominguez (Co-Chair), who pledged the group’s continuing support to the collaborations’ aims, goals and outcomes. This first of its kind meeting was held at the Department of Labor & Industries in Tumwater.

The meeting was open to ALL state employees and included a free catered lunch for all who RSVP’d. Stay tuned for future collaborations and all are invited to join forces to make Washington’s varied business enterprises no matter the size, ‘Employers of Choice!’

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Recognition Sub-Committee 'Memorial Day' Events Announcement

By Betty DeVos, Department of Revenue (DOR), Talent & Retention Manager, Military Spouse

Photo credit to the "The Olympian"



This year, and for the first time since its inception, the VERG is participating in two Memorial Day events in partnership with the Thurston County Veterans Council (TCVC).

The first event is a Waterside Memorial Service on Sunday, May 27 at Percival Landing, Olympia. This ceremony will start at 1:00 p.m. and honors those men and women lost at sea – during combat or in times of peace. [Click here](#) to see an excerpt of last year's event.

The second is a Memorial Day Service on Monday, May 28 at the Capitol Rotunda starting at 11:00 a.m. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. For this one, you can expect cannon fire, keynote speaker Congressman Denny Heck, a rifle salute and taps. View [this link](#) to see last year's opening.

Both events have been well-attended in past years and the VERG is proud to work alongside a number of veterans organizations to support the Thurston County Veterans Council.

Upcoming Career-Focused Events

WDVA Events Calendar	WDVA website	Dates vary	Locations vary	Continuously updated
Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Recruiting Event	Dep Dir MG Harry E. Miller Jr.	04/10/2018 1 p.m.	Hawk Transition Center, Bldg 11577 41 st DIV (Lewis North)	Free Event
Direct2Apprenticeship	Flyer	4/18/2018 9 a.m. - 12 noon	Camp Murray, Bldg 91 DuPont, WA 98327	Free Event will focus on connecting veterans to registered apprenticeships
Tacoma Dome Resource Fair and Stand Down	Nine9line Veteran Services & WDVA	04/28/2018 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.	Tacoma Dome – 2727 East D Street Tacoma, WA 98105	Free Event

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Announcements, Tools & Resources

Food for thought – Protect your credit: [Theft identity, frauds and scams](#) have become the daily norm. Leading experts like the [Better Business Bureau \(BBB\)](#), recommend all persons of working age, monitor their credit. Two leading entities which provides outstanding services totally free of charge, are [Wallet Hub](#), and [Credit Karma](#).

[Military-Transition.org](#) offers comprehensive one-stop access to numerous transition resources for military families.

Just what is an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) anyway? Ever wonder just how do Talent Acquisition Specialists navigate through the hundreds of Resumes to a single job posting? *Posted on August 11, 2016 by James Hu*, this JobsCan Blog offers interesting insight for today's job seekers!

What is TagCrowd?: Yet another FREE (presently), and outstanding web application that enables users to copy and paste job descriptions and even resumes into an online portal for singling out key words and or phrases a particular hiring entity is desirous of; It was created by [Daniel Steinbock](#) while a PhD student at Stanford University. Check it out!

eBenefits continues to achieve milestones - 7 million registered users: The joint VA/DoD web portal provides resources and self-service capabilities to service members, Veterans and their families. This makes it a go-to tool and resource for the military and Veteran communities.

NAMI HOMEFRONT: Is a free, 6-session program taught by family, friends and significant others of current, or former military service members and veterans living with mental health conditions. Classes are conducted in an online, virtual setting designed to imitate traditional settings. Classes held every Monday beginning 4/30 – 6/11, 6:30 - 8:30 PM.

Working for Washington State: Check out state employment opportunities and sign up for daily job postings sent to your email inbox.

Final WDVA Legislative Updates: The 2018 Legislative Session adjourned Sine Die on March 8, 2018.



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Contact us if you have a relevant news story, idea(s), and or general information to share and the Communications Team will take action!

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