

# VERG Winter Edition

Washington State Veteran's Employee Resource Group

## Veteran's Day Wreath Ceremony 2014

By VERG members

### Special Interest Articles:

- HR CORNER
- NW EDGE COHORT UPDATE.
- WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES FOR HIRING A MILITARY VETERAN?

### Individual Highlights:

Frank O'Donnell  
Steve Loduha  
Nikki Cortes  
Brian Nell  
Daniel Butler  
Feiloaiga Oloi



VERG Members from numerous State Agencies pose for a picture after the wreath laying ceremony.



VERG Chairwoman and Governor Jay Inslee watch the posting of colors during the ceremony.

*In honor of Veterans Day, Governor Inslee issued an invitation to the Veteran Employee Resource Group (VERG), to participate in a wreath laying ceremony at the Winged Monument.*

*The Winged Monument was dedicated to the memory of World War I veterans in a solemn and patriotic ceremony on the capital grounds May 30, 1938.*

*The sculpture was unveiled by two GoldStar mothers, Mrs. Charles V. Leach and Mrs. Cordelia Cater, after whose sons the Olympia posts of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars were named.*

*The bronze sculpture features a 12-foot tall figure of Winged Victory surrounded by the figures of a soldier, a sailor, a marine, and a Red Cross nurse.*



## HR Corner – Try using Mentoring as a Retention Strategy

By Lonnie Spikes, MSHR, SPHR

Mentoring is an informal method of assisting with the on-boarding process and assimilation of the new employee to an agency's culture. For those new employees who are transitioning out of the structured culture of military service, having a process to help with assimilation to the culture found in state government, is a great tool to help with retention of those veterans. Here is a checklist that will get you started in helping to identify mentors who exist within your agency, and some ideas for how they can make a connection with your new hire.

The Mentor should:

- Be knowledgeable on both agency and unit's applicable policies, procedures, rules and workplace dynamics (i.e. lunch and break room sites, unit's morale activities).
- Provide assistance to the supervisor on providing the new hire with the agency and unit's applicable policies, procedures, rules and workplace dynamics (i.e. lunch and break room sites, unit's morale activities).

Checklist for Mentors:

- Email the new hire prior to date of hire.
- Introduce new hire to co-workers (this will be different coming from a peer).
- Arrange lunches with the new hire (at least two during on-boarding).
- Arrange breaks with new hire (at least four during on-boarding).
- Check-in with new hire (at least twice a week).

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*"Leaders..should influence others..in such a way that it builds people up, encourages and edifies them so they can duplicate this attitude in others."*  
~Bob Goshen

## NW EDGE Cohort 2014 Update

By Ann Reiter, Lead Veteran Strategist at OFM



The NW Edge program's pilot year ended with great success. Over 35% of the participants have begun their new careers within the civilian workforce. The state enterprise led the way hiring over 15 NW Edge participants into the public sector. Most transitioning service

members want to continue to serve as civil servants, and the state has become their employer of choice. We would like to spotlight those agencies who have successfully hired talented qualified veterans into their teams....

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## What are the Advantages of Hiring a Military Veteran?



[Jon Davis](#)

Contributing Writer- *Sergeant of Marines, Fought in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).*

I am going to speak as a Marine and a former hiring manager. I was once a Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps with two Iraq tours and have worked in the retail, real estate, the tech industry start-up and education

sectors. In that time, I've hired more than enough people to know that it's one of the hardest decisions you have to regularly make. The choices of who you bring into an organization will either make or break you far quicker than anything you as the individual are capable of. I also know that almost all the decisions you make as a hiring manager happen as the sum result of the generalizations and stereotypes you have attached to the bullet points on their résumé. Don't feel bad. It's important to not follow that instinct that all individuals are fundamentally good and fundamentally the same. That's how you get robbed and your employees drive your company into the ground.

The facts are, you rely on those generalizations to give you the best guess of who is going to add value to your company's culture and who isn't going to burn the place to the ground. That said, what happens when you see military experience show up in your inbox? What generalizations do you hold? Do you really not know what it is you're looking at? Would you like to

know more? The problem with many hiring managers is that they have no idea what it means when they see a veteran's resume. What qualities should you expect? What flaws? What do they add? How are they different from someone else? I wrote this piece to help communicate what to expect. Hopefully after reading you will be able to make an informed decision. You'll be able to know better if this applicant is not only a good worker for you, but also someone who can grow and drive your company in the future, someone who can grow with you, and maybe even someone who can help you take your operations to the next level.

### Leadership is Ingrained in Vets

What many people don't know is that the United States Marine has an average age of only 19. What? Yes, that Marine is incredibly young, but it still needs to be led. Who do you think is doing this? 19 year olds. By the time most people are twenty in the Marines (this goes for the other services, as well) they are already an NCO. This stands for Non-Commissioned-Officer. Don't let the "Non" throw you off. What an NCO means is, "The guy in charge who will make my life Hell if I screw up," or just as often, "the guy whose job it is to make sure I stay alive." By the age of 20 some kids have already become technical experts in a professional field, are teachers to younger service-members and have led small teams in everything from shop operations to combat deployments.

By the time I was 22 I was a Sergeant in

"In May 2013, Governor Inslee signed Executive Order 13-01 on employment opportunities for transitioning service members within Washington State".

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### Faces in the Crowd: Frank O'Donnell by Mary Forbes, WDVA

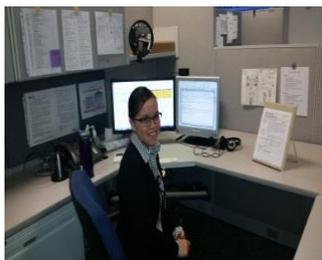
Frank O'Donnell joined the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs as the Military Transition Council Project Manager after serving over 25 years on active duty with the US Army. Frank was involved in a number of innovative programs and strategic policy development while serving in the military.



### Faces in the Crowd: Steve Loduha by Allyn Oligher, State Parks

Steve Loduha serves as a HR Consultant Assistant with key responsibilities as a Personnel/Payroll (HRMS) and Learning and Management System processor. Steve assists with L&I claims and is also responsible for data tracking, file maintenance. He also processes fingerprints for new employees and tracks the Agency's Gold Star Program and years of service awards.

Steve Loduha entered the service on August 12, 1994 and retired as a 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. During his military career he was stationed with 3-4 Cavalry (Schweinfurt Germany), 1-34th Armor (Fort Riley, KS), Army Recruiter (Bellevue, WA), 1-23IN (Fort Lewis, WA), and 2-358AR (Fort Lewis, WA), 8-1 Cavalry (Fort Lewis, WA).



### Faces in the Crowd: Nikki Cortes by Nikki Cortes, DOH

My name is Nikki Cortes. This December, I began a career with the WA State Department of Health. I became a member of Camo2Commerce as I transitioned out of the military, where they equipped me with an array of educational tools, workshops and mock interviews to prepare me for employment. I am now a Health Services Consultant for the Prescription Monitoring Program, giving health providers another tool for patient care and safety. I am very passionate about the work we do and the assistance we give to our community in the identification and prevention of drug abuse.



My successful Army career of 10 years has given me great experience in multiple positions and locations. Those factors provided a solid foundation to this new chapter in my life. I transitioned out of the Army as a Staff Sergeant where my last assignment was with the 16<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade. During my career, I had two overseas assignments, three state side assignments, and served three combat deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. I am happily married to my partner-in-crime Antonio. He has supported me endlessly through the many stages of our life and I appreciate him immensely. We have two beautiful daughters; True who is 5 and Valentina who is 7 months old.

I enjoy spending time with my family, reading, traveling, watching movies, and playing video games. We love this state for its culture, outdoors and relish everything it offers.



### Faces in the Crowd: Brian Nell by Brian Nell, DOH

My name is Brian Nell. This past November I began a career with Washington State at the Department of Health. I am a Public Health Advisor in the Office of Investigations and Inspections.

I was born in Utah and raised in Montana. I served 18 years in the United States Army as an Environmental Engineer. My last assignment was with the 56<sup>th</sup> Multifunctional Medical Battalion under the 62<sup>nd</sup> Medical Brigade. My experience includes serving as the Chief of Environmental Health for the United States Army Southern Regional Medical Command in San Antonio, TX, and as the Chief of Environmental Health and Engineering and Industrial Hygiene for the United States Army Public Health Command at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA. I am married to my true companion, Margaret, and she has been extremely supportive over the years. I have two children from a previous marriage, Benjamin (15) who resides with me in Olympia and Anessa (12) who resides with her mother in California.

My family and I have been exploring the great Pacific Northwest and really enjoy all that Washington has to offer.



### Faces in the Crowd: Daniel Butler by Daniel Butler, DOH

My name is Daniel Butler and recently joined the WA State workforce as a Health Service Consultant for the Department of Health in December. I currently work for Chris Baumgartner, Prescription Monitoring Program Project Director, within the Health Services Quality Assurance.

I was raised in the small town of Corrales New Mexico, just outside of Albuquerque. After completing a successful military career I decided to remain in the Olympia area. I recently retired as a United States Air Force as a Master Sergeant after serving 24 years as an Aircraft Maintenance Specialist. My last assignment was as the Flight Safety Non-Commissioned Officer, for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. During my career, I completed a four year assignment to Rota Naval Station Spain, temporary duty assignments to various locations in Europe, Asia and South America as well as two deployments to Qatar and Kuwait.

I have three daughters, Ann, Kathleen, and Rachael who live in Olympia. This is my first job with the state, and after a career in public service to the nation, I really wanted to continue to serve the public and make a difference in the community where I live. I am really excited about the long term initiatives and potential impact this organization can have across the state.

My family and I have been enjoying Washington and all that it has to offer since 2007. We have decided to settle here and make Washington our new home state.



### Faces in the Crowd: Feiloaiga Oloi, by Feiloaiga Oloi, DOR

My name is Feiloaiga Oloi. This past December I started my first state job as an Office Assistant for the Department of Revenue. I work within the Unclaimed Property section of Special Programs.

I currently serve in the U.S. Army Reserves as a Behavioral Health Technician (68X). I've been with the 1972<sup>nd</sup> Medical Detachment Unit located in JBLM since May of last year. I'm relatively fresh out of boot camp having gone through basic training in Ft. Jackson, SC in October 2013 and completed AIT in Ft. Sam Houston, TX in May 2014.



(Continued) Faces in the Crowd: Feiloaiga Oloi



My interest in pursuing a career in the public sector was influenced by family members and friends who are current state employees. From them I've been told of the endless occupational opportunities the state has to offer and the great benefits they provide. In addition, I have a BA degree in Political Science from the University of Washington, so a career within some type of governmental setting appealed to me from the get go. I plan on eventually going back to school and getting my Master's in either Accounting or Management Studies.

I was born in American Samoa, but consider Washington home. I grew up as a military brat having lived in Georgia and Germany. In many ways I can be described as a mini version of my father who is currently serving Active Duty in the U.S. Army as a Geospatial Engineering Technician (125D). I consider my mother my biggest role model. I'm the oldest of two siblings. When not working I love to hang out with my friends and enjoy the nightlife scene that Washington has to offer. I'm a huge sports fan and love to partake in recreational games of volleyball and soccer. I'm a major foodie and love to travel and enjoy the different cuisines from areas outside of town.

Idea for Recognition of Agency Veterans: Create a Wall of Honor, by DNR Staff

Grid of 48 small portraits with names and agency affiliations, including individuals like Lisa A. Brown, Mark Anderson, and others.

# CAREER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT LUNCH PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

The event featured a panel discussion with professionals representing the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs regarding benefits for veterans and their families. Q & A and networking were set to follow the panel discussion.

### What were the benefits of attending this session?

- Develop insight and strategies for your own career goals and personal development.
- Expand your employment contacts and network with other veterans within state government.

This event was open to all who have served in the Armed Forces. Conference rooms were set up for this event in Tumwater (AGO office), Vancouver (WA State School for the Blind), Spokane (WorkSource), Seattle (AGO office), Olympia (DOL), and Yakima (WorkSource).

To discuss future ideas for Lunch Programs, send an email to DOL Human Resource Consultant Lonnie Spikes, at [lspikes@dol.wa.gov](mailto:lspikes@dol.wa.gov).

## Save the Date! ~ Joint Base Lewis McCord

ATTENTION EMPLOYERS: The up-coming Career Day at Joint Base Lewis McCord is scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. The first day will be pre-workshops, where service members can network, get assistance with application materials, and hear from employers about best practice tips for landing your next career. The second day will be the Job Fair. Time/location to be determined.



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## What are the Advantages of Hiring a Veteran

### 2014-2015 VERG Executive Board

Chair: Cathrene Nichols (**WDVA**)  
 Co-Chair: Lonnie Spikes (**DOL**)  
 Secretary: Ashley Harris (**DOC**)  
 Executive Sponsor: Mary Forbes

#### Member Agencies

Attorney General's Office (**ATG**)  
 Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (**BIIA**)  
 Consolidated Technology Services (**CTS**)  
 Dept. of Commerce (**COM**)  
 Dept. of Corrections (**DOC**)  
 Dept. of Ecology (**ECY**)  
 Dept. of Enterprise Services (**DES**)  
 Dept. of Financial Institutions (**DFI**)  
 Dept. of Health (**DOH**)  
 Dept. of Labor and Industries (**L&I**)  
 Dept. of Licensing (**DOL**)  
 Dept. of Natural Resources (**DNR**)  
 Dept. of Revenue (**DOR**)  
 Dept. of Social and Health Services (**DSHS**)  
 Dept. of Veteran Affairs (**DVA**)  
 Employment Security Dept. (**ESD**)  
 Health Care Authority (**HCA**)  
 Human Rights Commission (**HUM**)  
 Office of Administrative Hearings (**OAH**)  
 Office of Financial Management-State HR Division (**OFM/SHRD**)  
 Parks and Recreation Commission (**PARKS**)  
 Recreation and Conservation Office (**RCO**)  
 State Investment Board (**SIB**)  
 Washington Lottery (**LOT**)  
 Washington State Dept. of Transportation (**WSDOT**)  
 Washington State Patrol (**WSP**)  
 Washington State School for the Blind (**WSSB**)  
 Washington Student Achievement Council (**WSAC**)

charge of a team of 13 other Marines. We were all occupying very technical jobs in the computer networking field and responsible for overseeing the maintenance and distribution of over \$3 million dollars of Marine Corps property. You probably might think that that was a stupid investment on someone so young, but we pulled it off, with no fanfare I might add, and we did things like that all the time. It wasn't until I received a degree in Business Management at 25, that the civilian world could trust me again with doing the same thing. I suppose, on the outside, people can't be trusted with that kind of responsibility. Every day, though, vets do. The fact is that I could not have done this alone. I had those thirteen Marines who did the work and it was my job to coordinate. I had a very solid framework for leadership that include such gems as the Five Paragraph Order, Six Troop Leading steps, and the Thirteen Leadership Traits. These have become pivotal to my personal growth as a manager, teacher, and how I lead others. The military philosophies on the science of leading aren't something that leave you. The military trains Service Members to lead by example. Skills like motivation and delegation are actually given time to be trained and implemented in the most hostile environments imaginable.

The military doesn't just educate their members on the practical ways to manage behavior, such as the discipline and communication methods. Leadership is truly studied on the academic and theoretical level. More so than in other organization, this theoretical and practical leadership are put in practice as a matter of survival.

You want another note on leadership? In the military, no one can be fired, not at the bottom tiers at least. That means that you have to get the job done. You are out there for seven to fourteen months with no replacements and just the same team along with all their problems. You have to train them, discipline them, correct them, counsel them and shape them, because you have no other choices. You didn't even get to hire them. They were just assigned to you, more or less, at random. That is another reason why vets have such strong leadership skills. Could you honestly say that you could run a company the way the Marines do, with their success record, if you couldn't even pick who gets hired and can't even get rid of the ones who suck? You probably couldn't, but the military does. Choosing team members and leaders who have proven they are able to do this means that you are choosing team members who are adaptable and know how to lead others.

*For more on Advantages to Hire Military Veterans read full article at:*  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/quora/what-are-the-advantages-to-hire-military-veterans.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=business&ir=Business](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/quora/what-are-the-advantages-to-hire-military-veterans.html?utm_hp_ref=business&ir=Business)

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**Northwest Edge Program**

- (Spotlight Agencies)
- Liquor Control Board (LCB)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)
- Health Care Authority (HCA)
- Military Department
- Department of Revenue (DOR),
- Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS)
- Washington Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA)
- Department Of Health (DOH).

We would also like to spotlight agency employees who have become vital partners throughout each cohort:

- Don Chavez (DES)
- Davis Garabato (DSHS)
- Cat Nichols (WDVA)
- Tommy Simpson (DOH)
- Chuck Johnson (DOT)
- Leialani Jensen (DOR)
- Sue Richards (COM)
- Sanyu Tushabe (HCA)
- Rose Israel (HCA)
- Ashley Harris (DOC)
- Lonnie Spikes (DOL)

2015 brings more successes as we pilot the NW Edge Program at Fairchild AFB and Kitsap. If you would like to become a participating partner in the NW Edge program please contact Ann Reiter at (360) 407-4145 or [ann.reiter@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:ann.reiter@ofm.wa.gov).

**DO YOU HAVE IDEAS FOR NEWSLETTER MATERIAL?  
SUBMIT YOUR INFORMATION TO THE VERG COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE FOR OUR  
NEXT QUARTERLY LETTER!**

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