



U.S. Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Office of Trust Services

Honoring our Trust Services Veterans



“These veterans are some of the most dedicated, loyal and tenacious employees I know, demonstrating true grit in their service to Indian Country. I encourage all employees to take a moment to speak with their fellow vets. Take note of their leadership styles and consider the ways we all grow as leaders to better serve our teams and Tribes”.

Darryl LaCounte
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Honoring our Trust Services Veterans

Darin BEGAY

Inventory Management Specialist
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Travis BLACKETTER

Program Analyst
Lakewood, Colorado

Dale (Albert) BOND

Realty Officer
Lakewood, Colorado

Michelle CRUZ-SALEM

Contract Specialist
Boise, Idaho

Anthony Charles DAVIS

Electronics Technician
Boise, Idaho

Darla EVANKOVICH

Realty Specialist
Billings, Montana

Eric Michael GONZALEZ

Cartographic Technician
Sacramento, California

John HOLDER

Audiovisual Production Specialist
Boise, Idaho

Daniel James KAIM

Supervisory Petroleum Engineer
Lakewood, Colorado

Bradford LECOMPTE

Supervisory Equipment Specialist
Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Kyle Albert LEVIN

Mechanical Engineer
Lakewood, Colorado

Olivia LUCERO-NELSON

Administrative Assistant
Dulce, New Mexico

Paul Michael MAHON

Cartographic Technician
Dulce, New Mexico

Darryl MARTINEZ

Natural Resource Specialist
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Steven MESA

Program Analyst
Lakewood, Colorado

Ira NEW BREAST

Water & Land Resources Officer
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Richard Owen

Asst. National Fire Cache Manager
Billings, Montana

Christopher T. TALBOT

Cartographic Technician
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Information for employee bios provided on a strictly voluntary basis.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

November 10, 2021

Greetings all,

This past October 29th, President Biden proclaimed November as National Native American Heritage Month, 2021. Within his proclamation, he writes:

“Despite a painful history marked by unjust Federal policies of assimilation and termination, American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have persevered. During National Native American Heritage Month, we celebrate the countless contributions of Native peoples past and present, honor the influence they have had on the advancement of our Nation, and recommit ourselves to upholding trust and treaty responsibilities, strengthening Tribal sovereignty, and advancing Tribal self-determination.”

When I read these words, I am humbled by the fact that I work for and support a bureau of 4,500 employees, many who have themselves served in our armed forces or have family members who are serving. It is these employees who know intimately the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual sacrifices made on our Nation’s behalf so the rest of us may know security.

When I give pause to think about the veterans I know personally, I am grateful to them for their service, but also for the principles and skills they contribute to our organization. These veterans are some of the most dedicated, loyal, and tenacious employees I know, demonstrating true grit in their service to Indian Country.

I encourage all employees to take a moment to speak with your fellow vets. Take note of their leadership styles and consider the ways we all grow as leaders to better serve our teams and Tribes. I invite you to visit a new online exhibit by the National Native American Museum entitled, “Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces”. You will find the exhibit at www.americanindian.si.edu/why-we-serve/.

BIA employees also honorably serve and demonstrate their commitment to Indian people and Tribes.

Darryl LaCounte
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Darin Begay, Staff Sergeant (E-5) United States Air Force veteran

BIA Position: Inventory Management Specialist with Program Management and Coordination in Albuquerque, NM



Photos: Darin Begay in military collage and standing with 505 Thunder basketball team he coaches, 505 Thunder logo

Darin Begay has been working with the Office of Trust Services for one year. He is an Inventory Management Specialist, with Program Management and Coordination. He is a member of the Navajo Tribe.

He earned the rank of E-5 in the United States Air Force and while serving from 1987-1991. While in the military his primary duties as a Tactical Aircraft Maintenance Specialist, tasked with taking care of the F-16 tactical aircraft systems, when the pilots aren't flying them, ensuring they are repaired and maintained to be ready at any time.

Aircraft maintenance specialists perform end of runway, post-flight and preflight, thru-flight and phase inspections. Perform integrated combat turns and hot pit refuels, advise on maintaining, servicing, and inspecting aircraft and related aerospace equipment, and troubleshoot and maintain aircraft structures, systems, components, and related equipment. These airmen remove and install aircraft components, conduct functional tests of repaired components and systems, and adjust, align, and rig aircraft systems. Inspections include structures, systems, components, and related systems and interprets inspection finding to determine what corrective actions might need to be taken.

For fun and in his free time he enjoys playing video games with his boys and serving as head coach for all Native American Youth Girls' basketball team, 505 Thunder, at local and out of state basketball tournaments. He also volunteers for his boys' gym as a trainer and enjoys watching 3 movies with his family on the big screen.

Travis Blacketter, Corporal (E-4) United States Marines veteran

BIA Position: Program Analyst with the Land Titles and Records Office in Lakewood, Colorado



Photos: Travis Blacketter delivering ordinance to an expeditionary airfield, screen shot of GIS parcel creation process, and Travis atop 14,000-foot peak in Colorado

Travis Blacketter has been working with the Office of Trust Services, Division of Land Titles and Records as a Program Analyst working on Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) in Lakewood, Colorado for ten years. He is a member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe.

He earned the rank of Corporal in the United States Marines and served for 4.5 years in Iraq, Kuwait, Japan, Thailand, and Gaum. He built, delivered, and deployed air launched rockets, missiles, and bombs, in support of ground forces during active combat missions.

He describes one of his most memorable experiences working with the BIA to be working with multiple BIA Regions to support the parcel creation process.

For fun and in his free time he enjoys climbing 14,000 foot plus peaks in the lower 48 states.

Kyle A. Levin, Senior Airman (E-6/HM1) United States Air Force veteran

BIA Position: Mechanical Engineer (Renewable Energy) with the Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD) in Lakewood, Colorado



Photos: Kyle Levin exiting a plane, Airmen posing for photo in front of plane

Kyle A. Levin has been working with the Office of Trust Services, Division of Energy and Minerals Development (DEMD) as a mechanical engineer focused on renewable energy in Lakewood, Colorado for 6.5 years.

He earned the rank of Senior Airman in the United States Airforce where he served for 6 years. As a Senior airman he was responsible for Airborne Cryptologic Language Analysis. He preplanned and organized airborne operations and was responsible for translating foreign intelligence communications and locating ground threats. He also provided airborne oversight for U.S. troops and allies during combat, personnel recovery, and special operations missions. He flew aboard RC-135 and MC-12 aircraft for a total of more than 1,000 combat flight hours overseas. Kyle was deployed five times to Qatar (Al Udeid Air Base and Afghanistan Bagram Air Base).

He describes one of his most memorable experiences working with the BIA as follows. "One of my best memories at DEMD was watching one of my first projects evolve from a feasibility study grant application to completion and implementation (1.2 MW Solar PV Array at Picris Pueblo). It really showed me that what we do here at DEMD really does make a difference".

For fun and in his free time he enjoys hiking, camping, boating, fishing, guitar and definitely karaoke.

Bodie Shaw, Staff Sergeant (E-6) United States Air Force veteran and Reservist

BIA Position: BIA Northwest Region, Deputy Regional Director in Portland, Oregon and Acting BIA Fire Director 2021



Photos: Active-Duty military photo, C-130 Hercules aircraft, Bodie Shaw in fire gear, Lakeview Veterans Hotshot Crew

Bodie Shaw brought his expertise in to assist OTS as interim Fire Director in 2021 until the position could be filled. 2021 was one of the busiest fire seasons in history. The program had high visibility including a visit from the POTUS. He has since returned to his permanent position as BIA Northwest Region, Deputy Regional Director for Trust, Portland, Oregon.

Bodie earned the rank of Staff Sergeant in the United States Airforce where he served for 4 years and on active duty in Texas, California, South Korea, and Japan. He went on to provide active-duty support as a reservist for two years. While in the military he worked as an Aircraft Maintenance Bombardment Specialist, specializing in fighter jets (F-15 and F-16) munitions preparation, and loading and cargo jets (C-130s, C-5s and C-141s) prepping for long range hauling of personnel equipment around the globe.

He recalls one of his most memorable experiences working with the BIA, Office of Trust Services during his acting BIA Fire Director tenure over the summer of 2021 as follows. "I was fortunate enough to meet one of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Veteran fire crews...the Lakeview Veterans Interagency Hotshot Crew out of Lakeview, Oregon. As a fellow military veteran, I was honored to meet and discuss with the crew how they parlayed their military experience to the hotshot crew. Given that I followed the same path (leaving military and joining a Type II US Forest Service crew), it was great to see how the BLM has elevated veterans into the elite status/crews of Hotshots. My hope is that one day, the BIA could do the same with our native vets!"

For fun and in his free time he is a state certified coach in baseball, basketball, soccer, softball, and lacrosse and coached all 3 of his children in all or most sports. He restores muscle cars, enjoys camping and crabbing along the Oregon coasts each summer.

Owen Richardson, Sergeant (E-5)

United States Army veteran

BIA Position: BIA Northwest Region, Deputy Regional Director in Portland, Oregon and Acting BIA Fire Director 2021



Photos: Active-Duty military photo, Military logos, Owen with his wife Emma

Owen Richardson has been working with the Office of Trust Services, Wildland Fire Program for 16+ years. He is the Assistant National Fire Cache Manager, Supply Specialist since October 2005 providing supplies to Regional and National All Hazard emergencies. He earned the rank of U.S. Army Airborne Paratrooper, Sergeant in the United States Army where he served from November 1984 – July 1991. Owen is a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes (Hidatsa) of Newtown, North Dakota.

Owen went to Basic Training in Ft. Leonardwood, Missouri, US Army Quartermaster school, Ft. Lee, Virginia, US Army Airborne School, Ft. Benning, Georgia, 18th Airborne Corps Recondo School, and Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC). He was assigned to the Headquarters Battery 2nd Battalion 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and the Delta Battery 4th Battalion 1st Brigade, 32nd Defense Command. He worked to maintain the Mandatory Load List of repair parts for everything from personnel weapons to Howitzers, Air Defense Artillery, and all vehicles.

He enjoys spending family time with his wife of 36 years, Emma and traveling when they can. He closely follows the exploits of their three children and grandchildren, be it sports, chorus, violin concerts, plays, etc. They are all enjoyable.

Chrisopher Talbot, Petty Officer First Class (E-6)/Hospital Corpsman, First Class (HM1) United States Navy veteran

BIA Position: BIA Cartographic Technician, Branch of Geospatial Support in Lakewood, Colorado



Photos: Active-Duty military photo, map of Afghanistan, operating a drone

Christopher Talbot has been working with the Office of Trust Services for 1.5 years. He is a Cartographic technician with the Branch of Geospatial Support in Lakewood, Colorado. He earned the rank of Senior Airman in the United States Airforce where he served for 19 years.

Kyle was deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom 2nd BN 3rd Marines in Afghanistan in 2009 and again in support of security operations 24th marines in Afghanistan in 2012. As a Corpsman he provided medical support for Marines in administration, everyday medical services, trauma and as a combat paramedic.

He describes one of his most memorable experiences working with the BIA as follows. “I really enjoyed participating in the Tribal Geospatial Information Services (GIS) conference in 2020 as it was really neat to see how geospatial is being applied by a variety of native communities to solve problems”.

For fun and in his free time he enjoys flying drones and taking pictures and videos with them. He hopes to eventually utilize the drones to make maps with them.