

Honoring our Trust Services Veterans

November 2023



The U.S. celebrates Veteran's Day and the service members who have courageously served and continue to serve in our Armed Forces. Given that American Indians serve in the United States 'Armed forces at five times the national average, a higher per capita ratio than any other ethno-demographic in the United States, those who continue their service with the BIA are, rightfully, doubly honored. My ask of all of you is that if you know or work with any veterans, please take the time to thank them for their continued service and the leadership they share throughout the year. I am deeply grateful for the leadership they model and the expertise they share. Their input makes BIA and Indian Country a stronger, more economically viable place for us and the American Indians and Alaskan Natives we serve.

Darryl LaCounte

Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Honoring our Trust Services Veterans

November 2023



*“This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.”-
Elmer Davis*

Darin BEGAY

Inventory Management Specialist
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Travis BLACKETTER

Program Analyst
Lakewood, Colorado

Dale Albert BOND

Chief, Energy & Minerals Development
Lakewood, Colorado

Michelle CRUZ-SALEM

Contract Specialist
Boise, Idaho

Anthony Charles DAVIS

Electronics Technician
Boise, Idaho

Darla EVANKOVICH

Realty Specialist
Billings, Montana

Daniel KAIM

Supervisory Petroleum Engineer
Lakewood, Colorado

Bradford LECOMPTE

Supervisory Equipment Specialist
Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Kyle Albert LEVIN

Mechanical Engineer
Lakewood, Colorado

Myles LYTLE

Mechanical Engineer
Lakewood, Colorado

Paul Michael MAHON

Cartographic Technician
Dulce, New Mexico

Steven Donald MESA

Program Analyst
Lakewood, Colorado

Chid J. MURPHY

Chief, Resource Integration & Services
Lakewood, Colorado

Ira NEW BREAST

Water and Land Resources Officer
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Robert T. WEBER

NIOGEMS Trainer (Contractor)
Lakewood, Colorado

Information for employee bios provided on a strictly voluntary basis.



MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY BUREAU DIRECTOR

November 9, 2023

Colleagues,

An integral aspect of our annual National Native American Heritage Month celebration is Veterans Day. During this time, we extend our recognition and gratitude to all individuals who have served in America's military, including reservist, National guard members, and their families who have shared in their sacrifice.

Additionally, we dedicate time to honor the numerous Native American men and women who have served in the nation's Armed Forces. These individuals exhibited loyalty, determination, skill, and courage in their duties, with many being highly decorated for their valor. To the veterans on my staff, it is because of your heroism and sacrifice that we enjoy safety at home and abroad. We honor you this Veteran's Day and thank you for your military service and for the expertise you bring to the Office of Trust Services. You model leadership, integrity, and teamwork in your everyday duties.

Happy Veteran's Day and Native American Heritage Month!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Johnna Blackhair".

Johnna Blackhair
Deputy Bureau Director-Trust Services



Asking our OTS Veterans...



If you started a program to help veterans returning from military service prepare for a federal job, what might it include?

- An explanation of the types of Federal jobs available
- Identify what qualifications are required for available jobs
- Training sessions on how to search USA Jobs
- Training session on how to draft a federal resume

What qualities/traits did you learn in military service you find essential to your success in federal service?

- Leadership Skills
- Be Resilient
- Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle
- Walk with Integrity
- The Importance of Collaboration
- Work as a Team



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



BIA Position: Inventory Management Specialist, Division of Program Management and Coordination, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Photos: Darin Begay in military uniform, Varsity girls he coaches against Native American teams from CA, ID, and ND. Varsity girls participated in tournament in Oklahoma City sponsored by Lindy Waters III. Mr. Waters (pictured with team), is an NBA player with the Oklahoma Thunder, presented my three high school seniors with scholarships prior to tournament start. Team logo.

Darin Begay has been working with the Office of Trust Services for three years. 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.

In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and going to the gym with her. He serves as head coach for all Native American Youth Girls' basketball team, 505 Thunder, at local and out of state basketball tournaments. He volunteers time on a basketball tournament committee and coaching 6U boys and girls in coordination and guidance with the NB3 Fit Youth development program. Striking Eagle Native American Invitational (SENAI) is held annually at the University of New Mexico Johnson gym on the main campus.



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



BIA Position: Program Analyst, Division of Land Titles and Records, Lakewood, Colorado

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

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. Travis was tasked with creating a new GIS Branch under OTS called Branch of Geodata Examination and Validation for the purpose of supporting OTS GIS needs and support for the BIA Regions. He is currently the acting Branch Chief for this new GIS modernization effort.

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 feet plus peaks in the lower 48 states.



**Daniel J. Kaim, Cavalry Scout Team Leader/Sergeant (E-5)
United States Army veteran**



**BIA Position: Supervisory Petroleum Engineer/Branch Chief, NIOGEMS and
Acting Branch Chief, Geotechnical Data Services, Division of Energy and
Mineral Development, Lakewood, Colorado**

Photos: Daniel Kaim in Afghanistan in 2012. He was a Cavalry Scout Team Leader with the 82nd Airborne Division conducting combat operations out of Combat Outpost Giro in Ghazni Province.

Daniel J. Kaim has been working with the Office of Trust services, Division of Energy and Minerals Development (DEMD) as a supervisory petroleum engineer in Lakewood, Colorado. He is the Branch Chief, National Indian Oil & Gas Energy and Minerals System (NIOGEMS) and Acting Branch Chief for the Branch of Geotechnical Data Services. He earned the rank of Sergeant in the United States Army where he served 4.5 years. He trained at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and was a Cavalry Scout Paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. He also qualified as a Jumpmaster.

He described the qualities or traits he learned in the military that help him in his current job as teamwork and resilience. For fun and in his free time he enjoys home renovations, hiking, and traveling.



Kyle A. Levin, Senior Airman (E-4/HM1) United States Air Force veteran



BIA Position: Mechanical Engineer, Renewable and Distributed Generation,
Division of Energy and Mineral Development, 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 7.5 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 conducted real-time translation and geolocation of intercepted Arabic communications. He directly supported personnel recovery efforts for downed allied aircraft in multiple Afghanistan warzones. Provided local oversight to domestic and foreign special forces teams (SEALs, Green Berets, Rangers, Pararescue, Special Air Service) during active Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) operations. Completed 5 wartime overseas deployments to Qatar (Al Udeid Air Base) and Afghanistan (Bagram Air Base) in support of OEF. He flew aboard RC-135V/W (Rivet Joint) and MC-12 aircraft for a total of more than 1,000 combat flight hours overseas. He flew aboard RC-135S (Cobra Ball) during peacetime missions to collect data on ballistic targets to verify arms treaty compliance.

He describes one of his most memorable BIA experiences "At DEMD 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.



**Michelle Morrison, Lieutenant/Direct Commissioned Officer (O-3)
United States Navy veteran**



BIA Position: Beneficiary Services Chief and Fiduciary Trust Officer, Indian Energy Service Center, Lakewood, Colorado

Photos: Michelle Morrison at Ronald McDonald House Charities in 2017, talking with visitors at "Stewards of the Sea: Defending Freedom, Protecting the Environment" exhibit during Mount Trashmore's Earth Day celebration, Virginia Beach, VA 2016, and with fellow shipmates at Navy Operational Support Center, Tulsa, OK.

Michelle Morrison has been working with the Office of Trust Services, Indian Energy Service Center for two years. She is a member of the Cherokee Nation. Mrs. Morrison enlisted in 2003 in the Navy Reserve and served as an E-5 Yeoman, 2nd class Petty Officer, (Administrative Assistant). She provided operations, logistics, joint planning, communications, public affairs, and exercise support to joint combatant commands at US Pacific Command and US Southern Command. Selected in 2008 as a direct commissioned officer in Human Resources she provided support to the Navy Personnel Command & Navy Recruiting Command. She was mobilized to the US Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk, VA in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. There she worked as the Operational Energy Action Officer in the Fleet Installations, Environmental and Energy Readiness Office on the Great Green Fleet Campaign of 2016. This initiative helped transform the Navy and Marine Corps energy use in accordance with the energy and efficiency goals outlined by the Secretary of the Navy to diversify fuel sources, strengthen operational flexibility and improve combat capability.

She enjoys spending time with family and friends and walking her cattle dogs. She lives on a small farm with cows and horses and tries to lead a healthy lifestyle by staying physically active. She and her oldest granddaughter participate in 5K walk/runs through the year with the Cherokee Nation Wings group. She completed the Route 66 half-marathon, a Tough Mudder and the Native American Pathstar Alcatraz swim.



**Robert T. Weber, Air Radar Tech/Gunnery Sergeant (E-7)
United States Marine Corps veteran**



**BIA Position: NIOGEMS Trainer, Division of Energy and Mineral Development,
Lakewood, Colorado**

Photos: Staff Sergeant and Mrs. Weber at the Marine Corps Birthday Ball ~1993. (L-R) Robert's son Stephen, Robert, and Rob Halford, lead singer of Judas Priest 2018

Robert T. Weber has been working with the Office of Trust Services, Division of Energy and Mineral Development as a contractor for over five years. Robert Weber served in the United States Marine Corps from 1982 - 2004. After graduating recruit training in San Diego, California he served as a Dragon Weapons Gunner (0352) in the Marine Reserves in his hometown, Toledo, Ohio. He then transitioned to active duty and reported to Marine Corps Base 29 Palms, California for training as an Air Radar Repairer (5942). Robert then served at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona and Futenma, Okinawa before returning to 29 Palms for training as an Air Radar Technician (5948). Upon graduation, Robert was selected to stay on as an instructor at the Radar Maintenance Training Section. Robert then served as Radar Crew Chief and Radar Shop Chief at Marine Air Control Squadron 23 (MACS-23), Buckley Air Force Base, Aurora, Colorado. Robert then returned to 29 Palms for another tour as an instructor and then returned to MACS-23 where he retired in 2004 as a Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt E-7). Other billets and duties that Robert held are Military Police and Protocol Chief.

Robert enjoys providing NIOGEMS Training at the user's sites because every group is different in how and why they will use NIOGEMS. On a personal note, he enjoys traveling, spending time with his family, watching movies and sports, and listening to heavy metal music set to (11) eleven.