

ON THE MOVE

New Hampshire Department of Transportation Newsletter

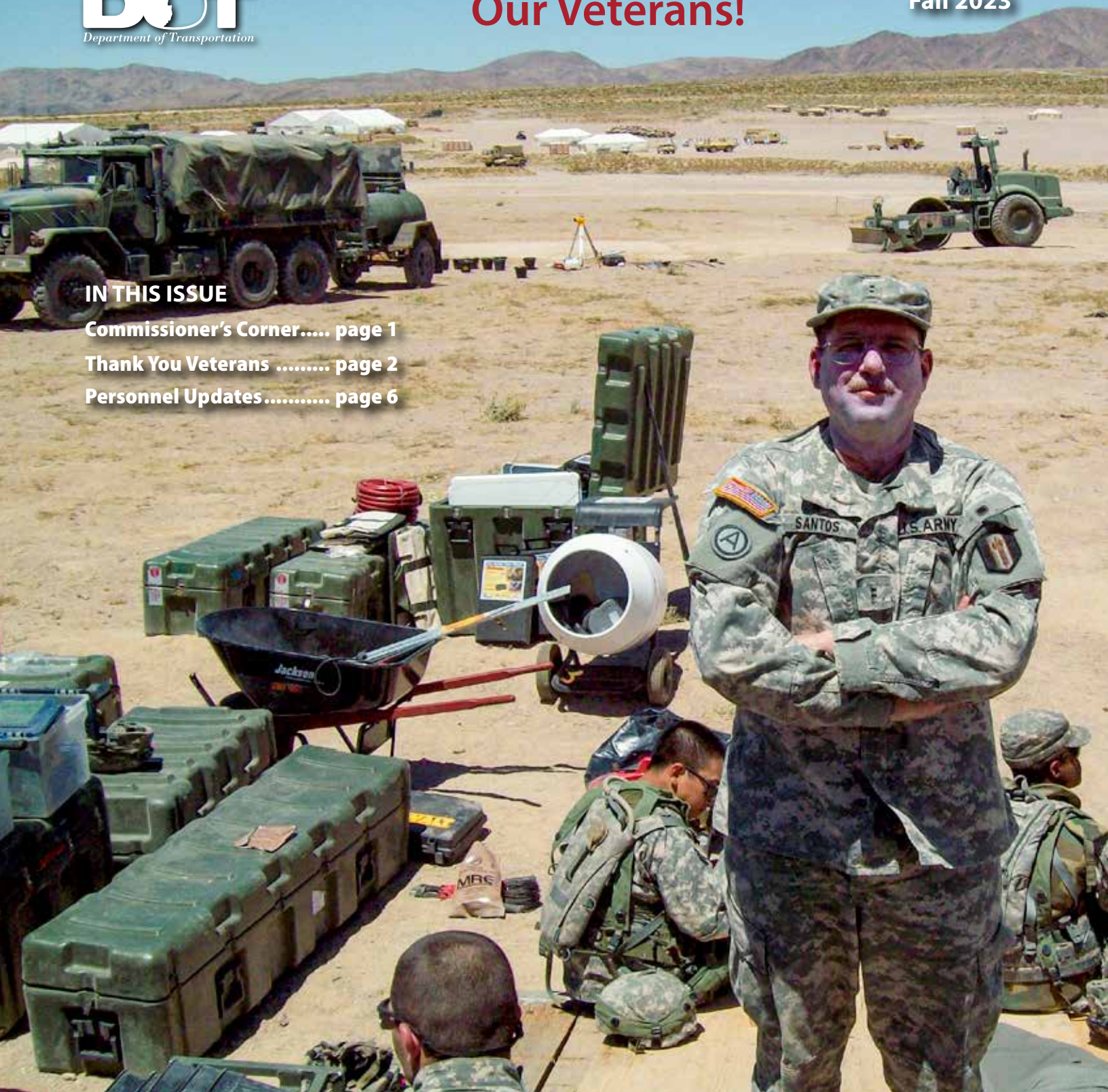


NHDOT Salutes Our Veterans!

Fall 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

- Commissioner's Corner..... page 1
- Thank You Veterans page 2
- Personnel Updates..... page 6





Veteran's Day Message

Deputy Commissioner Andre J. Briere
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

On the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month...the fighting of World War I ended in 1918. Due to the conclusion of "the War to end all Wars," November 11th became a universally recognized day of celebration to honor the veterans of that war and all those that have followed.

Veterans Day is a time when we as Americans stop and say thank you to those who served. Those simple words are important, but they are just the beginning. I encourage you to take the next step. Ask questions...listen. Take an interest in the experiences and sacrifices of your NHDOT teammates who allow us to live out our own stories in a country that is safe and free. Doing so is more powerful than you know.

Almost from its inception, NHDOT has been led and staffed by veterans. From the tenure of NHDOT Commissioner Frank D. Merrill, Brigadier General, USA (Ret.) in the 1950s, to the present day...NHDOT has benefited from the sacrifices, work ethic, and dedication to public service that veterans bring to our Department.

It is truly a privilege for me to be counted among the dedicated veterans, Guardsmen,

Reservists, and active duty Skillbridgers who continue to serve our nation and our state at NHDOT. There can be no doubt that America's fighting men and women have given their all to ensure that our great nation stays free. We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who served... to all those who were injured... and especially to all those who made the ultimate sacrifice. America is the country it is because of our heroes, past and present. These are people who put the nation's interest above self-interest...who put patriotism above profit...and who put love of country above love of self.

To all of our veterans, I extend best wishes and the appreciation of the Commissioners and all of your colleagues at NHDOT.





Thank you **NHDOT** Veterans!

The NHDOT is proud to support the Veterans that work for the NHDOT. We asked them to share where and when they served and what they like most about working for the NHDOT. Their responses are below. We thank all of our Veterans even if they choose not to share their stories.

Dan Kendall, *Mechanical Services Truck shop, Heavy Equipment Mechanic*

I was in the U.S.M.C., Operation Desert Shield/Storm, The Liberation of Kuwait – 0311 Rifleman Infantry.

The excellent benefit package that takes care of my family's medical needs. The job security that comes from a job that will always need doing and the deep sense of family among the employees.

Jim Roberg, *Human Resources, Workforce Development Administrator*

Jim Roberg works in Human Resources on Hazen Drive as the NHDOT Workforce Development Administrator.

Jim is an Operation Iraqi Freedom Combat Veteran. He was in the Army where he was stationed at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and Seoul, South Korea.

I like working for the New Hampshire DOT because it provides me purpose where I can give back and continue to serve the residents and visitors of the state.

Carla Puffinburger, *NHDOT TMC, Transportation Management Specialist I*

USAF SAC 416 Bomb Wing/Griffiths AFB, Rome, NY/radar intelligence specialist with B52s. I annotated charts for navigators, analyzed radar images from reconnaissance films and interpreted films from bomb runs for accuracy.

I like working with people who have a wide range of current job specialties and from various backgrounds.

Matt Courser, *Materials & Research, Bituminous Concrete Unit Supervisor*

(88M) Motor Transport Operator / U.S. Army, 1986-1992.

Riding through the State and seeing all that we (NHDOT) accomplish, and knowing that I had a hand in it.

Miguel Picanço, *Highway Maintenance, Radio Dispatcher*

I was a Musician in the 43rd Army National Guard Band in Lincoln Nebraska, 2006-2012.

Attention to professionalism and detail with the pervasive spirit of continuously improving, just as we also do in the Arts.

Patrick Doughty, *Construction Bureau/ Engineering Technician V (Contract Administrator)*

I was in the U.S. Army, 1985-1989. Basic training & AIT @ Ft. Sill, OK; Sheridan Kaserne, Augsburg, Germany; Ft. Lewis, WA; US Army Reserve, 368th Engineers Battalion, Rutland, VT. I was a TACFIRE Specialist in the Field Artillery and Equipment operator in the Reserves for a short time, ended as a Sergeant E-5

Continued service to the people, Great Team, benefits and retirement plan. I'd like to think that I'm part of a team making NH's roads better.

Kevin Coates, *TSMO/Transportation Management Communications Specialist*

U.S. Air Force/deployed to Spain, Chad, N.Iraq, Communications Maintainer/Operator (AFSC's-304X0/205X0)

It's a very dynamic and rewarding job and we are in a position to assist people daily on their commutes, travels and vacations while enjoying all our beautiful state has to offer.

Adam Carr, *Materials and Research – Geotechnical Section, Geologist*

USAF Security Forces, 2003-2009

The people, the people are awesome!

Christopher Hall, *Highway Maintenance District 4, Highway Patrol Foreman*

I have served in the U.S. Army since 2003 and I am still serving today. I am a Technical Engineer with a Vertical Construction Company that does vertical and horizontal construction out of Rutland, VT. I have also had two deployments to the Middle East with the latest one in 2021.

There is a sense of pride that one gets knowing that what we do helps to make the roadways safer for those that use them.

Rob Poggi, *Portsmouth Bridge Maintenance Crew 15, Bridge Construction Foreman*

Served in the US NAVY SEABEES as a Heavy Construction Equipment Operator, Weapons instructor, Equipment trainer, and a supervisor. I served in the Navy for a total of 10 years. Also served in the Air National guard As a Heavy Construction Equipment operator, Squadron Equipment trainer, And Project field supervisor. Served in the Guard for a total of 12 years. I've served in Port Hueneme CA, GAUM, Rota Spain, Qatar, Jordan, Kuwait, and Pease in Newington NH.

The ability to advance to a higher position in my field.

Jay J Nevin, *Franklin New Hampshire. Bridge Yard Warehouse, 2613 Warehouse Supervision*

NAVY 1981- 1985. New London Conn, Floating Crane YTD – 80 worked as a rigger for sub-tender. Spend next 3 years MSO-448 Mine Sweeper as a Engineman , working on 16 cylinders engines.

Robert Havey, *Bureau of Traffic, Senior Pavement Marking Foreman II*

US Army Combat Engineer/88 Mike, 1981-1994, Hawaii and NH National Guard. US Air Force Vehicle Operator, Pease Air National Guard Base, NH 1998-2004. 1 Tour in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom), 2003

Retired December 4, 2004

Job Security over the years and the service to the public of NH.

Brandon Havey, *District 4*

US Army with the 82 Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Alaska and California 2009-2017, 88 Mike

1 Tour in Iraq (Operation Enduring Freedom) 2010. 1 Tour in Afghanistan (Afghanistan War) 2012

Job Security, and doing different things every day.

Tom Santos, *Highway Design, Utility Coordinator*

Army / Italy, Ft. Huachuca, Korea / Site Power Coordinator, Radio Operator, Microwave & HF Radio Propagation Profiling

Army National Guard / Ft. Huachuca, Korea / Communications NCO & Battalion Safety NCO

Air Force Reserves / Davis-Monthan AFB, Germany, Korea, Panama / Power Production NCO & Communications NCO

Army Reserves / Londonderry, Germany, Kuwait, Afghanistan / Electric Shop NCOIC, Detachment Commander (WO3)

I retired with 30 years of combined active and Reserves military service. I was first deployed to Italy during the Cold War with the Army Signal Corps. I deployed Stateside in support of Operation Desert Storm. I later deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). I was also deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Seeing the Engineers and Technicians come together to make our transportation systems as safe as possible.

Suzanne Dyner, *Highway Maintenance, District 2, Enfield, Account Clerk*

I was a medic (91B) and later a Russian interrogator (96C) in the Utah Army National Guard, 1980-1986. (I never interrogated any actual Russian POWs obviously. Our unit was all linguists, NATO as well as Soviet-bloc languages – it was there because Utah has so many Mormon missionaries who speak various languages. We mostly practiced our language skills in our sections and learned about interrogation strategies.)

The variety of people and new skills I have encountered and being a part of something needed by the community.

Marie Garvey, *Hampton Toll Attendant*

US Navy RM3 Naples Italy and Sigonella Italy Communication From 1981-1989

Love meeting people from all countries

Kyle Rodrick, *Bureau of Construction, Civil Engineer and Contract Administrator*

U.S. Marine Corps (2005-2010), Okinawa, Japan (2006-2008) and Al Anbar, Iraq (2009-2010), Combat Engineer clearing supply routes of IEDs and constructing FOBs.

The sense of community service you feel when working with all the different towns and the impact infrastructure can have on everyone.

ENGINEER, SOLDIER AND A COMMISSIONER

In the lobby of the Morton building, NHDOT Headquarters on Hazen Drive, there's a wall of photos of former NHDOT Commissioners that have led the Department for over 100 years. And over those years the NHDOT has been blessed with many great leaders that have brought a variety of skills and experience



to the position. One of our leaders, Frank Dow Merrill, rose to the rank of Major General in the US Army and, as the leader of the famous "Merrill's Marauders" in WWII, was one of the youngest and fastest-rising US Army generals ever. This unique combat unit was a US Army special forces group formed to combat the Japanese in the sweltering jungles of Burma during 1943-1944, and became the forerunner of the

modern day US Army Ranger program. Several books have been written and a movie was made about the Marauders and General Merrill.

General Merrill was born and raised in Massachusetts and his distant cousin Heather Sinton, and her partner, James Riley, an HM 3 at the Dover Shed, recently stopped by to see his photo and to meet new Commissioner Bill Cass. Heather said that the family was very proud of him and that they love to see and learn everything about his life. Although Commissioner Merrill died in 1955 at 52 years old, "it's still amazing how much he accomplished," added Heather.

General Merrill was born in the village of Woodville, Hopkinton Township, Massachusetts and at age 5, his family moved to Amesbury, Mass., where he grew up, along with a sister. Frank graduated from Amesbury High School, and soon thereafter in 1922, enlisted into the U.S. Army, originally assigned to the Signal Corps, from where he rose to the rank of staff sergeant in Company A, 11th Engineers within 3 years. In 1925, Frank received an appointment to the US Military Academy at West Point, graduating as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1929. He subsequently earned a B.S. in Military Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1932.



In 1938, Merrill was assigned as a Military Attaché to the US Embassy in Tokyo, where he studied Japanese language. Subsequently, he joined General Douglas MacArthur's staff in the Philippines in 1941 as a military intelligence officer. Merrill was on a mission in Rangoon, Burma, at the time of the December Pearl Harbor attack and remained in Burma after the Japanese forces invaded there.

Although Commissioner Merrill died in 1955 at 52 years old, "it's still amazing how much he accomplished," added Heather.

In 1943, Frank Merrill was appointed to command a newly formed, all-volunteer U.S. Army special forces unit, the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), shortly afterwards dubbed "Merrill's Marauders" by several visiting war correspondents covering the unit's combat training performances on practice gunnery ranges. (The title provisional means the unit is formed for a special mission or operation and will be disbanded afterwards.) In November 1943, Colonel Merrill was promoted to the rank of US Army Brigadier General only a month before his fortieth birthday, making him one of the youngest American generals since the Civil War. Even more remarkable was the fact that he had been serving as a commissioned officer for only 14 years.

General Merrill oversaw the specialized jungle warfare training and subsequent deployment of the three battalions of the 5307th into Burma in February 1944.

During the slightly more than five months of often intense combat while behind Japanese lines in Burma, the Marauders advanced 750 miles through some of the harshest jungle terrain in the world, fought in



five major enemy engagements (Walawbum, Shaduzup, Inkangahtawng, Nhpum Ga, and Myitkyina) and engaged in fierce jungle combat with the Japanese Army on thirty-two different occasions. In their final mission against the Japanese base at Myitkyina, the Marauders suffered 272 killed, 955 wounded, and 980 evacuated for illness and disease. By the time the town of Myitkyina was taken, only about 200 surviving members of the original Marauders were present. On August 10, 1944, only one week after Myitkyina fell to U.S. and Chinese forces, the 5307th was disbanded with a final total of only 130 combat-effective officers and enlisted men (out of the original 2,997). Battling Japanese soldiers, hunger, and disease, they had traversed more jungle on their long-range

patrols than any other U.S. Army unit during WWII. Merrill was promoted to Major General in September 1944 at the age of 40.

After the war ended, Gen. Merrill served for a short while in the Philippines, and then in early 1946 he was assigned to the headquarters of the 6th Army in San Francisco under General Stilwell. In May of that same year, Merrill and Stilwell led two Marine platoons to suppress a prison uprising at Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary in what is now known as the Battle of Alcatraz. Due to post-war downsizing of the Army, Merrill was reduced in rank to Brigadier General on 1 June 1946. He retired from the Army in his permanent rank of Colonel on 30 June 1948, but was once again promoted to Brigadier General on the US Army's retired list released the very next day.

After retiring from the Army, Frank Merrill served as the New Hampshire Commissioner of Highways. In December 1955 he was elected President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials but died two days later in Fernandina Beach, Florida. In 1992, General Merrill was posthumously honored with his induction into the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame inaugural class of selectees.

James, a retired Army Combat Engineer, enjoys learning about Frank's military experience. James has traced the Army division (the 5307th) that Frank led in Burma and said that General Merrill is considered the father of today's Army Rangers. He added that to become an Army Ranger, recruits have to attend basic training at Fort Bragg, then complete a second training program at Camp Merrill in Georgia (named after Frank), and then complete their training in the swamps in Florida at Eglin Air Force Base.

Content from this article was copied from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Merrill, which references these sources:

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2. *The Encyclopedia of American Prisons* by Carl Sifakis, pg. 9
3. "Section 2 - Building the Interstate - Interstate System - Highway History - Federal Highway Administration".
4. "Merrill's Marauders Bridge Dedication".
5. "Communique" (PDF). *Press Information Bureau of India - Archive*. Retrieved July 5, 2017.
6. *U.S. Army Register*. 1946. p. 473
7. *U.S. Army Register*. 1950. p. 788.

Personnel Updates

New Hires:

Elizabeth A. Balestrero - Highway Maintenance
Timothy P. Belanger - Highway Design
Haley R. Brownell - District 3, Crew 2
Nicole M. Bryant - Human Resources
Alexis M. Carmichael - Audit
Scott A. Christie - District 2, Crew 26
David D. Compagna - District 5, Crew 25
Brody M. Cox - District 6, Crew 8
Cheryl C. Gilpatrick - Maintenance
James K. Harrell - Mechanical Div-Concord
Gavon S. Harris - District 3, Crew 25
Dillon M. Jussau - TSMO Dispatch Operations
U S M Dilruba Mahmud - Construction
Vincent J. Mazzaglia - District 5, Crew 28
Thomas J. Morehouse - District 1, Crew 9
Cody M. O'Gara - District 1, Crew 25
Justin E. Osgood - District 1, Crew 15
Briana M. Peasley - Bridge Design
Ronald M. Rioux - Planning & System Dev
James G. Roberg - Human Resources
Dylan J. Ruggles - District 1, Crew 7
Alexander D. Schwartz - Planning & System Dev
Dale E. Secor - Finance & Contracts
Denise M. Sherburne - Planning & System Dev
Joseph T. Simoneau - District 4, Crew 1
Kerron S. Simpson - TSMO Dispatch Operations
Austin C. Skora - Traffic Dist Sign Crews
David S. Smith - Highway Design
Justin K. Webb - Finance & Contracts
David J. Woodman - District 1, Crew 7
James D. Zerull - District 2, Crew 6

Retirees:

James Lillis - District 5 (43)
Reagan Clarke - District 2 (37)
Douglas King - District 2 (35)
Stephen Dickinson - District 1 (34)
Robert Glover - District 1 (33)
Gerald Bars - District 5 (32)
Thomas Clement - Bridge Design (30)
Edward Godfrey - District 5 (30)
Sharon Allaire - Planning & Community Assistance (27)

Paul Schoffield - Traffic (26)
Adam White - Mechanical Services (26)
James Downs - Construction/Engineering Audit (21)
Del Cass - Bridge Maintenance (20)
Steven Benoit - District 5 (20)
Christine Bonoli-Stohlberg - Highway Maintenance (17)
James Hoyt - District 2 (11)
Denis Frenette - District 1 (10)

Promotions:

Jennifer Reczek - Civil Engineer VII, Bridge Design
Jesse Tyll - Construction Foreman, District 5
John Scully - Asst Highway Patrol Foreman, District 6
Joshua Brown - Environmentalist III, Environment
Keith Duguay - Highway Maintainer II, District 1
Kevin Rousseau - Highway Maintainer III, District 1
Lee Baronas - Civil Engineer VII, Traffic
Mark Dooley - Civil Engineer III, Highway Design
Michael Ash - Asst Highway Patrol Foreman, District 2
Michael Hughes - Highway Patrol Foreman, District 1
Michael Kinson - Technical Support Spec IV,
Construction/Engineering Audit
Michael O'Donnell - Civil Engineer VI, Traffic
Pasquale Giunta - Engineering Technician IV, Traffic
Raymond Wilder - Highway Patrol Foreman, District 2
Russell Briney - Warehouse Supervisor, District 2
Ryan Linehan - Tran Mgmt Comm Spec II, TSMO
Sharon Simpson - Admin Assist I, Human Resources
Shawn Cummings - Supervisor III, District 5
Stacy Ware - Warehouse Supervisor, Mechanical Svs
Steven Bennett - Equipment Mech Foreman II, Mech Svs
Tyler Miller - Highway Maintainer II, District 4
William Saffian - Civil Engineer VI, Bridge Design
Zackery Martin - Highway Maintainer III, District 1

Services Awards:

5 Years:

Anna C. Voglino - District 4
Shannon E. Aiton - Office of Access, Opportunity
and Compliance
Jose A. Perez Gonzalez - Construction/Eng. Audit
Dylan M. Laleme - District 1
Erik M. Lefavor - Turnpikes
Shawn P. Newhook - District 1
Nancy L. Welsh - Right-Of-Way

10 Years:

Joseph E. Abell - Turnpikes
Curtis A. Morrill - Highway Design
Matthew D. Kemp - Materials & Research
John M. Gitschier - Turnpikes
Melilotus M. Dube - Environment
Pasquale A. Giunta - Traffic
Eric P. Moore - District 1

15 Years:

Kristina L. Montambeault - Materials & Research
Dennis K. Eastman - District 4
Jason A. Abdulla - Planning & Community Assistance
Andre D. Bresseur - District 1
William A. Rose - Planning & Community Assistance
Robert R. Neveu - District 5
William G. McGraw - Traffic
Courtney P. Collins - Finance
Nathan C. McGrath - Mechanical Services
Justin K. O'Neil - Bridge Maintenance
Beth F. Platzner - Turnpikes
Arthur T. White - Traffic

20 Years:

Kurt A. Melendy - Right-Of-Way

25 Years:

Thomas W. Cutter - Highway Design
Richard L. Robinson Jr - Bridge Maintenance

30 Years:

Daniel C. Afflick - Planning & Community Assistance
Wendy L. Grygiel - Turnpikes
Arthur A. Grenier - District 4
Vincent F. Benincasa - Turnpikes
Matthew B. Courser - Materials & Research

35 Years:

George R. Boewe Jr - District 3
Kevin M. King - District 5
Joshua Hicks II - Right-Of-Way

Committed to
Excellence, Safety,
Innovation, and
the Future...

Honoring Their Service Through SkillBridge

In 2021 The New Hampshire Department of Transportation began participating in the SkillBridge program. We are proud to hire military members and veterans. It is also a way for DOT to thank them for their service to our nation.

Since NH DOT began participating in SkillBridge we have had 8 participants, hired 6 participants, agreed to have 4 more start in our programs in the next 6 months and have others pending participation. There have been others throughout that time who have not been able to participate due to other challenges the state has been experiencing since the pandemic.

So, what is SkillBridge? SkillBridge is a program run through the United States Department of Defense. This provides an opportunity for service members and military spouses to gain valuable civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships. Members of the armed forces can participate during their last 180 days of service. They continue to earn their pay and benefits through the Military while gaining skills they will need to transition to civilian life. With approximately 200,000 service members transitioning out of the military every year and only 18 SkillBridge providers currently in the state, the DOT has an incredible opportunity to attract candidates who are mission-focused, results-driven, with strong ethos and leadership skills.

Nationally, there has been emphasis put on having separating service members participate in the SkillBridge program. The chair of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Congressman Derrick Van Orden, said earlier this year "We have heard of the success of the SkillBridge program in helping transitioning service members connect with employment... We need to be creating more connections like these for our servicemembers."

We all know someone who has or is serving in our military, even though only 1% of the population has served. It can be a family member, friend, or someone else in our lives. Whether they served on active duty, in the reserves, or in the National Guard, they all made a sacrifice to a grateful nation. At DOT we are showing our gratitude by offering opportunities through our SkillBridge program to bridge the gap between Military Service and Public Service.



Dwayne Baker
District 3, PS315
Highway Maintainer

I was a Chinook Helicopter Flight Engineer and Leadership Course Instructor in the US Army from 1989-2023.

The people and camaraderie.



Governor:
Chris Sununu

Commissioner:
Bill Cass

On the Move Editor:
Richard Arcand

Layout and Design:
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www.nh.gov/dot

Cover Photo: Tom Santos, Training in Fort Irwin, CA