

## STAKEHOLDER NEWS

# Veteran Co-Op Program Excels in First Year

One year, seven veterans, and a number of recognitions under its belt, Savannah River Remediation's Veteran Cooperative Program is still going strong.

The Veteran Cooperative Program, which began in October 2014, is designed to aid veterans transitioning into full-time employment with mentoring, training, and allowing college credit toward a degree while working at Savannah River Remediation (SRR).

SRR, the liquid waste contractor at the Savannah River Site (SRS), which is owned by the Department of Energy (DOE), currently employs seven veterans in part-time positions through this Cooperative Program. The Co-Op students, many of whom started as interns over the summer, hold positions in Science, Math, Engineering, Technology (STEM) fields and non-STEM fields, each related to their degree of study. These part-time jobs could result in full-time employment.

Scott Brown, the Program's manager and retired Army lieutenant colonel, said this program is an educational opportunity that not only provides a competitive pay rate, but also provides marketable job experience.

"The SRR Veteran Cooperative Program has been a unique opportunity for veterans in our area," Brown said. "Participants are in school, earning a degree, building their workplace experience, and, most of all, gaining confidence in their skills outside of the military."

Because the Program has seen such great success, SRR has plans to grow the Program on a corporate-wide level, Brown said.

"SRR has communicated our program to other sites in the DOE Complex and to our parent and partner companies as well," he said.

Veterans are an important and beneficial asset to our workforce at SRR, said Stuart MacVean, SRR President and Project Manager.

"Savannah River Remediation is working to give back to those veterans who have already given so much to our

country," MacVean said. "We hire veterans because of their motivation and the experience they bring into the workforce."

Even before the Program began, SRR had a track-record of supporting veterans.

In February 2014, SRR was certified as a Palmetto Military Employer, recognized by Operation Palmetto Employment and Gov. Haley.

In June 2014, the Adjutant General for South Carolina, Maj. Gen. Robert E. Livingston Jr, recognized SRR for its support of hiring veterans.



*Ashley Dernberger, a U.S. Army veteran, is the most recent student to join Savannah River Remediation's Veteran Cooperative Program. She is working part time in Public Affairs and pursuing a marketing degree at Augusta University.*

# SRR Co-Op Student, Navy Veteran Pursues Engineering Dreams

Brandon Twite is an inspiring example that limitations don't have to impede people from pursuing their goals.

Brandon is a part-time employee at Savannah River Remediation (SRR) through the Veteran Cooperative Program, an educational program providing qualifying veterans part-time paid developmental jobs in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Prior to coming to SRR, Brandon spent six years in the U.S. Navy.

Brandon knew from an early age that he wanted to join the Navy right out of high school. He wanted to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Yet Brandon also knew his options in the military would be narrowed because he is color blind.



"I remember entering the Navy recruiter's office one afternoon and looking at a 400-page binder of military job options," Brandon said. "Those options narrowed to about six job opportunities open to me."

Brandon seized the job option he knew would interest him most and open the doors to a rewarding and fulfilling military career. Brandon became a linguist, translating the Persian language, Farsi, into English for the military.

Brandon's language training took him to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, where he learned a new language, made lasting friendships, and took up a hobby.

"I was born in Washington State and grew up in Montana, so when I moved to California for my military training, I decided to teach myself to surf," Brandon said. "After all, I was living right next door to the ocean."

Brandon and his buddy would grab their surfboards on the weekends and ride the waves. Brandon said this hobby was a good way to relax the mind and exercise the body after the mental taxation of learning a new language during the week.

After his language training, Brandon was stationed at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and spent his time in the military translating for the Navy and fully enjoying his military duty to his country.

After leaving the military, Brandon decided to return to the classroom. He wanted to continue challenging himself and felt the best path for him would be through the field of mechanical engineering. Brandon enrolled at USC Aiken and began working part-time at SRR in the Design Services Engineering group.

"I'm grateful for the responsibilities and confidence given to me by my management team," said Brandon. "I enjoy the work and the experienced workforce at SRR."

In Brandon's free time, he enjoys gardening with his wife of 10 months. They grow their own herbs, vegetables, grapefruit and lemons, as well as raise geese, ducks and chickens.

The military opened the doors for Brandon to learn a new language and build the self-discipline and self-esteem he needed to walk through new doors, continuing his education and broadening his horizons, reinforcing that limitations only challenge you, they do not have to stop you.



## SRR Exceeds United Way Goal

At the conclusion of the 2015 SRR Employee United Way Campaign, donations totaled \$301,933, exceeding the goal set by the SRR United Way Committee. SRR President and Project Manager Stuart MacVean encouraged the workforce to push toward this goal.

"At the beginning of the summer, the committee challenged the Savannah River Remediation workforce to raise \$300,000 for the United Way," MacVean said. "I knew they could do it, and to see our goal not only met, but exceeded, really says a lot about the spirit of giving at SRR."

Even though SRR employees have been engaging in fundraising events for the United Way all year, the official Employee Campaign kicked off in early August. Employees really stepped up this year and out-did themselves with donations, said Mike Hubbard, SRR United Way Campaign Chair.

"This year's slogan was 'Reaching Out, Lifting Up,' and our folks definitely did that," Hubbard said. "People participated in sports tournaments, cooked food for fundraisers, and gave generously through pledge cards. There were so many different ways people gave their time and resources."

Several SRR employees were recognized for their roles during the campaign. Amy Joslin served as the Executive Sponsor. The Volunteer of the Year was presented to Donnie Thaxton. Other employees honored were Robin Fields as Coordinator of the Year, Kim Hauer as Manager of the Year, and Teresa Sheppard for the Unsung Hero Award. Mad-die Blair and Colleen Welch jointly received the President's Award.

Savannah River Remediation (SRR) LLC is the Savannah River Site's (SRS) Liquid Waste contractor. SRS is owned by DOE. SRR is composed of personnel from a team of companies led by AECOM with partners Bechtel National, CH2M and BWX Technologies. Critical subcontractors for the contract are AREVA, EnergySolutions and URS Professional Solutions. For more information, contact the SRR Public Affairs Department: Dean Campbell at 803.208.8270

