

The Value of Hiring Veterans

By Hal Archer and Phoebe Pierce, Transportation, Phoenix

Hal Archer's interest in transportation planning was partially spurred during a short tour in Nepal while serving with the US Army. Hal inquired about a lot of rubble lining the streets (prior to the earthquake) of the capital city of Kathmandu. The city, after a warning by the mayor and two years to comply, bulldozed through businesses and any other infrastructure in the path of the widening. Hal's interest piqued, though, as he came to understand that government figures disagreed about the benefit. Some wanted to modernize the city and provide mobility for automobiles (whatever the cost!), while others sought to preserve centuries-old walkable, vibrant streets and concentrate on other solutions. To top this off, it quickly became evident that this early, firsthand experience of these transportation system problems were just as relevant and amplified in scale when applied to transportation systems in the US.

Hal served in a specialty called Civil Affairs which contributes to the Army mission by partnering with local governments and communities in our deployed areas. They are highly skilled at assessing and improving governance, infrastructure, public health and basic human services. This is just one of countless examples of career paths that benefit our country (and poor people in tumultuous foreign places), preparing military professionals for immediate, direct impact in civilian industry when the time has come to hang up the boots. After separating from the Army after 11 years on active duty, Hal moved his family home to Phoenix and enrolled in the Urban Planning program at Arizona State University (ASU), giving his passion a fresh start. He

Maharajgunj Road, Kathmandu



continues his service in the Army reserves and will soon apply his skills in rural South Korea for the second time in six months.

While studying, Hal interned with the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) where he expanded his technical skills in the performance measurement program using GIS, VISSIM, SQL Server, and Visual Basic for Applications. Wilson & Company is excited to have Hal on our team. His experiences, curiosity, and passion are a happy addition to our bustling planning group. We intend to use his modeling skills both in the planning and engineering sectors.

Bonus: Hal's work with Department of Defense adds to our growing federal capabilities.

Hal and family after Afghanistan tour



Hal's wife, Michelle works for ASU (Go Sun Devils!) as an instructional designer for the online school, taking content from professors and producing web-based course work. Together they are raising two teenagers, living close enough to downtown Phoenix to take advantage of the unique urban vibe.



Phoebe Pierce works primarily with the Phoenix office to market their expanding office. Working remotely from D.C., she was excited to meet Hal in person while he attended the annual Transportation Research Board conference.