



# THOUGHTS

Newsletter Issue No. 32

November 2018

## 2018 HIRE Vets Medallion Program Demonstration Award from U.S. Department of Labor

On November 8, 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor recognized TekSynap as one of the recipients of the 2018 HIRE Vets Medallion Program Demonstration Award. The Award recognizes leadership in recruiting, employing, and retaining our nation's veterans.

TekSynap joins 239 recipients of the 2018 HIRE Vets Medallion Program Demonstration Award ranging from small businesses and community-based non-profits to leading Fortune 500 companies from 42 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Recipients demonstrated a commitment to veteran hiring and retention and provided veteran-specific resources, leadership programming, dedicated human resources, and compensation and tuition assistance programs. We are a medium Gold award recipient.

The HIRE Vets Medallion Program is the only federal-level award that recognizes job creators who successfully recruit, hire, and retain America's veterans. Kearstin McGinnis, Talent Acquisition Manager, has been very successful in her efforts to recruit transitioning veterans. TekSynap values the leadership, teamwork and professional experience that veterans bring to the workplace and will continue to actively recruit more veterans to join our company. Congratulations to Kearstin for earning this recognition for TekSynap!



Kamran Jinnah and Kearstin McGinnis

For more information about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program, please visit [www.HireVets.gov](http://www.HireVets.gov).

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### Kudos

Congratulations to [Steve Yingst](#) who has provided outstanding customer service.



Hats off to [Sam Fisher](#) who was recently recognized for his leadership and high performance!

Kudos to [Pearl Prince](#) for her great customer repore and her ability to handle complex projects.

Congratulations to [Leon Faircloth](#) who received kudos for his positive attitude and willingness to help!

Props to [Mark Pint](#) who was recently recognized for doing a great job onsite.

Thanks for all your hard work!

If you have someone you would like to thank or recognize, email your message to the [news@teksynap.com](mailto:news@teksynap.com).

## Our NDU Mission

In July 2012, TekSynap (then Synaptex Corporation) partnered with GDIT and won a contract to provide comprehensive IT support services to the National Defense University (NDU) and the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC). I joined TekSynap in July of the following year, completely unaware of how much this team of roughly 15 TekSynap employees would impact my life. I have the distinct honor of serving with some of the most dedicated and capable team members with whom I have ever worked. The challenges we have faced and conquered have made me proud of the team and what we have accomplished. I think it is befitting to touch on a few pivotal moments in this history so that we may appreciate where we have been.

There have been changes since my arrival in 2013, but the spirit of this team remains. When I began, the team had just completed the first CCR (Command Cyber Readiness Inspection) for the South campus and was preparing for the same inspection at the North campus. It was hectic, and most people expected us to fail. After all, NDU had never

## DC Holiday Party - Don't Forget to RSVP!

Have you RSVP'd for the DC Holiday Party at the International Spy Museum yet?

We'll be celebrating on Saturday, December 8 from 7-11 pm. Each employee is invited to bring their family, including children ages 13 and older to the event. We will have food, live entertainment and lots of hidden details!

For more information or to RSVP, email [events@teksynap.com](mailto:events@teksynap.com).

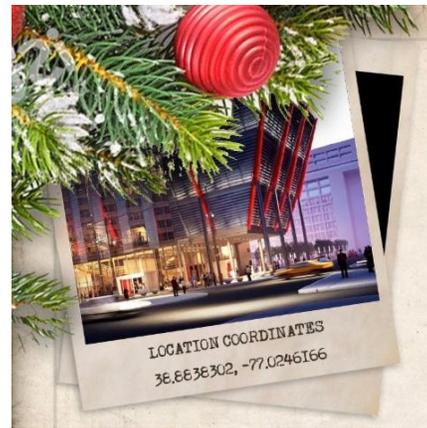
passed a CCRI before. However, as would be the case for many things to come, our team did not accept failure as an option. We banded together and passed both CCRI's, ultimately achieving a higher score than our parent organization, Joint Staff.

Not long after this, there was a major change at the top of the IT organization at NDU. The NDU CIO retired and was replaced by RADM (Ret.) Diane Webber. The new CIO set about making changes that directly impacted our contractor management team and could have easily caused the team to falter. Yet again, we stepped up to the challenge and changed to meet, then exceed the new expectations. This process was not always filled with success, but our team never gave up, and pulled through to achieve even more amazing accomplishments.

The landscape for a Government agency like NDU changes over the course of time, but certain things, such as cyber security and compliance, remain a constant. We soon faced our greatest challenge yet; a transition from DIACAP to RMF with the ultimate goal of achieving an ATO. This would have to be done as the first .edu organization ever under RMF, and we only had six months to achieve it. The inspecting agency, J6, saw this task as so daunting that they indicated to the NDU government staff that this was an impossible task and they expected us to fail. Yet again, as we had done many times before, our team stepped up to the challenge. Countless hours of time, to include surge support staff from other programs and our corporate office, were necessary for this effort. In the end, not only did we achieve our goal, but we passed with flying colors. NDU was awarded a three-year, full ATO which is the highest that an organization can attain. Our team was commended many times for achieving what some thought was unachievable.

We now face our next challenge for this program. Our recent bid for a new five-year contract with NDU has been met with setbacks that include not winning the initial award. We continue to fight this decision, but bad news and uncertainty can have extremely negative impacts on most teams. What gives me hope is that the NDU team is definitely NOT most teams. We have faced challenges before, and no matter the outcome, I hold each team member in the highest regard. It is truly humbling to lead people with the professionalism and dedication displayed at NDU. I extend my deepest gratitude to each NDU staff member for the outstanding efforts put forth on this program. Be proud of your accomplishments, and keep up the amazing efforts.

- Darrin Snyder



## Keeping ADP Up to Date

It's important that we ensure the company has the correct personal contact information for all employees. Our Security Team receives many requests for Background Investigations throughout the year and they use ADP for their answers. We also continually send out important information to our employees and use the information we have in ADP to do so.



**Please review the current information that we have on file for you through ADP and edit any fields as necessary.**

Please navigate to the Myself tab and verify your personal information to include your home address, phone number, emergency contacts and Talent Profile. We appreciate you taking the time to update your information.

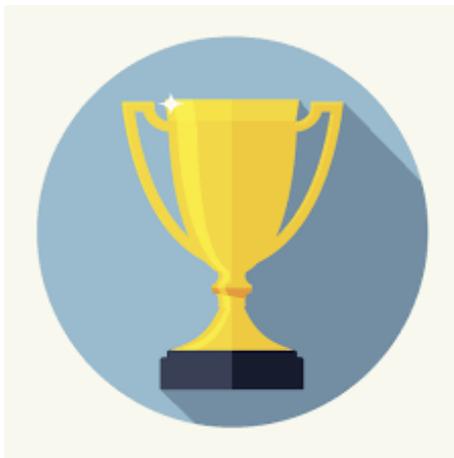
## Employee of the Quarter: Mark Pint

Mark joined TekSynap as our VTC Lead in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in August 2018 and immediately discovered the DLA end-user customer was very unhappy with the services being provided by our support team. There were myriad issues with the AV/VTC equipment and conference rooms that were not being properly addressed. He immediately started addressing the issues working with the support team, the end-user customer and the Government resources sent there to assist with the hardware and network issues. Mark's experience, insight, knowledge and perseverance has resulted in significant progress in identifying and fixing the issues.

An example of Mark's ability to assess areas for improvement and make immediate changes for enhanced services included changing the VTC support team's work schedules. The operations schedule that had been implemented for years required the two VTC support personnel to work swing shifts to cover VTC conferences and support after core business hours. This schedule was inadequate for covering the volume of requirements during this period. Mark proposed that both VTC support personnel work during the day and alternate covering VTC requirements that were scheduled after core business hours. He is currently providing weekly status reports to the COR and COTR to show that improved after core business hours coverage is resulting in a higher level of customer satisfaction.

The feedback we are receiving from Jennifer Reynolds (COR), Gregg Schrader (COTR) and Romulo Faria (VTC Service Branch Chief) based on input from the Pearl Harbor end-use customer is commendable. Mark has come in, taken the bull by the horns and turned a difficult situation into one where we now have a happy customer and a VTC team that is getting things done!!!

Great Job Mark!!



## Security Update

### Your Responsibility to Stop Insider Threat

An uncommon, but serious threat to organizations and our nation, are Insider Threats. U.S.

Department of Homeland Security defines Insider Threats as "a current or former employee, contractor, or other business partner who has or had authorized access to an organization's network, system or data and intentionally or unintentionally misused that access to negatively affect the confidentiality, integrity or availability of the organization's information or information systems."



## Wreaths Across America

You should be vigilant and cognizant of those around you, at work, in public or on social

Wreaths Across America is a little less than a month away and TekSynap will be participating on Saturday, 12/15 at the Arlington National Cemetery in 2 ways:

- Volunteering as a Truck Crew - passing out wreaths to other volunteers
- Placing wreaths on the fallen veterans

We have met our number of allowable volunteers for the Truck Crew and are currently wait listing individuals. If you are interested in joining the wait list, please note this is a very EARLY morning (5:15 am). As part of the Truck Crew, we will have an assigned truck of wreaths to pass out to other volunteers. We will be responsible for providing proper guidance on wreath placement, passing out wreaths and communicating the powerful message of WAA.

If the Truck Crew is not for you and you would still like to participate as a wreath volunteer instead, we are glad to have your support - the more the merrier.

If you are interested in being placed on the Truck Crew wait list or participating as a wreath volunteer, please reach out to our lead, [Kearstin McGinnis](#) to confirm your spot. If you are not in the DC area but are interested in Wreaths Across America, please look into participating in your local area instead. Should you need assistance in finding a participating cemetery, please don't hesitate to reach out to [Kearstin McGinnis](#) directly.

To learn more about Wreaths across America, please visit their [website](#).



media. Insider Threats are motivated by a variety of issues to include disgruntled employees, ego, financial gain or a particular cause. Most insider threats search and prey on a person's weaknesses (i.e. finance, alcohol, drugs). Once a threat finds your weakness, they can use it to their advantage and cause damage to an organization or government.

How can you stop Insider Threat? Be observant for suspicious activity to include:

- Unexplained affluence
- Working irregular hours
- Removing documents without authorization
- Disregarding safeguarding of information
- Inappropriate discussion of information

It is your responsibility to report any potential threats directly to [security@teksynap.com](mailto:security@teksynap.com).

## Thanksgiving Wishes

TekSynap wishes all of our employees a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday!

Check out our recipe for an easy Thanksgiving **Cranberry sauce** - which is sure to light up any table!

### Ingredients

- 1 pound fresh cranberries, washed and dried
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 orange, zested and juiced

### Directions

In a medium pot, combine the cranberries, sugar and water. Stir to blend. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat. Reduce to a simmer and add the cinnamon stick, allspice and nutmeg. Stir to blend and simmer for an additional 5 to 7 minutes. Some of the cranberries will burst and some will remain whole. Add the orange juice and zest, stir and allow to cool before serving.



## Baby On Board

Congratulations to Spencer Ellingsen and his wife who welcomed a beautiful baby boy, Carson Ellingsen on November 15th!



## Employee Anniversaries

### 8 Years

Rob Ritch

### 5 Years

Kyle Montague  
Kirk Falk

### 4 Years

Sheila Andahazy

### 3 Years

Ray Caruso

### 1 Year

Scott Bertran  
Jonathan Daher  
Trent Tackett  
Christopher Vontomaszewski



## REFER A FRIEND — AND BE REWARDED —



Please email your referral resumes to:

### DLA

VTC Admin - Fort Belvoir, VA  
Information Assurance Management Analyst - Columbus, OH  
Network Engineer - New Cumberland, PA

### AFRL PRsISM

Cyber Information Assurance Analyst - Albuquerque, NM  
Cyber Security Assessment and Authorization - Albuquerque, NM  
Senior Linux Administrator - Albuquerque, NM  
Senior Information Systems Analyst - Albuquerque, NM  
Systems Administrator (Application Development) - Albuquerque, NM

### AFRL

EMC Storage Matter Expert - Joint Base Andrews, MD  
Senior Systems Administration - Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, DC  
SolarWinds Subject Matter Expert - Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, DC  
Microsoft SharePoint Subject Matter Expert/SME - Andrews AFB, MD

[careers@teksynap.com](mailto:careers@teksynap.com)  
or visit [TekSynap Careers](#)

## Welcome New Employees!

Chrissi Cox, HQ  
Leonard Newman, HQ  
Marla Helveston, HQ  
Crystal Bonnieter, DTRA

Crystal Danmister, DTRA  
Ezra Jackson, Schriever  
Kalahari Valentine, HQ  
Candice Coalson, DTRA  
Jeremiah Nicholson, VA WiFi  
Zowie Lankford, HQ  
Colin Fryer, DTRA  
Dane Barnhart, DTRA  
Christopher McKee, HQ



## We want to hear from you!

Send us your news -- babies, weddings, pets, trips and vacations, graduations, kudos to coworkers...

Send all submissions to the [Newsletter team](#).



# LinkedIn

**"Follow" us for the latest news  
and info!**

