

Veterans prove to be valuable hires at Imperium

Outside operator Patrick O'Brien climbed between rows of rail cars outside the Imperium Grays Harbor biodiesel plant. He radioed in loads and directed outgoing trucks.

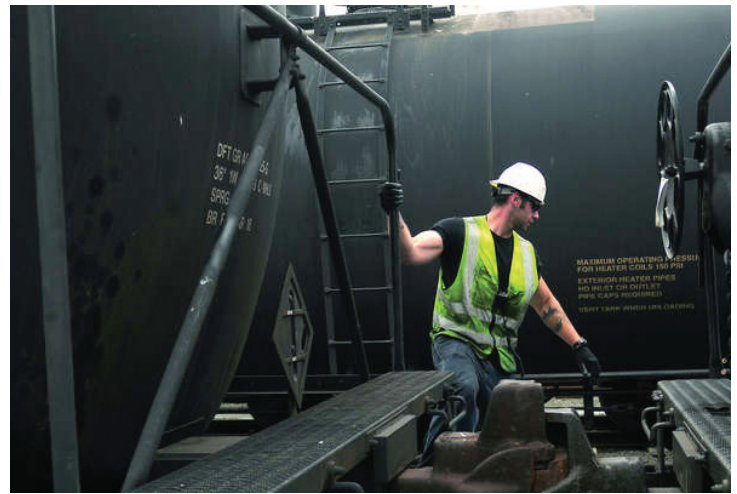
With short hair, an athletic build and tattoos down his arms, he represents a growing faction at the local biodiesel facility -- recently discharged military veterans.

The Boston native recently left the U.S. Army where he served as a cavalry scout. Imperium president and CEO John Plaza said O'Brien is one of the hard-working veterans the growing company is using to rebuild its own ranks.

few opportunities for returning veterans despite their extensive training, personal work ethic and leadership skills. Imperium Renewables has worked to recruit several veterans to the local plant.

"They make tremendous team members," he said.

O'Brien said he was attracted to the solid wages and outdoor work. He said he has since found a familiar



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"[Imperium CEO John] Plaza said the nation has provided few opportunities for returning veterans despite their extensive training, personal work ethic and leadership skills. Imperium Renewables has worked to recruit several veterans to the local plant."

"We found that folks that are getting out of the military and returning to the Grays Harbor community are some of our best employees," he said.

Plaza said the nation has provided

camaraderie working alongside other veterans.

He said he left the Army this past spring and while he sometimes misses the military, the other veterans at the plant have offered support and advice for making the transition

to being a civilian.

"We talk about it a lot," he said. "It makes it easier."

Lisa Smith, a manager at the plant, said five of the 42 people at the plant are veterans. They bring a positive and determined attitude to the workplace.

"It's all about teamwork," she said. "They're just a great group."

O'Brien said he enjoys working in a place that values his skills and challenges him on a continual basis. He said he is happy to be part of the team and looks forward to growing with the company.

"I'm there's an opportunity to step up," he said, "I'm definitely looking forward to that."