



Concrete Preservation Institute

RMC Research & Education Foundation Selects CPI Alcatraz Alumnus as highlight in 2015

CPI Alumnus Brief

Henry Freimuth, a proud US Navy veteran and Concrete Preservation Institute (CPI) alumnus, was chosen from among students at five universities nation-wide by the RMC Research & Education Foundation as the highlight of their 2015 year-end newsletter (please see the full RMC Foundation profile of Henry on the following page). Henry participated as a CPI Field School team member during the spring 2015 session at Alcatraz Island, where he accomplished meaningful preservation results for the National Park Service and developed the direction for his future career. Having completed his two-year Associate degree before entering the military, Henry decided that his path included completing his Bachelor's degree (other CPI alumni follow this path while some seek non-college directions also leading to well-paid jobs). With the guidance of CPI staff, Henry was accepted to California State University, Chico, and began his studies upon completion of the Alcatraz program. He is currently majoring in Concrete Industry Management (see below for information about CIM) and has numerous companies interested in hiring him when he graduates.

Background

About the Concrete Preservation Institute

Through their partnership with the US National Park Service, the Concrete Preservation Institute offers their Preservation Field School that focuses on education, hands-on training, and unique life experiences for post-9/11 military veterans and active duty service members seeking new ways to serve while gaining passion and direction for future careers. CPI also accepts college students interested in the learning experience and working hand-in-hand with veterans. During the 12-week CPI program, participants meet industry leaders, make powerful professional contacts, and help restore national landmark structures at Alcatraz Island and other National Park locations. Although many alumni choose construction-related careers after the engaging CPI experience, the program incorporates leadership and teamwork development that is excellent preparation for careers at many levels and in many fields. CPI has a strong record of job placement for their Field School participants across the United States in skilled trades and management positions, paid industry internships, and college programs.

About the Concrete Industry Management University degree program

For veterans and transitioning service members interested in college, both those who participate in the CPI Field School and otherwise, the Concrete Industry Management program is a great option (CPI offers advising about CIM and other college programs). Industry companies who are eager to hire their alumni generously support both CPI and CIM. Offered at five universities across the United States, CIM is a Bachelor of Science technical degree program that incorporates a minor in business administration. It prepares graduates for management careers in construction project management, sales and other business sectors, research and development, management of ready mix, cement, precast, packaged products, and many other areas. Community college graduates with proper course preparation can often complete the CIM Bachelor of Science degree in four to six semesters (2-3 years).

Veteran Discovers Concrete Industry Management Program Through Work With the Concrete Preservation Institute

From the RMC Research & Education Foundation 2015 Year-End Newsletter

Henry J. Freimuth spent most of his eight-year naval career in munitions and as a military policeman, while also serving two tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. A post-military career in the concrete industry was not something that had occurred to him. At least, not until he met Tanya Wattenburg Komars at a local veterans meeting. It was there that Henry learned of the Concrete Preservation Institute (CPI) and the work taking place at Alcatraz. Dr. Komars, who is both the executive director of the CPI, and also an associate professor at California State University-Chico in the Concrete Industry Management (CIM) program, was recruiting for the CPI Field School, and it was a meeting that would change the course of Henry's life.

After having become ill while in the Navy and then requiring several surgeries later, he was no longer able to serve as a prison guard, his initial post-service occupation, and was looking for a new career. Like many veterans, Henry was interested in a career change that would allow him to utilize skills honed in the Navy. That is where some of the appeal of the CIM program came from. He noted, "While my military years never directly contributed to concrete or construction, I believe it equipped me with skills necessary for becoming a leader in the concrete industry via CIM. These skills include front-line and middle management experience, diligence, perseverance and discipline."

The CPI program at Alcatraz was particularly appealing to Henry given the scope of the work combined with the military and prison history of the location, especially after having been a prison guard himself. Once he gained some experience in the Field School, he knew concrete was the industry for him. Henry attributes the exposure to so many elements of the concrete industry as part of his Field School work, and then within the CIM program, to stoking the flames of interest in pursuing his career in concrete. "At the end of the day, it comes down to problem solving, preservation and being able to upgrade our historic public lands while learning from trusted industry experts," says Henry noting that both programs offer a unique and valuable experience.

Another appeal of the concrete industry for Henry is all of the options and flexibility. He appreciates all of the different areas open to him. Although he has not yet decided what area of the concrete industry in which he will ultimately like to work, he leans toward ready mix design, new construction project management, and the repair arena. "CIM exposes you to various aspects of the concrete industry," says Henry, adding, "It serves as a guiding light for each person to take the path that would be most beneficial to them and the industry as a whole. Many degree platforms in college pigeonhole you immediately. In CIM, you get to explore many options and experiences." Similarly, the various opportunities the industry offers are appealing in their flexibility given that Henry and his wife, Erica, have a young family, including eight-year-old Allison, five-year-old Sophia, and six-month-old Henry Jr. The strong concrete industry support for the CIM program is also something that has made an impression on Henry. He feels the industry truly recognizes, as he puts it, that "making, molding, and steering future concrete leaders will create a better product," adding that the industry has benefitted so much from the program because CIM graduates "enter the industry unhindered and ready to go. I cannot think of any other college program so hands-on and truly invested in the success of all the college students in the CIM programs nationwide."

Henry's experience is one that the leadership of CPI hopes will be replicated with many other veterans. Says Tanya Wattenburg Komars "Henry is a great example of someone who would not have known to look at our industry if it weren't for the Alcatraz program. I can't wait to see the line of companies trying to hire him well ahead of his graduation date a year and a half from now." Like so many CIM students and graduates before him, Henry looks forward to an exciting career ahead of him and he could not be more motivated: "I am very much looking forward to facing the challenges and problem solving in the industry moving forward."