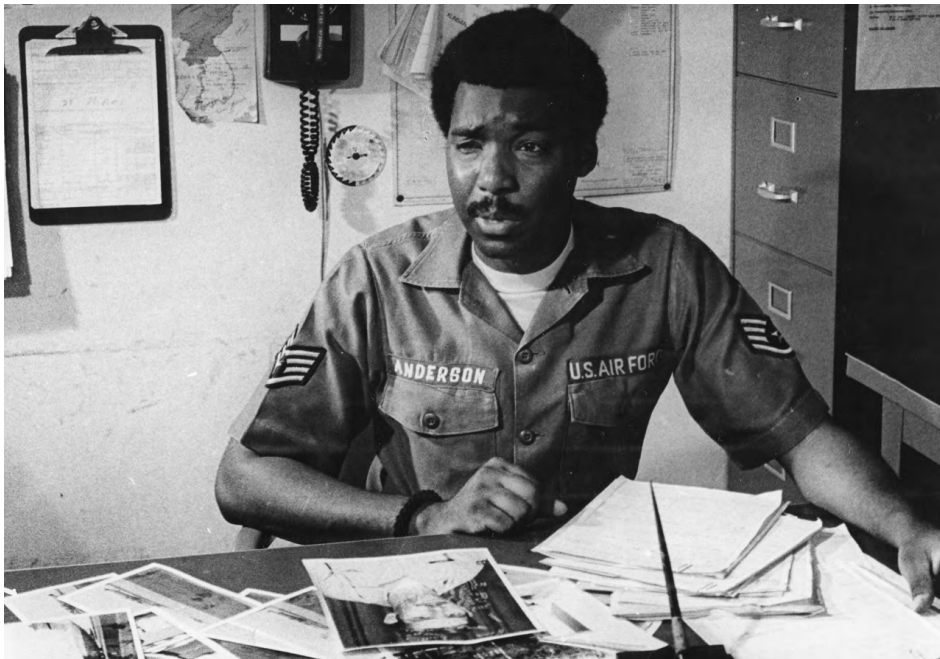


From Air Force Photographer to GPO Seattle Office

How Willie Anderson Has Been Helping GPO Keep Its West Coast Customers Happy for Decades



Willie Anderson serving in Korea during 1972.

Printing Services Specialist Willie Anderson, III joined GPO's Seattle Regional Print Procurement Office (RPPO) in 2005 after a ten-year career in the U.S. Air Force and twenty-seven years with the Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In 1967, Anderson enlisted in the United States Air Force where he served all over the country and overseas as a photographer.

Then in 1978, after leaving the Air Force, he secured a photography job with the Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He was responsible for documenting the activities of the Corps, such as dams, levees, military base construction, and flood season activity.

"I feel privileged to have spent much of my career as a photographer, since photography has always been a passion of mine. I've visited many varied locations allowing me to enjoy lots of new and interesting experiences," said Anderson.

When a job became available in 1986, Anderson embraced the opportunity to transition to a Printing Services Specialist for the Seattle Division, Army Corps of Engineers. In this position he worked

closely with GPO for its printing needs, such as decals, tags, handbooks, maps, floor graphics, signs, etc.

Being located in the same building as GPO's Seattle RPPO, Anderson became very familiar with the office staff. He interacted with the GPO on a daily basis and when necessary, they'd meet face-to-face to collaborate and discuss printing requests.

Anderson recalls, "In 2005, when I learned of an available position in GPO's Seattle RPPO, it seemed like a natural fit for me. On my first day of work in the Seattle office, I knew I had made the right decision! The transition to my new position with the GPO was flawless."

The function of a regional office is to service the printing and publishing needs of agencies within that particular region. Specifically, the Seattle RPPO serves the states California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

When a regional office receives requests from agencies for printed materials (manuals, pamphlets, handbooks, maps, vehicle wraps, decals, tags, floor graphics, etc.) the job is logged in and the Manager assigns those jobs to

Anderson or another Printing Services Specialist.

"Once I receive a job assignment, I work directly with the requesting agency to get the details and specifications for the job, such as paper stock, ink type, etc. The next step is to do research to prepare and write up the specs and create a solicitation. Then, I post the solicitation and wait for quotes to come in," says Anderson.

Chief of Customer Services, Regional Operations, Ted Priebe said, "Willie is the ultimate team player. He's been instrumental in helping to create the current pandemic workflow for the office. He regularly follows up with teammates when the manager is on leave to ensure the Seattle team can meet customers' mission essential requirements. His leadership and continuous support of co-workers helps keep the office exceeding customer services standards."

RPPOs were created to support executive branch agencies' print procurement needs in the regions they serve. They were originally established



Willie during basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in 1967.



Willie at an Army COE drafting table in the 1980s.

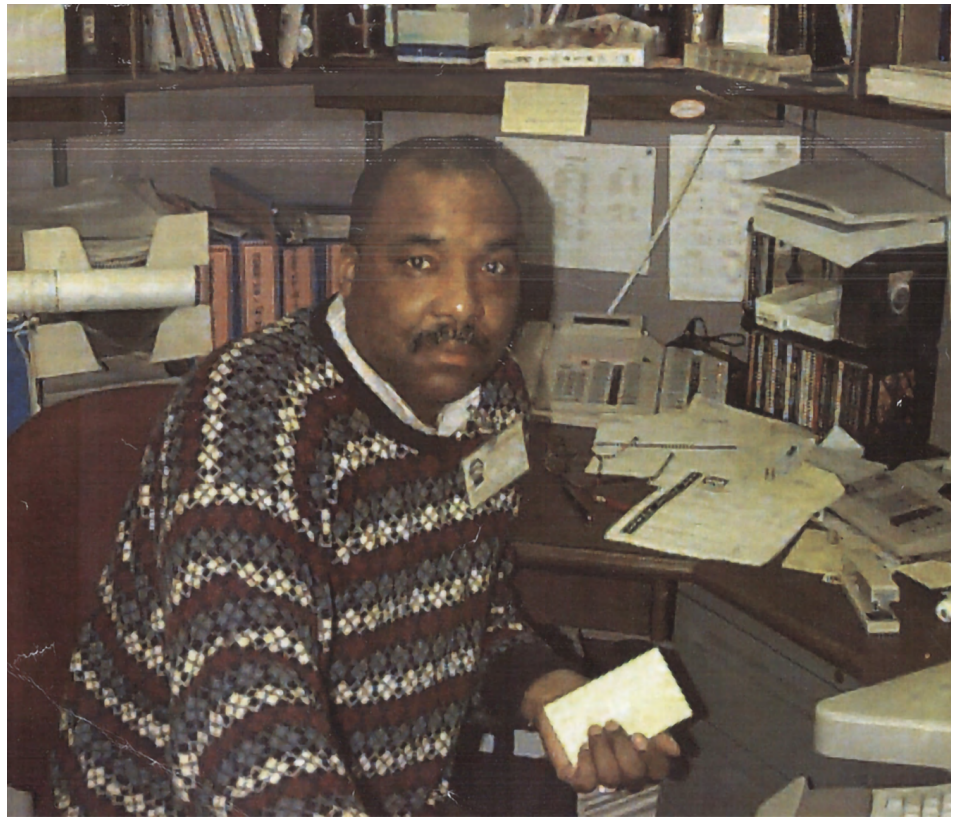
based on a study of the Government Printing Office and the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) goal of decentralizing government printing to leverage the commercial printing industry to save taxpayer dollars.

Currently, GPO operates 12 regional offices located nationwide to serve regional Federal agency customers with their publishing and procurement needs. The offices are located in Atlanta, Charleston, Columbus, Philadelphia, Seattle, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, San Antonio, San Francisco, and Virginia Beach. Regional offices are set up to work with the customers in an established region; however, agency customers can choose which GPO office to use.

Staff in the regional offices promote and perform the same types of procurement and offer the same services as those in DC. Customers initiate requests with the regional offices, then a consultation can be made about the best procurement vehicle. Each office has its own workflow as processes are built around customer needs and available GPO staffing.

The Seattle office has a unique history of initially serving a regional printing facility, and subsequently the regional procurement team was established on August 19, 1970.

Since March of 2020 when the pandemic hit, GPO's procurement teams have been almost exclusively teleworking. They've transitioned processing



Willie working in the Army COE Reprographics Office Desk in the 1990s.

of customer orders from tangible submission of orders that (pre-pandemic) were primarily sent to the physical office addresses, to having print requests sent electronically via email, etc. The RPPOs transitioned to a fully electronic (digital records management) process for official contract files. The teams regularly use Microsoft Teams to communicate with each other.

Anderson said, "I truly enjoy my role at GPO on a daily basis. It can be challenging at times, but that's the best part. I appreciate, and enjoy the association with, all my co-workers. We all trust what we as individuals, and a group, have to offer one another in the performance of our jobs, as well as the success of the office in general. To be honest, I realized that I had made a great decision to join the GPO team on my first day of work."

Editor's Note:

This is part of a series of articles focused on employees with 40+ years of Federal service. We look forward to sharing their GPO experience with you.

—Michelle R. Overstreet



Willie Anderson teleworking during the pandemic.