

ALTIORA ET MELIORA – HIGHER AND BETTER

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Katrina Ware Simpson, Classes of '11/'12G,
B.A. in Human Development, M.Ed. in Educational Studies



Photo by Jodie Andruskevich

Second Lieutenant Katrina Ware Simpson wears many hats—wife, mother, clinician, entrepreneur, and infantry platoon leader for the Army National Guard. Strength, service, and a drive to support others’ success as well as her own, guide this alumna’s path.

“I’ve loved Rivier’s mission to ‘transform hearts and minds’ since I first considered the school as an option,” says Simpson, who completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Rivier. Fully embracing the mission, she actively served those in need while pursuing her degrees.

“While at Rivier, I attended a trip to Casa del la Esperanza in Houston with campus ministries, where we were fortunate enough to aid in caring for children who had been abandoned or separated from their

families,” she shares. “I traveled to South Carolina with Habitat for Humanity ... and to Kentucky with the Christian Appalachian Project. I’ve had so many opportunities to give back in a big way; Rivier has helped to reinforce the notion of being a part of something bigger.”

Upon graduation, Simpson worked in the local community, first as a clinical supervisor for a foster care agency and later for Becket Family of Services, where she specialized in treating children with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Ambitious, goal-oriented, and looking for a hands-on challenge, Simpson joined the Army National Guard in 2013. “As a civilian clinician, I deal heavily with youth who have experienced trauma,” she says. “But when I joined the military four years ago, I decided my ultimate career goal was to work with combat veterans struggling with PTSD. Twenty-two veterans take their own lives each day. When I first heard that statistic, I knew that was the population I wanted to serve.”

Upon completing basic training, she returned to the New Hampshire Army National Guard and officer candidate school. In fall 2016, Simpson made history; she completed intensive combat leadership training in the first class that included female lieutenants, and she became the first woman to graduate from U.S. Army infantry officer training.

Currently a platoon leader in the New Hampshire Army National Guard’s mountain infantry company, Simpson will attend Ranger School in the future.



“Rivier taught me that I can be strong as well as compassionate, fiercely driven and yet still kind to others. Those are the things I want to pass on to my daughter.”

Second Lieutenant Katrina Simpson, her husband James Ware, and their daughter Avalene, who was baptized at Resurrection Chapel on the Rivier University campus.

Perhaps an even greater challenge, Simpson has created a point of intersection in her military, professional and personal lives—she and her husband recently launched New Hampshire’s first flotation therapy center. “When we were first considering flotation therapy (also known as sensory deprivation) as a business opportunity, I was hesitant; but after reviewing all of the research on utilizing sensory deprivation tanks to treat PTSD, I was all in,” says Simpson. New Hampshire Float Therapy opened in early October 2017 in Londonderry, New Hampshire.

Along with her strong personal drive, Simpson claims “my husband and my daughter” as two major motivators. “My education, I’m sure will continue to prove invaluable throughout my career, but I’m more grateful for how I’ve benefited as a wife and mother,” says Simpson. “I don’t ever want my child to think that education is the end all, be all. After all, what good is education if you’re not a good person? If you don’t value others and do your part to help others when you have the opportunity, then you’re cheating yourself. Those are the moments that matter most and the moments that build character.” ■