

FEATURED SPEAKERS & PRESENTERS

2022 NASWA VETERANS CONFERENCE



Eric Airola*

Attracting & Retaining Veteran Talent in a Competitive Economy

Eric Airola leads Military & Veteran Relations for J.B. Hunt Transport. In this role that is relatively new to J.B. Hunt, Eric works closely with business leadership and other stakeholders to develop and manage the military talent acquisition strategy, military transition programs, and veteran recognition and support programs. Additionally, he is a member of the Inclusion Strategy department and represents J.B. Hunt in community relations and other functions that serve to build and enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion. Eric is a co-founder of J.B. Hunt's Veteran Employee Resource Group and past Chair. Prior to this assignment Eric was responsible for non-driver Talent Acquisition for the enterprise, and during his time in Human Resources he has been Director of HR Business Partners, Benefits, and Talent Development. Eric began his career as part of J.B. Hunt's Manager Training Program and was the first manager trainee recruited directly from the military. Eric joined J.B. Hunt following six years as an infantry officer in the United States Marine Corps. He has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from East Carolina University, and his Professional of Human Resources certification. Eric lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas with his wife, Dr. Denise Airola, and their three daughters also live nearby.



Danielle Applegate*

Serving Military-Connected Families, Pandemic Edition;

Attracting & Retaining Veteran Talent in a Competitive Economy

Danielle Applegate is the Director of Veteran and Military Family Engagement for Oracle Cerner. Prior to bringing her 25 years' experience to Oracle Cerner, she led VetsFirst, an accredited Veteran Service Organization, and served in the Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Women Veterans, where she created groundbreaking women veteran initiatives and nationwide VA programming. A fifth-generation veteran with dual-military parents, Danielle served on active duty in the US Army and the National Guard; her duty included a tour in Korea. Due to service-connected injuries, she left active duty and earned an MBA from the University of Massachusetts and a nonprofit executive certificate from Georgetown University. A published military and veteran community subject matter expert and advocate, she serves on the Board of Directors for PsychArmor Institute as the Governance chair, the Board of Directors for the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans, the Board of Directors for Hesperus, the National Physical Activity Alliance, as a Carry the Load Ambassador, and on the American Legion's Small Business Council. A self-professed data nerd, she resides in Northern Virginia where she is being raised by two delightful middle schoolers who enjoy volunteering as much as she does.



Alexandra (Ali) Bergeron

What's New at NVTI?

Alexandra Bergeron is the Customer Service Coordinator for the NVTI Program at Management Concepts. In her role caring for NVTI student enrollment, she is the customer-face to new and returning NVTI students. Mrs. Bergeron has been in her first-contact role for over three years now. With her educational background in Psychology and Interpersonal Communications, she successfully works with people in different roles across a multifaceted environment.



Dr. Jill Biden

Jill Biden, Ed.D., is the First Lady of the United States, a community college educator, a military mother, a grandmother, and bestselling author. Dr. Biden also served as Second Lady of the United States from 2009–2017. In 2021, Dr. Biden announced the next phase and priorities of Joining Forces, her White House initiative to support military and veteran families, caregivers, and survivors. In her first year, she visited 16 military installations; worked with Joining Forces partners to hold over 20 events with military families; and

launched an interagency working group with the National Security Council, which secured over 80 commitments and proposals across the federal government to support [whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov) military families. Through her Joining Forces work, she has advocated for: increased economic opportunities for military spouses; additional educational programming and support for military children; more focus on health and wellness in the military community; and improved resources for caregivers and survivors.



Ryan Blackburn*

Don't Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Ryan Blackburn is a native of central Ohio and a United States Air Force veteran. While serving on active duty from 2004-2010 as an Operations Intelligence Analyst, Ryan was stationed around the world while deploying to Iraq twice and once to Afghanistan. Ryan utilized his post-military education benefits to pursue a bachelor's degree at The Ohio State University in Business Administration and then a graduate leadership certificate in Public and Non-profit Leadership. He worked as a Veteran Peer Sponsor while at Ohio State, helping new veteran students acclimate to the collegiate atmosphere and providing guidance and resources to the student veteran population on campus. Now as the Manager of Workforce Development with the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, Ryan directs a team of consultants across the state that assist employers with hiring veterans. He provides consultation and veteran employment training presentations aimed at assisting employer recruiting, human resources, and management teams in identifying best practices for recruiting, on-boarding, and retaining veteran employees. Ryan also works strategically with national organizations and partners to help Ohio become the premier destination for military veterans and their families.



Matt Brogdon*

Hesperus- Supporting Native American Veterans Through Education, Employment & Technology; Putting Our Veteran and Military Community to Work

Matt Brogdon is a Senior Engagement Manager with the Microsoft Military Affairs Team and is a United States Army veteran and a 1994 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy. He is also the Founder and Executive Director of Hesperus, a non-profit focused on serving the training and education needs of Native American veterans. Matt has 23 years in the military and diversity recruiting, education, and employment arenas, as well as a strong background in technology training and skilling programs.



Ed Carr*

Attracting & Retaining Veteran Talent in a Competitive Economy

U.S. Army Sergeant First Class (Ret.) **Edward Carr** is the Senior Project Manager, Military and Veteran Affairs at Comcast NBCUniversal. In his role, Ed manages the company's external partnerships with governmental and non-profit veteran-focused organizations as part of Comcast NBCUniversal's broader programs and outreach in support of the military community. Ed also focuses on assisting talent acquisition in the recruitment and retention of members from the military community. Ed's military career spanned twenty-three years active duty, as a combat medic and then a medical recruiter, as well as overseas combat and humanitarian deployments to the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia. His military service was recognized with numerous military awards and commendations, including the Meritorious Service Medal with 6 oak leaf clusters, the Combat Medical Badge, The Air Assault Badge, and the Glen E. Morrell Order of Recruiting Excellence Medallion. Ed's work at Comcast NBCUniversal has been instrumental in the company being recognized as a private sector leader in military hiring and community outreach.



Allison Chamberlayne^

Connecting Military Talent to High-Demand Careers through Tech and Industry Focused Internships

Allison Chamberlayne is a military spouse who served alongside her husband, a retired Army Engineer, for over 25 years. She joined Hiring Our Heroes in January of 2018, as a part of the Corporate Fellowship Program. Over the past four and a half years, Allison has held several roles to include Operations Manager, Program Manager of Corporate Fellowship program in the National Capital Region and Deputy Director of the Military Spouse Fellowship Program. Before her career at Hiring Our Heroes, Allison faced the same employment challenges as those she currently serves. She has held full time, part time and temporary positions in multiple fields to include Accounting, Logistics, Marketing, Finance and

Education. This has made her a passionate advocate for military spouses in their pursuit of meaningful employment opportunities. Allison has a bachelor's degree in Urban Affairs from Virginia Tech and being a diehard Hokie consumes much of her and her family's free time. She resides in McLean, VA with her husband, Ed (VT '93, '02, '11) and son Eddie (VT '24). Her daughter, Emma (UVA '20) lives nearby and tolerates the VT fanaticism.



Jaime Chapman*^

Connecting Military Talent to High-Demand Careers through Tech and Industry Focused Internships

Jaime Chapman is a Sr. Military Talent Program Manager at Amazon Web Services and one of the original Co-Founders of the Military Spouse Chamber of Commerce. Her professional background is as a human capital entrepreneur where she successfully placed over 1,600 jobseekers in careers, creating an economic impact totaling over \$112 million. Jaime has achieved recognition for:

- #1 Military Spouse Owned Business Overall Award by Military and Veteran's Choice in 2019.
- 2020-2021 Armed Forces Insurance US Army Garrison Wiesbaden Military Spouse of the Year Award.
- 2022 Fort Hood Local Business Person of the Year, Alignable
- Scholar, George W. Bush Stand-To Veteran Leadership Program, Class of 2021.

Jaime served in the Army Reserves for six years, and is currently an active duty Army spouse with her family stationed in Texas. She is a proud advocate for the military community, actively working to reduce military spouse unemployment and underemployment.



Hall Charter

Virtual Reality: Innovative Workforce Solutions for the Military Community; Hands-on Demo and Best Practices: Virtual Reality's Impact on Career Exploration and Training

Hall Charter, one of the original TRANSFR team members, develops and leads partnerships across education, workforce development and business & industry to build community ecosystems that focus on closing workforce skills gaps and creating pathways to career prosperity. He is passionate about helping people on a path to upward mobility, including underemployed, unemployed, veterans, youth, incarcerated and other demographics that often face barriers to employment. He wants to ensure everyone has equitable access to education, no matter their circumstances or location. Hall hails from Australia and currently resides in New York City. He is an avid runner and loves the outdoors.



Babs Chase[^]

Virtual Reality: Innovative Workforce Solutions for the Military Community; Hands-on Demo and Best Practices: Virtual Reality's Impact on Career Exploration and Training

Babs Chase has spent her career building connections to positively impact the world around her, and Chase Magnolia capitalizes on her desire to make a difference by bringing changemakers together. Babs's true passion is working with the military community connecting organizations wishing to engage with and support those who wear the cloth of our country and the families serving alongside them. She is recognized as a national leader in support of our nation's veterans as a 2021 graduate of the George W. Bush Institute's Veteran Leadership Program.



Mika Cross*[^]

Remote and Hybrid Jobs: Top Career Paths and Skills Needed for Success in the Future of Work

Mika J. Cross is a widely acclaimed workplace expert, speaker, strategist and innovator specializing in interdisciplinary expertise among the areas of innovative global workplace initiatives, remote and distributed work, culture change, strategic communications, knowledge management, next generation workplace and future of work predictions. Her career includes 20+ years of public service with assignments throughout the United States Intelligence Community and across the Federal government and Mika is also a veteran of the United States Army, having served as both an enlisted soldier and commissioned officer.



Margarita Devlin

Pre-Con – USDOL VETS Listening Session

Margarita Devlin, MA, CRC, a member of the Senior Executive Service, is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations and Management at the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). Prior to coming to VETS in July 2021, Ms. Devlin served with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for over 25 years in various positions of increasing responsibility. Ms. Devlin began her VA career as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and progressed through leadership positions within VBA, VHA, and at the VA Department level. Ms. Devlin most recently served as the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Chief Learning Officer (CLO). In her prior role as CLO, she was the principal advisor to the Under Secretary for Health for the analysis, development, delivery, implementation, and evaluation of education and training programs, products, and services that support workforce development and continuing education for the VHA's staff. Before serving as VHA's Chief Learning Officer, Ms. Devlin served as Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits in Washington, DC. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Master of Arts degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of South Florida, Tampa FL.



Daryle Dudzinski
Master of Ceremonies

Daryle Dudzinski was named Connecticut Department of Labor Deputy Commissioner by Governor Ned Lamont in January 2019. Having served as Acting Deputy Commissioner since June 2018, he began his career with the agency in 1992, starting out as a Connecticut Career Trainee. A graduate of Central Connecticut State University, Daryle holds a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting. His first job at DOL involved working with employers to determine annual tax rates and liability for the Unemployment Insurance program. In time, he began working in the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Division, helping the agency bring improvements and innovations to its Call Center operations, claims adjudications process, technical support activities, online services and integrity measures. Prior to being named Acting Deputy Commissioner, Daryle served as Director of Labor Operations. In that position, he oversaw the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Division, as well as the Employment, Business Services and Veterans divisions, which offer services to residents through the American Job Center network and online. He is current chair of the NASWA Veterans Affairs committee.



Janice Fidalgo
*Grow with Google;
Connecting Military Talents to High-Demand Careers through Tech and Industry-Focused Internships*

Janice Fidalgo leads economic opportunity programs at Google. Born and raised in Boston, she developed her passion for giving back to her community. Today, Janice supports national and local nonprofit organizations to provide economic opportunity for Google's Career Certificate program, including partnering with organizations like Boys & Girls Club, Mom Project, and the nation's largest workforce development organizations through partnerships with the National Association of State Agencies (NASWA). Janice graduated from Dartmouth College and currently resides in New York City.



Michael Fisher, MSW*
Spread the Word. Vet Centers Work.

Michael Fisher was appointed as the Chief Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Readjustment Counselling Service (RCS) in May 2016. He has direct leadership and oversight of the 300 Vet Centers, 80 Mobile Vet Centers, and the Vet Center Call Center which all provide readjustment counselling to Veterans, active-duty Service members, and their families. RCS facilities are located in all 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and

American Samoa. As Chief Officer, Mr. Fisher also advises the Under Secretary for Health in policy issues effecting the readjustment of veterans and their families and issues surrounding the combat experience. Mr. Fisher began his career with VA in RCS as an outreach specialist at the Baltimore Vet Center ensuring increased access to care and services for his fellow Veterans. He performed local, Regional, and National role of increasing responsibility within RCS culminating in his appointment as Chief Officer. Prior to his VA career, he served over 10 years with the Pennsylvania National Guard and was deployed to Iraq as an Infantry non-commissioned officer in 2005. Following this combat deployment, he was medically discharged from the military. He holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) from the Catholic University of America.



Jerry Flores *

Don't Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Jerry Flores is one of 3 Local Veteran's Employment Representatives (LVER) at the Oregon Employment Department. Jerry served in the United States Coast Guard as a Chief Boatswain's Mate. He is an active volunteer with several Veteran Service Organizations with the goal of assisting veterans in overcoming barriers to employment, housing, and education.



Jaime Feeman

Veteran and Military Spouse Entrepreneurship

Jaime Feeman serves as Chief Operating Officer for Dog Tag Inc. In her role overseeing internal operations, Jaime is responsible for leading the financial management, strategic development, and the execution of Dog Tag's program and bakery growth. Jaime also directs Dog Tag's workflow optimization to enhance program delivery, change management support, and data analysis to measure impact and mitigate risk. Previously a management consultant with Deloitte, Jaime supported multiple federal clients, including the Department of Defense with the development of DoD-wide pilot encompassing over 20,000 individuals to measure optimal force health and readiness. Jaime is currently completing the Nonprofit Management Executive Certificate at her alma mater, Georgetown University. While not at work, Jaime can be found planning her next trip or getting lost on a hike with her two dogs.



Jeanette Gilles

Collaborative Solutions for Veteran Empowerment

Jeanette Gilles, Director of The Network, holds a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of South Carolina and has more than 20 years of experience in the areas of addictions and mental health, medical social work and military/veteran issues. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in Georgia. She is the lead for the America's Warrior Partnership national

coordination program, The Network. The Network connects veterans to their community and connects communities to national service when resources do not exist or have been exhausted.



Michael Haft*

Navigating Through the Entrepreneurship Journey

Michael Haft is the Co-Founder and CEO of Compass Coffee, a D.C.-based coffee company. Compass Coffee is Washington, DC's signature coffee chain whose cafés have garnered critical acclaim and signature blends can be found at leading restaurants, grocery chains, and is the coffee of choice at many federal government agencies. Before starting Compass Coffee, Michael served as an Infantry Officer in the United States Marine Corps and deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Michael studied entrepreneurship at Washington University in St. Louis and lives in Washington, D.C.



Wendy Harrison*

What's Happening In the VETS/JVSG/VA VR&E Space?

Wendy Harrison has served as the Tennessee State Director for the US DOL Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) since September 2015. Ms. Harrison began her career with VETS in September 2010 as an Assistant Director in the Nashville office. Ms. Harrison oversees, as well as conducts investigations under Veterans' Preference (VP) and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). She currently serves as the Grant Officer's Technical Representative for Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) grants and the Tennessee Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), monitoring quarterly performance and financial data and providing technical assistance to grantees as needed. In addition, she monitors the Department of Labor's Employment Workshops at various military installations across Tennessee, including Ft. Campbell (KY), McGhee Tyson ANG Base (TN), and Millington NSA (TN). Born at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, Ms. Harrison grew up as an Army dependent. She then joined the U.S. Air Force and served from 1991-1995 as a Surgical Services Specialist. After serving in the Air Force, she and her family returned to Clarksville, TN, in 1995, where she continues to reside.



Dan Hawthorne, PhD*

Remote and Hybrid Jobs: Top Career Paths and Skills Needed for Success in the Future of Work

Dan Hawthorne enlisted in the US Army right out of high school at age 17 and served for three years in the US Chemical Corps as an NBC Specialist. He has also continued to work in veterans' interests and transitioning service members by serving as a part of the American Legion's Employment Innovation Task Force to the National Veterans Employment & Education Division. Dan graduated from The University of Missouri - Saint Louis (UMSL) with Bachelor's degrees in English Literature and Psychology, a Master's degree in Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology. He has extensive experience with numerous Fortune 500 consulting clients and has worked in several roles from an individual contributor in projects like a Big Data initiative for State Farm Insurance and a senior leader in the deployment of a Big-5 personality measure for Educational Testing Service (ETS) and a significant project developing new Adult Education and Literacy standards for the Texas Workforce Commission. He weaves together his experience as a client-facing consultant with his background as an organizational research scientist to uncover powerful data results. He currently serves PAIRIN in his role as Director of IO Psychology by being the psychometric technical expert on PAIRIN's products and tools. He also is the primary investigator on all research projects and drives PAIRIN's research agenda.



Darnell Holcomb *

Veteran and Military Spouse Entrepreneurship

Darnell Holcomb is the Senior Program Manager for Global Corporate Citizenship for Fiserv, named one of world's most innovative companies by Fast Company. In this role he manages the strategy and implementation of Fiserv's strategic philanthropic, diversity and inclusion, employee, and community engagement efforts. Previously, a senior development officer in Los Angeles' Independent Schools and at the university level, Darnell also oversaw a broad range of high-level projects at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), while supporting LACMA's Office of Development and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (OSCARS). A U.S. Air Force veteran, he served in a variety of assignments from the Assistant Regional Director of Admissions for the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) to financial manager of all activities related to the Air Force's multi-billion dollar Air Force Satellite Control Network. As he transitioned from the Air Force into Boeing's Space and Intelligence division, Darnell was instrumental on those teams providing classified technical capabilities for the Global War on Terrorism. He earned an undergraduate degree in corporate finance and sociology from Morehouse College while simultaneously receiving a commission in the U.S. Air Force from Georgia Institute of Technology. He holds an MBA from Pepperdine University, with additional graduate study in sustainability from Harvard University Extension School.



Anita Sugimura Holsapple

Battlefield Home- Finding Peace in Turmoil

Anita Sugimura is an award-winning independent documentary filmmaker and former news producer with more than 20 years of film and television news experience. She is currently in development on two projects, one a multi-media book and film, as well as currently working on her mother's biography as a Nagasaki survivor. Her first feature film, *Battlefield: Home - Breaking The Silence*, a project based upon her family's journey with trauma, was awarded Best Documentary at the 2018 SAMHSA Voice Awards for its attention and awareness of PTSD and mental health. The film also garnered several awards at various film festivals, as well as special screenings at UCLA's Friends of Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. Anita was also recognized as Best Female Director at the Santa Fe Film Festival. Anita has degrees in sociology and psychology, as well as a Master of Science degree in International Conflict Analysis & Resolution. Anita, a classically trained chef, also spent more than 10 years as a professional chef. Anita is a first-generation Japanese American born in California but raised internationally, courtesy of her U.S. Marine Corps father. Her love of culture and communication stems from her firsthand immersion in living abroad. She is a member of IDA, NYWIFT, AWD, and the APA. Anita is also involved with The Rural Assembly, CAAM, and a passionate mental health advocate. Anita recently relocated from Los Angeles to southern Louisiana where she also cares for her aging mother.



Dan Hopkins

Attracting & Retaining Veteran Talent in a Competitive Economy

Dan Hopkins is VP of Applied AI and Public Sector at [Eightfold.ai](https://www.eightfold.ai). Dan is responsible for helping agencies and global governments leverage Artificial Intelligence to create better employment outcomes across their internal hiring needs and externally for their citizens and veterans. Dan has over 15 years of technology experience. Prior to his role at Eightfold, Dan was VP of innovation at Apttus, where he was responsible for Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain solution offerings. His past management experience includes a deployment to London where he oversaw the sales engineering team for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Dan has also provided technology consulting for past US presidential campaigns, members of congress, and government agencies. Dan has an undergraduate degree in Political Science, a master's in information systems technology and attended Columbia University for a Master's in Business Administration.



Julie Howell*

Serving Veterans with Disabilities Throughout Life's Journey

Julie Howell is a 5-year Army veteran who deployed twice to Iraq. After leaving the military, she attended culinary school and worked as a chef for several years. In 2013, Julie decided to go back to school and earned a BA in History and a master's degree in Public Policy with an emphasis on veterans. She began working in veteran advocacy in 2018 as a research and policy intern for Iraq Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). For the past few years, she has worked at the University of California at Santa Cruz as the veteran program coordinator. As Associate Legislative

Director Julie is responsible for veterans' issues related to employment, education, and adaptive housing and automobile grants. She also serves as principal point of contact for women veterans' issues.



Eileen Huck^

Serving Military-Connected Families, Pandemic Edition

Eileen Huck became Deputy Director in the Government Relations Department in October, 2012 after previously holding positions in the Youth Initiatives and Development Departments. In her role as Government Relations Deputy Director, Eileen monitors issues relevant to the quality of life of families of the uniformed services. Her primary area of focus is health care, to include the Military Health System, TRICARE, and behavioral health care. In this capacity, she serves as the co-chair of The Military Coalition's (TMC) Health Care Committee and as the Association's representative on the TRICARE for Kids Coalition. Eileen also handles issues related to wounded warriors and military caregivers. She is a former co-chair of the TMC Personnel Committee and Awards Committee and served as an *ex officio* member of the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). She has been recognized for her work advocating on behalf of military-connected children by the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) and the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA). Prior to joining the Association, Eileen volunteered as a case worker with the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society in Mayport, Florida and served as adviser to the USS HALYBURTON Family Readiness Group. She earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Georgetown University and served two tours overseas as a Foreign Service officer. A Navy spouse, Eileen has lived in Virginia, California, Florida, and Rhode Island. She currently resides in Alexandria, Virginia with her husband, CAPT Michael Huck USN (ret) and their two children.



Tim Johnston*

What's Happening In the VETS/JVSG/VA VR&E Space?

Tim Johnston is the Supervisor for Employment Services for VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment Service in Central Office where he has been in this position for the last two years. Previously, he served in central office as the Supervisor of Rehabilitation Services since November of 2015. He came to VR&E Service after serving for 16 years in VR&E management as both the VR&E Officer and the Assistant Officer for the Los Angeles Regional Office. Prior to VR&E management, he served as both a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and a Rehabilitation Specialist in the Los Angeles RO starting his VA career in 1995.



Sean Kelso*

Don't Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Sean Kelso is a Dedicated Public Servant, Community Builder, Outreach Expert and Workforce Development Professional with a passion for connecting our Veterans to meaningful career opportunities. Sean is one of 3 Local Veteran's Employer Representatives (LVER) at the Oregon Employment Department. His primary focus is to conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans, encourage the hiring of disabled veterans, and generally assist veterans to gain and retain employment. Sean is a proven and experienced problem solver, critical thinker, with a growth mindset. Sean served his country for the past 10 years honorably as an active-duty Marine and Oregon National Guard member. Sean continues to serve the Veteran community in my role with the State of Oregon. Sean attributes his success and professional development throughout his career to the core values, leadership skills, and work ethic he learned and perfected during my time in military.



Cedric King*

Keynote: Relentless Spirit, Resilient Mind

Master Sergeant Cedric King entered the United States Army in 1995. During his 20-year career, King proved himself to be an exemplary soldier graduating from several distinguishing schools in the Army. He is the recipient of the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Legion of Merit. On the morning of July 25, 2012, during his second tour in Afghanistan, King was severely injured by an Improvised Explosive Device. The explosion caused internal injuries, permanent damage to his right arm and hand and the amputation of both of his legs. King now refers to that moment as his finest hour. While recovering from his injuries, King found time to complete his bachelor's degree and begin to cultivate his speaking voice. Since becoming an amputee, King has shared his story of perseverance and endurance with audiences such as the US Naval Academy and the United States Military Academy at West Point, professional sports team of the NFL, NBA, and MLB. Fortune 500 companies from Home Depot to Facebook. In February of 2019 his story was published into print when he released his book called, "The Making Point". In his book he shared mindsets, philosophies, and stories that include how 21 months after losing both of his legs, King completed the 2014 Boston Marathon. He has been featured on Networks such as CBS, NBC, ABC, HBO, and the NFL Network. He has gone on to compete in a number of physically taxing events including a 70.3-mile half Ironman Triathlon. He is a two New York City Marathon finisher, a five-time Boston Marathon finisher, numerous half marathons, and a three-time 48.6-mile Disney Marathon series finisher. King has been married to his lovely wife, Khieda King, since October 200 and the couple has two beautiful daughters, Amari and Khayma King.



Stan Kurtz*

Navigating Through the Entrepreneurship Journey

Stan Kurtz is a retired U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer with 23 years of service. He currently serves as the Director of Programs for the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Veterans Business development. He also served as the Director of Policy and Engagement and the Director of Veteran Business Outreach Centers for the Office of Veterans Business Development. Prior to SBA, Stan was the Director of Veterans Employment Services for Texas Veterans Commission in Austin, Texas. Previous positions include Operations Manager for the Texas Veteran Commission and Assistant State Veterans Employment Coordinator for the State of Florida. Stan holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland University College.



Richard Lawrence

Building Career Paths for Service-Disabled Veterans in the Clean Energy Industry

Richard Lawrence is a Program Director at IREC. In this role, he leads the National Solar Jobs Accelerator, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that connects military veterans and transitioning service members with training, certifications, apprenticeships, and jobs in the solar industry. He also supports the SolSmart program, which helps municipalities and counties open up solar markets; and the Solar Automated Permit Processing (SolarAPP) project, an industry initiative to streamline the permitting and inspection process for photovoltaic installations. Additionally, Richard co-chairs the Solar Energy Industries Association’s Quality Assurance Working Group, which creates best practices for the finance and installation of PV systems. Since 2002, he has focused his career on renewable energy education, training, workforce development, credentialing, advocacy, and quality assurance.



Dave Lee*

Attracting & Retaining Veteran Talent in a Competitive Economy

Dave Lee leads a workforce initiatives team at CVS Health. Our team is responsible for military programs, community operations (MD to GA), marketing & communications, data & analytics. Prior to CVS Health I lead the development of Amazon.jobs. As a retired Army Colonel I have commanded a 625 soldier battalion, served as a strategic planner to the Chief of Staff, Army, and lead the Army Strong marketing campaign. Proud to have been selected as part of the inaugural class for the George W. Bush Stand-To Veteran Leadership Initiative.



Daniel Libby, PhD

Introduction to Mindful Resilience for Compassion Fatigue

Dr. Daniel J Libby, founder and CEO of Veterans Yoga Project, is a licensed clinical psychologist and yoga teacher specializing in the mindful integration of evidence-based psychotherapies and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices for the treatment of PTS(D) and other psychological and emotional distress in active-duty military and veterans. As a Postdoctoral Fellow with Yale University’s Department of Psychiatry and the VA’s Mental Illness Research and Education Clinical Center, Dan conducted research investigating the physiological correlates of mindfulness meditation as well as the first epidemiological investigation of CAM in VA PTS(D) treatment programs. He is also former Director of Clinical Services for the Starlight Military Rehabilitation Program and has taught mindfulness and yoga to hundreds of veterans and active-duty service members.



Jim Lorraine*

Collaborative Solutions for Veteran Empowerment

Jim Lorraine, the President and CEO of America’s Warrior Partnership, served in the U.S. Air Force as a Flight Nurse for 22 years. Lorraine leveraged his extensive experience to develop a program, known as Community Integration, to unify local communities, national nonprofits and their resources around service members, veterans, and their families nationally. Under his leadership, America’s Warrior Partnership has assisted tens of thousands of veterans and created numerous communities.



Zach Ludi*

Don’t Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Zachary Ludi, a U.S. Airforce OEF/OIF veteran, serves as a Veteran Program Manager for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services’ (ODJFS) Office of Workforce Development (OWD) Veteran Workforce Services program. His program role provides policies and procedures regarding veteran’s programs and services necessary for the state to implement the Jobs for Veterans Act in OhioMeansJobs centers across Ohio. The ODJFS OWD Veterans Workforce Services program’s goal is to assist eligible military veterans, including disabled veterans, campaign veterans, and other targeted veterans and eligible spouses in alleviating unemployment and underemployment. Zachary began his tenure with the state of Ohio in 2011 as a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Representative passionately providing field operations reemployment services to military veterans like himself. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management with a focus in Marketing. He currently volunteers as a Treasurer board member with the Central Ohio Veterans Stand Down non-profit targeting services to homeless veterans.



Seth Maier*

Don't Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Seth Maier serves as the Veterans and Military Families Program Operator for Washington State Employment Security Department, a program that funds approximately 50 statewide DVOP, LVER and CVSR positions to assist both employers (who seek Veteran talent) and Veterans (to gain the attention of those employers). Seth holds a Master of Education degree from Old Dominion University that was earned while serving nearly 8 years active duty in the U.S. Navy – first as a deckhand aboard the USS Cowpens (CG63), then as a meteorologist on the remote San Nicholas island and NAS Point Mugu, and finally as a tactical oceanographer at NAS Whidbey Island - serving Honorably from 1997-2005. Seth's employment past offers a rounded and robust history that includes over 7 years in entrepreneurship as a business owner; legacy member as a program director for the still-active WDVA VetCorps program that offers Veterans the opportunity to continue public service through AmeriCorps; as an adjunct instructor and Veteran's club advisor in the Community Colleges of Spokane; and most recently, serving as a DVOP in Spokane, Washington for 7 years. Seth has received national recognition from First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden for the VetCorps program as a Best Practice in 2012 from the Corporation for National Community Service in addition to The American Legion's recognition as the 2016 Washington State's DVOP of the year. Since November 2018 Monique Martin has served with Washington State Employment Security Department's (ESD) Veterans and Military Families Program. Monique started with ESD in 2011 and has held multiple positions, including as the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) roles in the Vancouver WorkSource office. Monique was recognized by the American Legion as the 2017 DVOP and 2018 LVER of the year and has also received the International Association of Workforce Professionals (IAWP) Service to Veterans Individual Award.



Monique Martin*

Don't Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Monique Martin retired as a Master Sergeant after 26 years in the Army and Army Reserves. She served in Germany as a Signal Intelligence Operator, and stateside as Instructor, a Drill Sergeant, Recruiter, and as Acting Sergeant Major the 104th DIV (IT) Personnel & Information Management. Monique earned her bachelor's degree in Personnel Psychology and Human Resources Management from Washington State University in 2008.



Cheryl L. Mason^

VA- Employer of Choice

The Honorable **Cheryl L. Mason** serves as the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board). As Chairman, Ms. Mason leads a team of approximately 1200 personnel including Veterans Law Judges, attorneys, and operations and administrative professionals to meet the Board's mission of conducting hearings and deciding appeals on benefits and services for Veterans and their families. Ms. Mason is accountable for the efficient and

effective management of Board resources and executing a budget in excess of \$190 million. The Board is the Secretary's designee to decide appeals arising from all three administrations: Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration, and National Cemetery Administration as well as the Office of the General Counsel. Ms. Mason is the first woman to hold the position of Chairman. Prior to assuming her current role, Ms. Mason held several positions at the Board including Deputy Vice Chairman, Veterans Law Judge, and Counsel. She also served as an attorney with the Federal Labor Relations Authority, a Department of the Air Force civilian at HQ United States Air Forces in Europe at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and as an instructor at Central Texas College in Germany. Ms. Mason is the spouse of an Air Force veteran, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (retired), and is the daughter of a World War II Navy Veteran who died by suicide. She advocates for changing the culture and increasing awareness surrounding mental health and suicide awareness/prevention. Chairman Mason also is a key leader in the military spouse employment initiative, working to share best practices to encourage recruiting, hiring and retention of military spouses to support military readiness as well as transitioning Veterans.



Charles McCaffrey*

Serving Veterans with Disabilities Throughout Life's Journey

Charles McCaffrey is currently acting as Director of PVA's Veterans Career Program. A Navy Veteran with over 30 years of military, government contracting and small business experience, he is also a serial entrepreneur, instructor, mentor and ardent supporter of the military community. Charles recently served as the Executive Director of Eastern Market Main Street (EMMS), a nonprofit, and designated DC Main Streets program, dedicated to fostering a collaborative, connected, and competitive business community in the heart of the Capitol Hill neighborhood in Washington, DC. Prior to that, Charles was on the staff at George Mason University's Community Business Partnership; and served as Director of the Business Incubation Center (2012-2013) and Director of the South Fairfax Small Business Development Center (2013-2015) before founding and serving as the Director of the Veterans Business Outreach Center for the Mid-Atlantic region from 2015 to 2019. The Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program (a program of the Small Business Administration) is designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling, and resource partner referrals to transitioning service members, veterans, National Guard & Reserve members, and military spouses interested in starting or growing a small business. In that role, he worked closely with the state Departments of Veterans affairs to also provide career services to the military community. In 2016, he was named Boots to Business Instructor of the Year; and in 2018, the VBOC at Community Business Partnership was named the Veteran Business Center of Excellence by the Small Business Administration.



Stanley McChrystal*

Keynote: Lessons in Leadership

A one-of-a-kind commander with a remarkable record of achievement, **General Stan McChrystal** is widely praised for creating a revolution in warfare that fused intelligence and operations. He is also known for developing and implementing the counter-insurgency strategy in Afghanistan and for creating a comprehensive counter-terrorism organization that revolutionized the way military agencies interact and operate. A four-star general, he is the former commander of US and international forces in Afghanistan and the former leader of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which oversees the military's most sensitive forces. After graduating from West Point in 1976, General McChrystal served for 34 years – much of that time commanding special forces and airborne infantry units. He is also the best-selling author of the leadership books, *Risk: A User's Guide*, *Leaders: Myth and Reality*, *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World*, and *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*. Exclusively represented by [Leading Authorities speakers bureau](#), McChrystal, a former Green Beret, is known for his candor, innovative leadership, and going the distance. Since retiring from the military, McChrystal has served on several corporate boards of directors. He co-founded the McChrystal Group in 2010. Its mission is to deliver innovative leadership solutions to organizations which help them transform and succeed in challenging and dynamic environments.



Jim McDonough*

Serving Military-Connected Families, Pandemic Edition

Colonel (U.S. Army, Retired) James (Jim) D. McDonough, Jr., is the Executive Director of Headstrong, a leading mental health treatment practice for military connected individuals and their families. Prior to serving as Executive Director, Jim served in a number of key leadership assignments in the veterans' sector, including two stints as Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Services, Senior Fellow for Veterans Affairs within the New York State Health Foundation and Managing Director of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University, where he was responsible for the global deployment of the Institute's widely recognized programs and services. Jim also served as Chief Executive Officer for Veterans Outreach Center in Rochester, New York, where he led the nation's oldest continuing serving nonprofit dedicated to the needs of military connected individuals and families. Jim is pursuing his Ph.D. in law and policy from Northeastern University with an anticipated completion date of June, 2022.



Emily McMahan

Veteran and Military Spouse Entrepreneurship

Emily McMahan is the co-founder and general partner at the Academy Investor Network, a seed-focused investment syndicate that exposes U.S. Service Academy alumni to the venture asset class and funds best-in-class startups. Previously, Emily served as the Executive Director of Capitol Post, an incubator that taught military veterans and their spouses how to think and act like entrepreneurs. Capitol Post was also the home of Bunker Labs DC, a national 501(c)(3) organization

network of military veteran entrepreneurs dedicated to helping the military-connected community start their own business. Before starting Capitol Post, Emily was a partner and CFO at a successful startup technology firm serving the federal government. Emily holds an MBA from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business and a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Military Academy at West Point. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Patriot Boot Camp based out of Boulder, CO and lives in Arlington, VA with her husband and three children.



Paul Messett*

Don't Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Paul M. Messett is a Consolidated (DVOP/LVER) Veterans Representative within the Oregon Employment Department. He effectively supports Veterans and Covered Persons in 10 counties that make up the East Cascades Region. His home office is WorkSource Bend, an office that earned the NASWA Mark Sanders Award in 2020. Paul's background is in business and includes all aspects of ownership, manufacturing, retail, and national/international distribution. He worked in the automotive industry for twenty years as an engineer and sales and marketing manager. Paul enlisted in the Oregon Army National Guard (ORANG) at the age of 39 and became a Combat Medic (68W). He served with the Oregon Army National Guard and deployed to Afghanistan in 2014 with the 41st IBCT, 1-82 CAV/C TRP. He earned the Combat Medic Badge as the Senior Medic for the Troop and Line Medic for 1st platoon. Before separating from the ORANG, he became a Chaplains Assistant (56M) and was able to support Soldiers throughout the State of Oregon.



Aleshia Miller*

What's Happening In the VETS/JVSG/VA VR&E Space?

Aleshia VM Thomas-Miller, a United States Army Veteran, is an Assistant Director (ADVET) with the Department of Labor (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in the State of Virginia. In this capacity, she provides oversight of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) facilitated through Virginia's American Job Centers (AJC) and provides technical assistance for the delivery of individualized career services, job placements encompassing sustainable careers, and supportive services that enhance the competitiveness and employability of eligible Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, and Military Spouses. ADVET Thomas-Miller is also the Co-Lead of the National VETS-VRE Joint Work Group, which promotes the advancement, improvement, and expansion of employment opportunities for Veterans with service-connected disabilities. She promotes increased cooperation and coordination between the Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans' Affairs through the revisions of a Technical Assistance Guide, Memorandums of Agreement, and policies, which streamline processes and procedures for the delivery of labor market information and employment services for VR&E participants to obtain suitable employment. Thomas-Miller's advocacy and diligence toward "Veteran Employment" has been consistent for over ten years! She is a navigator for Veteran resources and implements the slogan "No fellow brother or sister in uniform... left behind!"



Sam Mitchell*

Opening Ceremonies; Don't Reinvent the Wheel: State Promising Practices Panel

Since May 2019, **Sam Mitchell** has been Washington State Employment Security Department's Administrator for Military Base Support. He develops policy and strategies for serving veterans and military families. Sam also oversees operation of WorkSource Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the state's only inside-the-gate job center. Previously, he served as the State Veterans Program Coordinator and Operator (2013-2019) and as a DVOP (2010-2013) and is currently the technical chair of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Veterans Affairs Committee. Prior to his employment with Washington State, Sam was Human Resources for Red Lion Hotel Kelso for nearly three years, where he oversaw all recruitment, hiring, compliance and training programs for 80 employees. Sam retired at the rank of Chief Master Sergeant, after 25 years, from the Air Force in 2007 where he spent tours in the Pacific, Europe, Middle East, and the US. His military career culminated in his selection and service as the Regional Functional Manager for 1,500 communications and information technology specialists across Europe. A native of Kelso, Washington, Sam graduated Kelso High School in 1982; he earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Evergreen State College. He has three daughters, Dianne, Amber, and Cathy.



Nicholas Morgan*

Building Career Paths for Service-Disabled Veterans in the Clean Energy Industry

Nicholas Morgan is a US Army veteran and is the founder of ACS, Inc., a firm focused on providing employers with workforce development solutions built on the apprenticeship model. It serves individuals with barriers to employment and underrepresented populations. He leads a team of workforce development practitioners that has placed more than 700 veterans and initiated a component to serve youth aging out of foster care. Nicholas has presented at local, state and national conferences on workforce topics, including economic opportunity-focused on underrepresented populations, apprenticeships and workforce funding.



Liz O'Brien ^

Veteran and Military Spouse Entrepreneurship

Liz O'Brien is an accomplished, high-energy leader with expertise in national partnerships, non-profit relationship building, program development, and community engagement. Elizabeth O'Brien currently serves as Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of Freedom Learning Group - an educational content and services provider powered by a global remote network of Military Spouses and Veterans. O'Brien, a Military Spouse, sits on The Blue Star Families Advisory Council, The Military Spouse Corporate Career Network Advisory

Council, and The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Council. She chairs the state of Virginia Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Previously, O'Brien served in significant leadership roles as a Senior Director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes and as Chairwoman for the U.S. Small Business Administration's Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs, the first Military Spouse named to the role. Prior to joining the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, O'Brien spent over a decade coaching college women's basketball at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Hofstra University, and The University of Hawaii. O'Brien resides in the Washington, D.C. area with her family. On any given day, O'Brien and her family can be found competing or cheering one another on at a sporting event.



Danielle Olsen

Sustaining Care: Evidence-based Techniques for Reducing Secondary Trauma and Burnout in Workforce Practitioners who serve clients with trauma

Danielle Olsen (she/her) is the Managing Partner at Purpose Co. In this capacity she leads strategy and solution development, which includes developing solutions to address labor and skills needs with a focus on equity, inclusion, economic mobility, and industry/regional competitiveness.

Previously, Danielle spent 20 years in workforce development, including as the Executive Director of a sector-based workforce development non-profit, and as a senior advisor to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development in Ontario, Canada where she led apprenticeship, adult education, employment, and community benefits strategy development. Her work has included developing programs and policies with a focus on workforce solutions and workforce system and practitioner capacity building that advance improved economic opportunities for low-income populations while meeting the skills and labor needs of employers and industries. Danielle loves a good problem to solve and learning from the perspectives of colleagues, clients and stakeholders. Danielle is an Aspen Institute Sector Skills Academy Fellow and holds a BA from York University in International Development and Labor Studies. Purpose Co is a workforce consulting firm that specializes in designing and implementing workforce solutions and system capacity building that create sustainable outcomes for people and businesses, and further inclusive labor markets and regional economic development.



Richard Pimentel, PhD*

*Keynote: Finding the Music Within;
Effective Job Placement and Employment Strategies for Returning Veterans*

Richard Pimentel is one of the leading experts in North America on practical issues in Leadership, Disability Inclusion, Disabled Veterans Employment Opportunities, Job Retention, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act. He is an exceptional humorous communicator whose audiences praise his ability to understand and meet the needs of his customers Richard was the co-author of SHRMs 'Making the ADA Work for You', 'What Managers and Supervisors Need to Know About the ADA'. He is the key author of the highly acclaimed and widely used Windmills Changing the Perception of Ability training program designed to

change the attitudes and behavior of supervisors who hire and promote employees with disabilities and disabled vets. Since Covid started he has trained over 500 trainers to deliver the Windmills training internationally. A full-length MGM motion picture of his life story “Music Within” came out in theaters in the fall 2007 and is now showing on cable channels throughout the world. In the late spring 2018 Dr. Richard Pimentel’s Goal Cast Motivational Leadership 5-minute video “How to Live Your Life Your Never Imagined” has gone viral and as of today we have had more than 60 million viewings on social media.



Susan Prokop

Serving Veterans with Disabilities Throughout Life’s Journey

Susan Prokop joined the Advocacy Program at Paralyzed Veterans of America in February 1997. The Advocacy Program addresses issues that PVA members encounter outside traditional veterans' programs such as disability rights, transportation, voting accessibility and fair housing challenges. Prior to arriving at PVA, Susan was a health policy analyst with the American Society of Internal Medicine from 1989 to 1997. Before that, she served six years as a legislative staffer with Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) where she managed issues of concern to veterans and senior citizens. At PVA, Susan is responsible for issues relating to Social Security, employment, and housing. She founded and is a cochair of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Task Force on Veterans, cochair of the CCD Task Force on Employment and Training, and past cochair of Task Forces on Social Security, Housing and Emergency Management. She recently helped to organize a Disabled Veterans Workforce Coalition that seeks to draw attention to employment challenges facing veterans with significant disabilities.



Shannon Rzasadin[^]

Serving Military-Connected Families, Pandemic Edition

Shannon Rzasadin is the president and executive director of the Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN), an active-duty Navy spouse, and mom of two toddlers. MFAN was founded in 2013 to fill a persisting gap in the military community: the inability to quickly and effectively understand the needs of modern military families and connect military families to the resources they need to thrive. Under Shannon’s leadership, MFAN has become a premier, respected nonprofit leader in a crowded and sometimes confusing network of military and veteran service organizations. Shannon was selected through a competitive process to serve as one of three civilian advisors to the Secretary of Defense on the Military Family Readiness Council and is regularly called on by national and local media to weigh in on military-related topics, including CBS, NBC, CNN, and FOX. Shannon serves on multiple advisory boards and councils, and in 2020 she was recognized by We Are The Mighty as a “Mighty 25,” for the impact she has made on the lives of military and veteran families. Shannon’s leadership, authenticity, fresh approach, and focus on collaboration have enabled her to earn the trust of military families and leaders within the public and private sector who seek advisement on the evolving needs of the modern military family. Shannon, her husband, and their children live in Newport, Rhode Island.



Tyler Reyes*

Attracting & Retaining Veteran Talent in a Competitive Economy

Tyler Reyes is the Military and Veteran Recruitment Program Manager for EquipmentShare, an equipment rental and technology solutions company based in Columbia, Mo. EquipmentShare made a commitment to increase the number of veterans it employs, and Tyler oversees all military recruitment efforts nationwide, including SkillBridge and Hiring Our Heroes. His team frequently travels across the US to meet with key stakeholders about EquipmentShare veteran recruitment initiatives. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska and his graduate degree from Missouri University of Science and Technology. Tyler was commissioned in the US Army as an Engineer Officer and he currently serves in the US Army Reserves assigned to the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) at Scott Air Force Base. He resides in Columbia with his wife, Ambrea, and their three children.



James Rodriguez*

Opening Ceremonies

Mr. James D. Rodriguez is the Assistant Secretary of Labor at the US Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Services. In that role, he is responsible for preparing America's veterans, service members and their spouses, for meaningful careers. Mr. Rodriguez is an Executive Leader and retired Marine with over 30 years as a leader in the U.S. government, corporate sector, and United States Marine Corps. He possesses a comprehensive background in program management, interagency collaboration, and policy development. He also has extensive senior level experience building and managing multi-million-dollar budgets and large diverse teams while meeting the expectations of the President of the United States, the Department of Defense, the Department of Labor and large corporate enterprises. Additionally, he has demonstrated experience with developing and leading large scale international and national programs with a commitment to operational excellence, risk management and quality assurance. Mr. Rodriguez's recent executive experience includes leadership roles within Deloitte LLP's Government and Public Sector practice and BAE Systems Inc. Government relations department. He also previously served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Warrior Care Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense from 2014 through 2017. Mr. Rodriguez possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Maryland, University College and a Masters of Arts Degree in International Commerce and Policy from the George Mason University School of Public Policy. He also serves as an adjunct faculty member in the government and political science department within the University of Maryland Global Campus.



Erinn Roth*
Navigating Through the Entrepreneurship Journey

Chef **Erinn S. Roth** retired from the US Army on 1 January 2017 after 24 years and fifteen days as a Lieutenant Colonel and started Pastry School at L'Academie de Cuisine, Gaithersburg, Maryland on 3 January 2017 where she graduated 15 December 2017. Chef Erinn Roth has honorably served her country and continues to serve her community through her talents as a regionally recognized pastry chef. She is 2016 graduate of the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities at Cornell University, School of Hotel Administration; a 2018 graduate of the Dog Tag Fellowship Program where she received a Certificate in Business Administration from Georgetown University; and is currently in the WeWork Bunker Labs Veterans in Residence Program in Washington, DC.



Euripides "Ruby" Rubio*
Navigating Through the Entrepreneurship Journey

Euripides "Ruby" Rubio, is a retired military officer with over 30 years of professional experience conducting, training, and directing technical and cyber operations at the Joint Special Operations and Intelligence Field Operations level in support of the US Department of Defense (DoD), Intelligence Community (IC), and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA), and private industry.



Scott B. Sanders
Mark Sanders Award; NASWA Update; Closing Ceremonies

Scott B. Sanders is NASWA's President and Chief Executive Officer. Scott manages the association of state administrators who handle workforce training, unemployment insurance, employment services, employment statistics, labor market information programs and veteran reemployment. The association provides advocacy at the national level for a more effective workforce system, and engages with the US Department of Labor, employers and the public. Scott is a board member of Jobs for America's Graduates, the past chair of the Labor Market Information Institute Board of Directors, a board member of the UWC Foundation and was a member of the US Department of Commerce's 25-member American Workforce Policy Advisory Board. Prior to joining NASWA in October 2014, Scott served as the Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Scott received his Master's in Business Administration from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and his Bachelor's in accounting from Miami University. His son served in the US Navy for eight years after graduating from the US Naval Academy in 2012, and his father and brother are both veterans.



Charlynda Scales*

Navigating Through the Entrepreneurship Journey

Charlynda Scales is the founder and CEO of Mutt’s Sauce, LLC, a company that makes “the sauce for every meal.” She is an Air Force veteran on a mission to bring American families together and unlock people's purpose by harnessing her gift of empathy and servant leadership. Mutt's Sauce recently debuted and sold out on QVC. She started the company Mutt’s Sauce, LLC while she was still serving on active duty in the military. Her passion for educating the youth and empowering our nation's Girl Scouts resulted in her being awarded with a Lifetime Membership to Girl Scouts of the USA. She has also partnered with SCORE and Bunker Labs, two organizations that have made invaluable impacts on her success as a veteran entrepreneur. She is a Clemson University graduate, with a degree in Aerospace Science and Business Management. She also holds an MBA in Strategic Leadership.



Steve Schwab

Serving Military-Connected Families, Pandemic Edition

Steve Schwab is a national leader and voice for the nation’s millions of military and veteran caregivers, and their families. He has closely advised senior leaders in every sector, addressed audiences across the country, and testified before Congress about the challenges faced by America’s military families and advocated for legislative and regulatory solutions to support them. As CEO of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Steve spearheads the country’s preeminent organization empowering, supporting, and honoring military and veteran caregivers. He has grown the Foundation’s staff, programs, development, and partnerships over the past seven years, managed the launch of the Hidden Heroes campaign, established the Hidden Heroes Cities program, launched a no-cost national respite program for military caregivers, and successfully championed the expansion of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to caregivers of every war era. Since 2018, Steve has led the Foundation’s successful signature fundraising event, Heroes and History Makers: An Evening with Elizabeth and Bob Dole toward raising tens of millions of dollars for the organization’s mission. Steve is an Executive Producer of Sky Blossom, an Academy Award qualifying film that provides a raw, uplifting window into 24.5 million children and millennials stepping forward as frontline heroes caring for a family member or veteran at home. He also chairs the Board of Directors of PsychArmor, the nation’s premier non-profit for providing free education and support for all Americans to engage effectively with the military community. Previously, Steve was head of external affairs for the National Cathedral, overseeing fundraising, marketing, and communications. Steve came to the Washington, DC area after serving in three senior leadership roles in his hometown of Rochester, NY. He was Vice President for Development at the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra after serving as Deputy Chief of Staff to Rochester, NY Mayor Robert J. Duffy and just prior as head of corporate development and relations for Rochester Institute of Technology. Steve started his career in New York City where he first worked in politics and then served subsequently as Special Assistant to the President and Director of Partner Development for the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce.



Shelby Sterne[^]

Connecting Military Talent to High-Demand Careers through Tech and Industry Focused Internships

By July 2020, **Shelby Sterne** had almost 10 years as a Stay-at-Home Mom under her belt and was six months into solo-parenting her young children through a global pandemic - and their father's deployment with the United States Army. Years before, she paused her successful Sales & Marketing career to support her family through frequent cross-country moves, deployments, and the many other challenges military families face. But she now realized she had reached the pinnacle of her domestic career and was ready to reignite her professional one. Shelby knew the decade-long gap in work history would bring challenges to her job search, and that the global health crisis wouldn't help either. The military community came to the rescue and pointed Shelby towards Trailhead Military - a Salesforce initiative that offers their tech training, curriculum, and exams to the military community for free. And that was the first step down the path into the Salesforce ecosystem. After a 12-week, paid, Hiring Our Heroes Salesforce Fellowship, where she was able to gain hands-on, real life Salesforce experience, Shelby was brought on full-time by her host company. Since then, she received several promotions, moving from Consultant to Delivery Manager and, most recently, to Salesforce Alliances Manager. Shelby is aware that, along with her own talents, much of her success is attributed to her connections in the military community, and the incredible opportunities afforded by the Hiring Our Heroes fellowship. She is passionate about giving back to the same community who cheered her on, every step of the way, and has been a regular speaker for ensuing HOH cohorts. She also mentors spouses, Veterans, and transitioning service members looking to have a career with Salesforce and can constantly be found singing the praises of this incredible fellowship.



Brent Stubbs

Virtual Reality: Innovation Workforce Solutions for the Military Community; Hands-on Demo and Best Practices: Virtual Reality's Impact on Career Exploration and Training

Brent Stubbs is currently Vice President for Economic Develop at Savannah Technical College and has been with the college since 2013. Some of his roles include Dean of Adult Education, Dean of General Studies and Learning Support, and Vice President for Adult Education. He is also an adjunct professor at Georgia Southern University. Prior, he was Coordinator of Adult Education and Department Chair at Lake Technical College. Stubbs holds a Doctor of Education in Higher Education from Georgia Southern University, and a Master's of Business Administration from Brenau University. He also has a Bachelor of Arts in Theological Historical Studies and Government from Oral Roberts University. He is the son of a GED graduate and the first person to complete college in his family. Brent lives with his wife and seven children in Savannah, GA which occupies most of his personal time. He enjoys black coffee, woodworking, golf, guitar and volunteering his time at his parish. He is also on the board of Step Up Savannah, a non-profit focused on poverty reduction in the greater Savannah region.



Steve Sullivan*

Veteran Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Today's Job Market

Steve Sullivan, President and CEO of Trident Development Corporation. Trident Development Corporation, a full-service talent management, recruitment and workforce development company headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a Certified Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE). Trident is dedicated to providing the highest caliber of service across a broad spectrum

of ever-changing talent resource needs to meet the unique requirements and expectations of our candidates as well as the employers we serve. As a seasoned chief executive and serial entrepreneur, Steve thrives in complex organizations where he can apply strategic insight, opportunity and innovation, helping to create game changing sustainable workforce development products and services, that ultimately benefit shareholders, customers, employees and communities served.



Jennie Taylor^

Keynote: She Inherited Her Husband's Life

Jennie Taylor is the widow of Army Major Brent Taylor, who was killed in Afghanistan by a member of the Afghan security forces in 2018. The National Guard officer was on his fourth year-long tour at the time. At the time of his death, Major Taylor was also the mayor of North Ogden, Utah, and the father of seven children – the youngest less than a year old. Jennie has since started

the Major Brent Taylor Foundation and was appointed a civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army in Utah.



Elliot Tommingo*

Opening Ceremonies

Elliot J. Tommingo is the Director of the D.C. Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs (MOVA) and currently serves as a Major in the US Marine Corps Reserves. In 2006, Elliot enlisted in the USMC Reserves while attending Iowa State University and was assigned to Echo Co, 2nd Bn, 24th Marines as an 0311 Rifleman. Upon graduating ISU in 2009 with a BA in Political Science, LCpl Tommingo was commissioned as a 2ndLt and began active-duty service.

After graduating The Basic School and Communications Officer Course in Quantico, Virginia, 2ndLt Tommingo was stationed throughout US Pacific Command from 2010 – 2013 serving in Japan, Republic of Korea and The Philippines. He supported multiple humanitarian missions and assisted the ROK and Filipino militaries with defensive operations. From 2013 – 2016 Capt. Tommingo was stationed in the National Capital Region with Marine Corps Combat Development Command as a Requirements Officer overseeing the USMC software programs. Capt Tommingo left active-duty service in July 2016 and returned to the USMC Reserves as the Communications Officer for Marine Wing Support Squadron 472 out of Ft Dix, NJ. In Jan 2019, he was promoted to the rank of Major and appointed Director for MOVA serving the 30,000 veterans within the District's borders.



Hannah Toney, Ed.D.
What's New at the NVTI?

Hannah R. Toney is a Director in Learning and Technology Services at Management Concepts and serves as the program manager and learning solutions lead for NVTI. She has a background in instructional systems design and consulting services. Prior to her current career, Hannah spent eight years working in the theatrical arts and education, writing state-wide standards and presenting research nationally. She also taught asynchronous and traditional college courses focused on curriculum design, educational philosophy, and theatre. Hannah holds a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction, a Masters of the Art of Teaching, and a BFA in design and technical theatre.



Laura Wages*
Veteran and Military Spouse Entrepreneurship

Programs Director Office of Veterans Business Development Ms. **Laura Wages** is the Programs Director for the Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). In this role, Ms. Wages oversees OVBD Entrepreneurship Training Programs (ETPs) in formulating, implementing, administering, and promoting policies and programs which provide training to veterans, service members (active duty, National Guard, Reserve), and military spouse-owned small businesses provided through grants. These programs include Boots to Business (B2B), Revenue Readiness, Women Veteran ETPs, Service Disabled ETPs and Veterans in Procurement programs. Ms. Wages joined the SBA in 2016, serving in a number of positions, most recently as the Programs Director for OVBD. Prior to the SBA, she held numerous leadership positions with the US Army, including Deputy Assistant for Awards and Promotions for the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs and the Deputy G1, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. Ms. Wages has first-hand military experience, having served 28 years as an enlisted soldier and active-duty officer in the US Army. In 2012, she retired from the military and purchased a franchise in the senior home health care industry. She holds an BA in Literature from the University of Texas at El Paso and an MA from Air University.



Brandon Webb*
What's New at NVTI?

Brandon Webb serves as the NVTI Lead for DOL/VETS. A retired Air Force Veteran of 22+ years, Brandon has a background in training, education, and program management. During his time in the Air Force, he served as Commandant for the largest Airman Leadership School overseas. He has previous work experience with JVSG, HVRP, TAP programs as well as USERRA and Veterans Preference Investigations. Mr. Webb holds a Master's degree in business administration, a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology, and three Associates degrees.



Lana Wertz

Bridging the Gap: How Your Unique Personality Traits Can Form Careers Beyond Military Service

Lana Wertz is an Executive Development Specialist, CEO and President of Lana Wertz Executive Development LLC. Formerly a Founder and Partner of Mythic Leaders LLC with Wendy Jo Johnson, a licensed clinical counselor (L.P.P.C.), they co-developed the Mythic Leaders Profile. Now titled the exec.TRAITS Survey, it assesses masculine and feminine leadership styles. These archetypal patterns reveal critical differences in leadership styles of men and women in organizations that are essential to their performance and potential as executives. This information fuels Lana’s passion for educating those in leadership to these archetypal patterns. As the 7th woman executive at Aetna Life and Casualty, she led the company’s goal to increase the representation of women and minorities in management. She co-founded the Aetna Institute for Corporate Education and created and directed the Executive Development Department at Aetna. She produced extensive executive education programs at Aetna. At Capital Holding she led the Capital Holding Learning Institute whose mission was to assist the holding company to become an integrated operating company through the executives of the various companies. During her years inside corporations through action learning and executive coaching she:

- Developed and implemented strategic support programs for as many as 4,000 officers.
- Assisted senior managers at the highest levels to assess and develop critical performance areas.
- Assisted hundreds of women and minorities to prepare themselves for executive positions.



Josh Wilson*

Collaborative Solutions for Veteran Empowerment

Joshua Wilson is a Marine Corps Veteran and the Corporate Relationship Manager for America’s Warrior Partnership. He deployed to Africa, Iraq, and abroad via the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit. He has an MBA and is also a licensed Attorney in the State of Georgia. Joshua collaborates with businesses as the lead for the America’s Warrior Partnership Corporate Veteran Initiative to ensure that military connected employees are supported by their local community, are recognized for their service, and have access to the benefits they deserve.



Dennis Wimer*
The National Anthem

Dennis Wimer started his military career at Undergraduate Navigator Training at Mather Air Force Base in Sacramento, California where he received the Paul F. Lorence Award as the top navigator student. Upon graduation, he served in the 16 Airlift Squadron at Charleston Air Force Base as a C-141B Starlifter Navigator. His last duty assignment was at McGuire Air Force Base in Wrightstown, New Jersey. At McGuire, Dennis became the first operations officer for McGuire AFB's C-141B Special Operations Low Level II squadron. At the same time, he completed his MBA at the University of Pennsylvania. After leaving the Air Force, Dennis has worked in multiple sectors of the economy; small private businesses, large public enterprise, non-profit, government and higher education. He has worked at companies like McKinsey & Company, Eli Lilly & Company, ExaroMed LLC, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Indiana and Kentucky, Butler University and most recently his family business LADS Consulting, LLC. Dennis was appointed Deputy Commissioner, field operations in the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. In this capacity, he led multiple state and federal programs including the Jobs for Veterans State Grants, ReEmployment Services Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance. Dennis started the Hoosier Initiative to Re-employ Ex-offenders (HIRE) and the Indiana Robotics Initiative. Dennis served on the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) board and was the chair of the NASWA Veteran Affairs Committee. Dennis is honored to be selected by Governor Eric Holcomb to serve as the Executive Director of the Indiana Department of Veterans' Services. He brings a servant's mindset to the department and is excited to lead the department to serve Indiana's Veterans and their families. Dennis has been married for 30 years and has two children, 20 and 17. He is passionate about coaching youth soccer and enjoys the time it gives him with his children and their friends.



Alexander Winn
Building Career Paths for Service-Disabled Veterans in the Clean Energy Industry

Alex Winn is a Senior Consultant with Wheelhouse Group where he helps the lead the Clean Energy work on the US Department of Labor Funded Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship. Mr. Winn has been at the forefront of solar labor analysis and Federally funded soft cost reduction strategies for more than a decade. He is dedicated to increasing the employment of people with disabilities through clean energy apprenticeship and other critical workforce development pathways. In addition, Mr. Winn he has provided advisory services on numerous clean energy land-use and economic development policies with local governments across the country. Nationally, he has coordinated with major lenders and energy project developers on innovative solar finance tools. At the local community level, he has provided advisory services on solar bulk purchasing strategies, streamlined land-use regulations, economic development assessments, and led the development of numerous community solar projects. Mr. Winn has been cited in industry press and interviewed on public radio on numerous occasions.

Please note:

- The information in italics under each individual's name indicates the conference session(s) they are participating in.
- An * denotes an individual is currently serving or is a Veteran of the United States military.
- An ^ denotes the individual is or has been a military spouse.