

FEATURED SPEAKERS & PRESENTERS

2023 NASWA VETERANS CONFERENCE



Lori Adams

Opening Ceremonies; Military to Manufacturing – An Essential Workforce Pipeline

Lori Adams is a Senior Policy Director at NASWA. Her duties include coordinating activities of the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee, working with state veteran representatives as well as US Department of Labor Veterans Employment & Training Service (USDOL VETS), planning the agency's annual Veterans' conference, promoting awareness of the National Labor Exchange, and managing NASWA's partnerships with Hilton Honors and Grow with Google. Lori is a member of the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee for Veteran Employment, Training and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO). She joined NASWA in 2015 after 26 years with Iowa Workforce Development, where she was a case manager, Regional Manager, Bureau Chief and Division Administrator/Workforce Services. As Division Administrator, she was responsible for program and service oversight at all the state's American Job Centers. Lori has a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass Communication from Iowa State University and is a Certified Public Manager.



Mrs. Patricia Barron^

Focus on Military Families

Mrs. Patricia "Patty" Barron was appointed as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy in January 2021. Mrs. Barron is currently responsible for a broad portfolio that includes policy, advocacy, and oversight of all community support to service members and their families, including quality-of-life issues; key legislative and policy issues affecting military families; family, child, and youth programs; the Military OneSource program and non-medical counseling resources; military spouse career advancement; morale, welfare, and recreation; defense resale policy for commissaries and exchanges; and family advocacy programs. Her oversight also includes casualty and mortuary affairs, and military funeral honors. Prior to joining Military Community and Family Policy, she served as the Director of the Family Readiness Directorate at the Association of the United States Army and supported all AUSA family programs and events by providing management and oversight to all directorate activities. Previously, she served as the Director of Outreach, Military Family Projects, at Zero to Three and worked as the Director of Youth Initiatives at the National Military Family Association where she oversaw NMFA's Operation Purple Camp program. As an Army spouse for 30 years, she has been involved in myriad efforts to support military families. She served on the Department of Defense Military Family Readiness Council, Zero to Three's "Coming Together Around Military Families" Advisory Committee, the Sesame Workshop "Talk, Listen, Connect; Phase Two" Advisory Panel, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network Advisory Board, the Child Care Aware of America Advisory Board, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Military Leadership Council. Mrs. Barron earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of San Francisco, a Master of Science in Education from Long Island University, an Executive Certificate in Nonprofit Management from Georgetown University, and an Executive Education Certificate from The Harvard Kennedy School

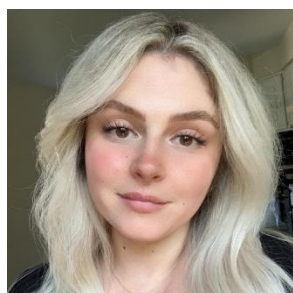
of Government. Mrs. Barron is married to retired Army Col. Michael Barron. They have three adult children: Michael, Megan, and Joseph; a son-in-law, Vance; and two granddaughters, Sofia and Violet.



Mary Benton

The Veterans Consortium: Legal Services for Veterans

Mary Benton serves as a Veterans Law Specialist at The Veterans Consortium's Pro Bono Program (TVC). As a member of the Litigation team, Mary staffs the Informational Helpline and works with case management to support veterans and TVC's services. She assists the Case Evaluation & Litigation team by screening United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims cases. Prior to this role, Mary was a Legal Assistant for TVC's Discharge Upgrade Program, sponsored by the DAV Charitable Service Trust. Mary is a graduate of the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University (J.D.), Kings College London (M.A.) and the University of Scranton (B.A.). During law school, Mary was a Student Advocate for the Robert W. Entenmann Veterans Law Clinic and helped Veterans obtain disability benefits and discharge upgrades. To contact Mary or for more information on The Veterans Consortium, please reach out to her at mary.benton@vetsprobono.org.



Alexandra (Ali) Bergeron

What's New at the National Veterans Training Institute, 2023

Alexandra Bergeron grew up in Springfield, Virginia. She studied Psychology and Communications with an emphasis on Interpersonal Communication at Northern Virginia Community College. After college, Alexandra refined her communication skills while working in multiple roles with diverse populations. She began working at Management Concepts in March 2019 and has been supporting the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) program since that time. Alexandra is devoted to helping others achieve their goals and loves being a part of the NVTI mission as her husband and father-in-law are both veterans. In her free time, Alexandra enjoys speaking at personal development events as well as creating art. She and her family recently relocated to Moyock, North Carolina.



Sarah Bierman*

USDOL Listening Sessions

Sarah Bierman is the Deputy Director for Grants and Training in the Office of National Programs (ONP) with the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service's (VETS) and has been with the USDOL-VETS since July 2006. In her current role, she provides national leadership and oversight, establishes national policy, and is responsible for the development and oversight of grant programs. Sarah served as a State Director with VETS prior to her role in ONP. She served as a federal investigator where she managed grant programs within South Dakota, provided outreach and training, and investigated violations of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Veterans' Preference (VP)/Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA). Sarah received a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Northern State University and a master's degree in social work from the University of North Dakota.



Deborah Bradbard, PhD

Leveraging the Value of Cross-Sector Partnerships to Create DEI Resources of Value

Deborah Bradbard, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, serves as a Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF). Her research focuses on employment readiness, veteran and spouse employment, military cultural competence, the experience of military families. Her work has influenced national policy and is regularly cited by, members of Congress, the White House, CNN, the Center for Deployment Psychology, The American Psychological Association (APA), The Society for Human Resource Management Foundation (SHRM) and the Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Brain Injury (DCoE). Dr. Bradbard frequently serves as a guest speaker for national conferences, educating providers, policy makers, and elected officials about the needs of military families and veterans. She previously served as the Director of Research and Policy at Blue Star Families (BSF) and was the primary author of the 2013 and 2014 Blue Star Families Annual Lifestyle survey whose results have influenced policy on mental health, military spouse employment, and military child education. As a management consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton, she provided subject matter expertise on evidence-based military mental health issues including PTSD, military sexual trauma, suicide, substance abuse, and traumatic brain injury.



Alisa Buriel

Workforce Agencies and Legal Aid: Removing Barriers to Employment through Criminal Record Clearing

Alisa Buriel is a paralegal at the Veterans Justice Center at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. Her work is focused on justice-involved veterans of color and removing the barriers associated with having a criminal record. Her late grandfather was a Vietnam Veteran and takes pride in serving the veteran community. Previously, Alisa worked as a legal assistant at a Lemon Law Firm and interned in Washington D.C. with Brady United Against Gun Violence. Alisa received her B.A. In English, *cum laude*, from the University of California, Riverside in 2022. She is currently studying for the LSAT as she wants to continue her legal career as a lawyer.

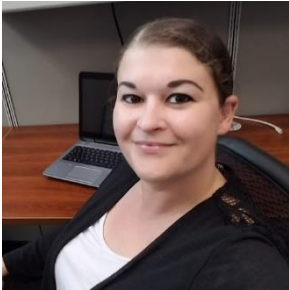


Dr. Todd Burnett

Preventing Veteran Suicide

Dr. Todd Burnett is the Senior Consultant for Operations in the Suicide Prevention Program (SPP) within VA Suicide Prevention in the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. His responsibilities and oversight in this role include Fiscal and Budget, Education, Grants, Innovations, Contracts, Human Resources, Partnerships, Program Evaluation, and Communications. Dr. Burnett previously served as the Deputy Network Director of the VA MidSouth Healthcare Network (VISN 9), where he was responsible for executive oversight and operational execution of multiple network offices. Dr. Burnett joined the Department of Veteran Affairs as a Chief Mental Health Officer for VA Northwest Network (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska; VISN 20). He has also served as acting Portland VA Medical Center Director, Acting VISN 9 Network Director, and Acting Medical Center Director Tennessee Valley HCS. Prior to joining VHA, Dr. Burnett worked in the

Georgia Regional Hospital and Developmental Disabilities system and Delnor Hospital (Northwestern Medical System). Dr. Burnett holds 3 graduate degrees in Clinical Psychology, Divinity, and Marriage & Family Counseling from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, Southern Seminary, and Wheaton College, respectively.



Jennifer Carter*

Promising Practice – North Carolina: Veterans Treatment Court – Striving to Serve

Jennifer Carter is a Disabled Veteran Employment Consultant at the NCWorks Career Center in Winston-Salem, NC. Ms. Carter is a treatment team member with the Forsyth County Veterans Treatment Court. Ms. Carter serves on the following boards and committees: co-chair of the Triad Community Veteran Engagement Board, VA Veteran and Family Advisory Council, The Heroes Center Female Veteran Advisory Committee, Piedmont Triad Regional Reentry Committee and American Legion Department of North Carolina Veteran and Employment Preference Committee. Ms. Carter is a Navy veteran and the Commander of American Legion Post 540 in Cary, North Carolina.



Allison Chamberlayne^

Utilizing Return-to-Work Strategies to Build Career Onramps for Military Spouses and Meet Today's Workforce Needs

Allison Chamberlayne is the Director of Operations for Hiring Our Heroes, an initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation connecting transitioning service members, veteran, military spouses, and caregivers with American businesses to create economic opportunity and a strong and diversified workforce. In her role, Allison focuses on day-to-day program operations, staff development, process improvement, and strengthening partnerships. She 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 including 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 including 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.



Lida Citroën

Finding Purpose and Mission

Lida Citroën empowers global executives, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders to manage how they are perceived. She's helped individuals in more than 30 countries tell the right story to the right people about who they are and what they offer. As a professional keynote speaker and presenter, Lida's popular TEDx Talk, Talks at Google presentation, and numerous courses on LinkedIn Learning showcase her empowering style and message. A passionate supporter of the military community, Lida volunteers her time to help veterans transitioning to civilian careers, assist employers who seek to hire military talent, and serves as a member of the Board of Directors at Project Sanctuary. Her work with veterans comes from gratitude for their service and sacrifice. She is a popular speaker at military installations and events on veteran hiring, teaches in the TAP program at the US Air Force Academy, Student Veterans of America, IVMF at Syracuse University, GE Healthcare, The Walt Disney Company, Abbott, SHRM, and others. She is a regular writer for Military.com and Entrepreneur.com and appears in international media, often sharing her expertise in military transition.



Merideth Cohrs*

Beyond the Basics: Creating a Military-Effective DoD SkillBridge Program

Merideth Cohrs is a 9-year Navy veteran and a United States Naval Academy graduate. She spent the next 15 years in corporate America, building expertise across business operations, dynamic program management, and military recruiting. Merideth is the Director of Operations and Partner at BufferSprings.



Tom Colombo

Master of Ceremonies

Thomas Colombo has a proven record in Human Services with a focus on Workforce during the course of his career. In his most recent role, as a Deputy Assistant Director for the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Tom is responsible for the Administrative Support areas for the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services. This includes fiscal oversight; contracts management; policy development, quality assurance, continuous improvement efforts, training and public information. Prior to this, Tom served as the Workforce Development Division Assistant Director for the Maricopa County Human Services Department. There he was responsible for the operations of the WIOA Title I-B programs and services for Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Rapid Response and Smart Justice. He has been in the Human Services field for 33 years and has extensive experience managing workforce programs, with over 15 years in senior level management positions with the Arizona Department of Economic Security and Maricopa County. During his previous time at DES, Tom's areas of responsibility encompassed 25 Federal and State funded employment and training programs, including Employment Security, Veteran's Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Business Outreach, Unemployment Insurance, TANF Jobs, and WIOA. Additionally, he managed multiple fund sources with budgets in excess of \$700 million as well as a staff of 1,100 employees. Tom is a Certified

Public Manager from the ASU School of Public Affairs. He is also fluent in Spanish. This experience has given him a comprehensive understanding of the critical needs of job seekers and businesses, the roles and responsibilities of Federal, State, and local agencies, and the importance of working in partnership with contracted and community organizations. He is committed to working with his teams to make continuous improvements that meet the need for quality workforce development programs and services. He and his wife Ana also give back to their community by being foster parents, and Tom is also a proud military dad. We have been incredibly lucky to have him at the helm of the NASWA Veterans Affairs committee, where he has twice served as chair.



Margarita Devlin

DOL VETS Listening Session; Update on Customer Experience (CX) Human-Centered Design Project

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.



Mona Dexter^

Leveraging the Value of Cross-Sector Partnerships to Create DEI Resources of Value

Mona Dexter is the Vice President of Military and Veteran Affairs at Comcast NBCUniversal. In this role, she leads a team that works across Comcast NBCUniversal to provide strategic leadership to aspects of programs and outreach engaging the military and veteran community, including efforts to make the Company one of America's most military-ready employers, advancing digital equity among veterans and military families, and delivering special media and entertainment experiences to military customers. Prior to this role, she was the Chief of Staff and Vice President of Hiring Our Heroes, a workforce development program and the largest center of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Mona oversaw the organization's mission to educate the business community on best practices in diversifying their workforces with military-connected and nontraditional talent and improving workplace equity for underserved populations. She has extensive community leadership experience with adult learning and career and workforce development in higher education and programs, including Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Army Family Programs, and multiple school districts. Mona also serves as the chair of the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans'

Advisory Committee on Education (VACOE), advising the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on educational issues affecting Veterans and ensuring access to quality programming and services. Mona holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Maryland and a Master of Science in higher education administration from Kansas State University. She was a military spouse for over 25 years and lives in Washington, D.C.



Jerry Elam*

Task Force Movement Programmatic Solutions – Task Force Movement Partner Successes

Jerry Elam was born in Chattanooga, TN on 14 September 1971. He graduated from Soddy Daisy High School in 1991 and attended Basic Combat Training at Fort Sill, OK in October 1991. He became a 13B; Cannon Crewmember after completion of Advanced Individual Training. Jerry has had many assignments throughout his military career in the United States and abroad to include the 1ST Battalion 82nd Field Artillery 1st Cavalry Division; Head Quarters Battery, 196th Field Artillery Bridge Chattanooga, TN; 95th Military Police Battalion Mannheim, Germany; Military Intelligence Company 1 Brigade Combat Team 34th Infantry Division; E Battery 4th Battalion 5th Air Defense Battalion 69th Air Defense Brigade; Southern California Recruiting Battalion, Houston Recruiting Battalion and Oklahoma Recruiting Battalion in the US Army Recruiting Command. Jerry was deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2006-2008 and 2009-2010, and his military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (4th award), Army Commendation Medal (3rd Award), Army Achieve Medal (6th Award), Basic Recruiter Badge, and Combat Action Badge. Jerry joined the ArcBest team in June of 2020 to help them further develop their existing partnerships with the Army and the Department of Defense SkillBridge program and to extend their veteran hiring initiatives.



Prescott "Pres" Farris*

Value of Apprenticeships for Veterans

As the Program Manager for the VA TAP contract, **Pres Farris** is responsible for the overall contract management, including operations, training and certification, project control, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. Mr. Farris joined CALIBRE in August of 2020 after 26 years of service in the United States Army. Mr. Farris served on the Army Staff as the Director of the Army's Soldier For Life Program Office, within the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCS G-1) office, where he was responsible conducting outreach and coordination with the Department of Defense, federal and state government agencies, non-profits, and community organizations to improve healthcare, education, and employment opportunities for Soldiers, Veterans, and Families. He also advised military and interagency leaders on strategic options for increased integration of, and improvements to, enterprise-level transition assistance programs through the transition governance framework. Mr. Farris holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Rochester, Rochester, NY; a Master of Arts in Leadership and Management from Webster University; and the Project Management Professional certification from the Project Management Institute. He is also a graduate of the United States Army War College and Central Intelligence Agency's military fellowship program.



Jillian Fasser

What’s New at the National Veterans Training Institute, 2023

Jillian Fasser grew up in the state of Massachusetts and moved to Washington, DC to study international affairs and economics. After graduating, she stayed in DC for 14 years and gained experience as an economist and consultant for the federal government. She became a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) in 2017. She joined Management Concepts in early 2020 as a Project Manager and has supported the National Veterans’ Training Institute (NVTI) program since then. She has always had a passion for helping veterans, active-duty service members, and their families. In her free time, she has volunteered for organizations such as Operation Gratitude and the Wounded Warrior Project. Jillian currently resides in the San Francisco Bay Area and enjoys playing soccer and spending time outside.



Karen Santiago Francis^

Utilizing Return-to-Work Strategies to Build Career Onramps for Military Spouses and Meet Today’s Workforce Needs

Karen Santiago Francis is the Program Manager for the National Capitol Region (NCR), which covers Northern Virginia, Maryland and DC. Karen is an Experienced Career Advisor, specializing in Veteran and Military Family populations with extensive involvement in military community issues, as an advocate, case manager, trainer, writer, and editor. As a military spouse, both AD, Guard and Reserves, she has worked within the military community for many years. Now, as a veteran spouse after her service member’s retirement, the reality of ‘civilian’ employment for spouses with a typical military spouse resume has set in. With a bachelor’s from UMUC in Psychology, a master’s in psychology from Capella, she also studied for and received her GCDF (Global Career Development Facilitator) and CCSP (Certified Career Services Provider). Karen has worked with transitioning servicemembers, including her own son and her spouse, veterans and military spouses on a variety of issues. Volunteering within the community led to work both in the suicide prevention/counseling sphere and employment assistance. Realizing that a foundation of a well-paid, interesting, and fulfilling career can assist the entire family in transition, she chose to specialize in employment and career assistance, with transitioning military and spouses. Military spouse and veteran spouse unemployment issues are her ‘soapbox’ issues, and advocating for that community include speaking with groups, legislators and those who can make a difference. “Getting a job is one thing, finding a career takes more work, more training and someone to help you find the way.”



Steven Gustafson*

Promising Practice – Florida: Empowering Veterans Through Coordinated Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) Service Integration

Steven Gustafson is the Chief Operating Officer at CareerSource Palm Beach County, a Marine Corps Veteran with over eight years of workforce experience. He has served as a LVER and Program Manager for the Local Workforce Development Board in Broward, Florida; as an Assistant State Veterans Program Coordinator, State Trade and Rapid Response Coordinator, and Workforce Administrator for the State of Florida; and

as Kentucky's State Director for U.S. DOL Veterans Employment and Training Service. Steven is currently the elected state representative for Florida with the Southeastern Employment and Training Association.



Dr. Blake Harris

Promising Practice – Texas: Coordinated Mental Health Resources for Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families

Dr. Blake Harris is a licensed clinical forensic psychologist and the Director of the Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD) for the Texas Veterans Commission. He is responsible for the VMHD as it strives to advocate for service members, veterans, and their families (SMVF) and align competent, accessible, and local mental health resources. VMHD meets this charge by providing technical assistance and training on the unique needs of SMVF, and through coordinating efforts with federal, state, and community stakeholders. VMHD is comprised of the Justice Involved Veteran Program, Military Veteran Peer Network, Homeless Veteran Initiative, Veteran Provider Program, Community & Faith Based Program, and efforts aimed at Veteran Suicide Prevention. Prior to joining TVC, Dr. Harris oversaw the development and implementation of clinical services for underserved populations in secured-residential and community-based settings. He has led multidisciplinary teams in mental health and justice settings and participated in mental health specialty courts. He has also provided training and clinical supervision to pre-doctoral and post-doctoral clinicians and instructed graduate courses in forensic mental health risk assessment.



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.



Rebekah "Bek" Haydin*

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

Rebekah Haydin is the national Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Lead for the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). The JVSG provides funding to states for approximately 1,500 Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER), and consolidated DVOP/LVER positions across the country. Through these staff, JVSG works with employers on behalf of veterans, networks with local veteran service organizations, and provides individualized career services to over 45,000 veterans per year. Rebekah is a veteran of the U.S. Army and a graduate of the University of Colorado at Denver through the VR&E program. She has been with VETS since 2005.



Julie Howell*

Trends and Opportunities for Disabled Veteran Employment

Julie Howell is a five-year Army veteran who deployed twice to Iraq. After leaving the military, she attended culinary school and worked as a chef for over 10 years. In 2013, Julie returned to school earning a BA in History and a master's degree in public policy. 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 worked at the University of California at Santa Cruz as the Veteran program coordinator. As Associate Legislative Director at Paralyzed Veterans of America, Julie's portfolio includes economic opportunity, benefits, and women Veterans. She also serves as principal point of contact for the women veteran VSO working group as well as the VR&E VSO working group. Principle areas of interest not covered by existing legislation are increased transparency of the VR&E program, improved information flow between DOL, DoD, & VA, as well as filling the gaps in care and benefits often experienced by women Veterans living with catastrophic injuries.



Dr. Amy Hrin

The Effects of PTSD Service Dogs on Service-Related Trauma

Dr. Amy Hrin serves as national director of American Humane's Center for Military Affairs, supporting veterans and military animals. Over her fifteen-year tenure at American Humane, Dr. Hrin has created and managed many vital programs that help people in need through the power of the human-animal bond. Her work includes reuniting retired military dogs with their handlers and helping veterans struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) to obtain lifesaving service dogs. Dr. Hrin's research work has encompassed the design and implementation of rigorous studies to demonstrate the impact of the human-animal bond on both humans and animals. She is the Principal Investigator for the Canines and Childhood Cancer Research study, the Pets in the Classroom study, as well as many more research projects. Dr. Hrin holds a master's degree from Queens University of Charlotte and a doctoral degree from the University of Denver. She also holds a Veteran Behavioral Health Certificate from the Department of Defense.



Robin "Phoenix" Johnson*^

From Combat to Comedy

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Robin Johnson served over 20 years in the U.S. Army before making her transition into the entertainment industry and veteran support space. During her time in service, she deployed five times to Afghanistan and Iraq and earned the Airborne, Air Assault and Pathfinder badges, three Bronze Stars, and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. Her career highlights include serving as the Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and commanding a battalion in Iraq where she was charged with leading 960 Soldiers, maintaining over \$50M in equipment, and acting in the capacity of a mayor for a coalition base responsible for a \$300M budget and over \$3B in construction projects and contracts. After retiring from the Army, Robin discovered her new mission was to heal people, organizations and communities with humor. She founded HEAL*ARIOUS, a non-profit that focuses on incorporating humor to improve psychological performance. She works in collaboration with clinicians to develop customized programming and motivational speaking for veterans, first responders, athletes, and corporate executives. She is a Level III Certified Humor Professional through the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor and a Comedy Bootcamp Instructor for Armed Services Arts Partnership. Robin is also a stand-up comedian and motivational speaker with performances at venues such as Carolines on Broadway, Stardome, Atlanta Comedy Theater, Charlotte Comedy Zone, Bricktown Comedy Club, Louisville Comedy Club, and corporate venues all over the country. Voted Charleston's Best Comic 2022 and featured on USA Today, Fox, and ABC, Robin continues to use her voice to advocate for more representation of veterans and military spouses in comedy and the use of humor to complement traditional therapy. Despite having a distinguished military career, her proudest achievement is her family. Robin has been married to retired Army Apache pilot, Cayton, for 20 years and they have two wonderful children that give her an abundance of comedy material!



Jilan Hall Johnson^

Veteran Business Owners – Our Journey

Jilan Hall-Johnson always had a passion for food. Growing up you would often find her in the kitchen. After high school, she decided on a non-traditional college and a degree in culinary arts would best suit her needs as a new mother. Moving from Syracuse, New York to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, she met her husband, DeMarco Johnson. After graduating from The Pennsylvania Culinary Institute and working for a short while in the restaurant industry she decided she did not enjoy the hustle and bustle of the commercial kitchen. DeMarco had always dreamed of serving his country and joined the United States Marine Corps in 2006, this gave Jilan the opportunity to return to school and earn a bachelor's degree in social psychology from Park University and a Graduate degree in Human Services Counseling Marriage and Family from Liberty University. Jilan has spent her professional career dedicated to assisting military families adjusting to the challenges of life. She has now set out on her newest venture, "Bringing big city living to small town plates," with her biscuit-centric restaurant, The Sassy Biscuit Co. in Billings, Montana and a second soon to come in Dover, NH.



John P. Jones*

Housing our Veterans. A Replicable Model Forged through Public-Private Partnerships

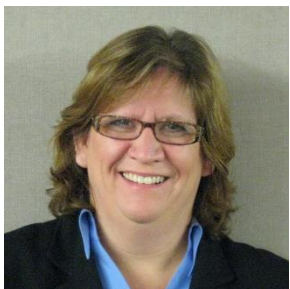
As the Executive Director of the VBC Giving Foundation, **John P. Jones**, USMC Ret. plays a crucial role in overseeing and driving the organization's mission, fundraising efforts, operational activities, and board engagement. He has a track record of making significant contributions to the veterans' space, including raising funds, creating awareness, and implementing effective strategies to help organizations achieve their goals. One of Jones' greatest strengths lies in his ability to build and lead dynamic teams, cultivating relationships with donors, volunteers, and stakeholders to further the organizations' missions. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a strong commitment to causes that positively impact individuals and communities in need, including suicide awareness, education, workforce development, and job placement for veterans. With his extensive experience and knowledge, Jones has developed a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by veterans and other individuals who require affordable housing. He is constantly searching for innovative ways to address these complex issues and make a meaningful impact in the world by providing housing to those who need it.



Lucas Kitto*

Justice Involved Veterans and Veterans in Crisis

Lucas Kitto is currently a Detective with the Middlesex County Prosecutors Office and has been employed with the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office as a Detective since 2015. Currently assigned to the Intelligence Unit, a crime scene investigator, Detective Kitto administers the Counties Veterans Diversion Program. From 2008-2015 he served with the Massachusetts Transit Police as a patrolman and detective in Boston Massachusetts. He spent five years active duty and three years in the reserves in the Marine Corps as an Infantryman. Detective Kitto deployed to Iraq on three occasions as well as Afghanistan, Kosovo and Africa.



Elizabeth Kohm

Leveraging the Value of Cross-Sector Partnerships to create DEI resources of value --Proposed Presentation

Elizabeth Kohm is the Manager, Foundation Programs and has programmatic oversight of SHRM Foundation's portfolio for untapped talent including the Veteran's at Work initiative, the Foundation's work on the recruitment, hiring and retention of the military community. She has extensive managerial experience across the corporate, nonprofit and government sectors. During her professional tenure in New York State, she worked for the New York State Legislature and for a nonprofit organization with numerous military efforts and was responsible for the founding of a dedicated facility for homeless veterans in recovery. In her most recent role, prior to joining SHRM Foundation, she was the Deputy Executive Director of PFLAG National, a family and ally organization for the LGBTQ community working across communities and workplaces on inclusion and equity strategies.



Daniel Kunze*

Task Force Movement Strengthening our Economy and National Security – Filling the Workforce Shortages

Dan Kunze, co-chair of Task Force Movement, is a leading voice in developing enterprise strategy and policy, enterprise technology, talent management, and policy efforts that support our future workforce and warfighting demands. He currently works in support of the Department of Defense involving Enterprise Software and Digital Transformation driving enterprise modernization. His prior experience includes working with Fortune 500 organizations across industries, enabling them to drive and deliver outcomes in enterprise technology, Pivotal Software working with Defense Agencies to deliver modern software practices, and has worked closely with Federal and State policy makers to shape policy related to modern enterprise technology and talent management demands. Kunze serves on the Board of USO Pennsylvania and New Jersey, is a member of the Association of the US Army Board Philadelphia and is a Board Member of Big Brothers Big Sisters in both Middle Tennessee and Philadelphia’s Independence Region. He currently serves as an Officer in the United States Army Reserve. As a Soldier, Kunze’s work has focused on workforce and talent management innovation. Dan graduated from Montgomery County Community College, Temple University, Widener University - Delaware Law School. He has also earned a certificate at MIT’s Sloan School of Management for Artificial Intelligence: Implications for Business course. Dan is married to his high school sweetheart, Kerrin, and they have three kids under age five.



Stan Kurtz*

Entrepreneurship: How to Get Started; Veteran Business Owners – Our 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.



Gabriel Lopez*

Promising Practice – Texas: Coordinated Mental Health Resources for Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families

Gabriel Lopez enlisted in the United States Navy on October 07, 1987. After completing basic training, he reported to fighter squadron 102 “The Diamondbacks” in Virginia Beach Virginia. He deployed onboard the USS America in support of Operation Desert Storm. In 1992, he reported to Naval Air Station Corpus Christi Organizational Maintenance Department. He finished his tour as an aircraft mechanic for a search and rescue unit working on the UH-1N Huey Helicopter. In 1994, he took on a new challenge and changed platforms, he reported to Naval Air Station Cecil Field in Jacksonville Florida where he completed another tour of duty as an F-18 Power Plants

Technician. Embracing new challenges has always been the trademark for Gabriel Lopez. He volunteered to become a recruiter in Laredo Texas. Reporting to the Laredo Recruiting station in 1997 and a year later, he was selected as the zone four recruiter of the year for the San Antonio district. He successfully culminated his tour as the recruiter in charge, leading his station to complete all recruiting goals for the year. His Naval Career ended in El Centro, California as a Budget Manager for Strike Fighter Wing Maintenance Unit. He deployed six times to the Persian Gulf in support on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. He retired from active duty on November 01, 2007. He serves as the Assistant Director for the Texas Veterans Leadership Program. An outreach, peer-to-peer program designed to assist Iraqi and Afghanistan veterans as they transition back into their civilian communities. He is a social activist who advocates for Veterans issues. One specific issue he has undertaken is homeless veterans. His education includes an Associates of Arts Degree. In 2007, He completed a Bachelor of Science in Human Services and Management. In 2010, He received a master's degree in public administration from Texas A& M International University in Laredo Texas.



Lisa Lutz

Task Force Movement Strengthening our Economy and National Security – Filling the Workforce Shortages

Lisa Lutz is a highly accomplished executive with nearly 30 years of experience conducting, managing, and consulting on projects associated with the research, evaluation, and implementation of workforce development and credentialing programs in both the civilian and military sectors. As co-founder and CEO of SOLID, since 2003, Lisa's strategic vision and leadership has resulted in incredible growth within the company, propelling them from a team of 2 to OVER 50 employees, increasing revenue, and cementing SOLID as one of the leading experts in their field. Lisa's work has concentrated on the development and implementation of programs to promote the professional development of service members and ensure their smooth transition from the military to the civilian workforce. For more than 20 years, Lisa has specialized in the use of occupational credentialing as a means of doing so. She has performed research, provided policy guidance, and developed programs in this area for numerous organizations, including the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance, as well as the U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor, Army, Navy, Air Force, Energy, and Transportation. She has also worked with numerous companies and non-profits, including The American Legion, Lumina Foundation, Walmart Foundation, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, and others to promote credentialing of service members and veterans. Recognized as a respected thought leader in this area, she is a featured industry speaker and published author offering her expertise to numerous stakeholder groups. Under her leadership, SOLID received the 2021 Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) Corporate Award in recognition of its significant contributions to the cause of military education. Lisa's notable experience has led to appointments to advisory committees for four Secretaries of Veterans Affairs to provide subject matter expertise on the implementation of education and credentialing benefits for service members and veterans. She has served as both a committee member and vice chair of the American National Standard's Institute's (ANSI) National Accreditation Board (ANAB) Personnel Certification Accreditation Committee (PCAC), which is responsible for overseeing the quality of certification programs and is currently on an ANAB Expert Panel for Industry-Led Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Lisa serves as a long-term member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) government affairs committee. Lisa holds a B.S. in Political Science and Psychology and a master's degree in public administration (M.P.A.).



Elizabeth Martin

Task Force Movement Programmatic Solutions – Task Force Movement Partner Successes

Elizabeth Martin is a Senior Vice President with the Enterprise & Innovation group at Optum Serve. Optum Serve, the federal facing arm of UnitedHealth Group, is a healthcare company first, tailoring expertise to help government partners reach their goal of bettering health for those they serve. Leading innovation initiatives for Optum Serve, Martin is a trusted advisor advancing leading-edge innovation and strategic execution resulting in sustainable growth and optimized performance across multiple federal, state, and local markets. Martin joined Optum and UnitedHealth Group in 2009 and has since served in a variety of leadership capacities in public programs including Executive Lead for both CMS' Comprehensive Primary Care-Regional Learning Network initiative and its Health Care Innovation Awards. Martin advances innovative initiatives that help improve the health and well-being of citizens that the government serves with a particular focus on military members, veterans, and their families ensuring effective healthcare delivery with integrated coordination across providers, types of coverage, and services. Martin received her law degree from Boston College, her business degree from Creighton University, and her Doctorate in Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute.



Kenneth Mayes*

Leveraging the Value of Cross-Sector Partnerships to Create DEI Resources of Value

Ken Mayes is the Employer Relations Navigator at Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Employment Support Services. In his role, he provides strategic direction, thought leadership, and business development essentials to establish, build, and sustain inclusive offramps to family-sustaining employment for the nations transitioning service members, veterans, military spouses, and members of the reserve components. Ken is a steadfast champion for equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace and an active member of Syracuse University's Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Council. He is a certified human resource professional with the Society for Human Resource Management, a Certified Diversity Recruiter, and a Certified Diversity Executive. Ken has served as a SHRM volunteer leader for over 8 years as the Fayetteville Area Society for Human Resource Management Chapter President, and a USAA SHRM Ambassador, ensuring employers have the tools and skills necessary to include the military community in their hiring practices. He currently serves as the Military Liaison Director for the North Carolina Society for Human Resource Management and is a member of the Board of Directors for Patriots Path, Inc., a non-profit organization that supports veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses in finding meaningful employment opportunities. His work has been featured in USA Today, Forbes Magazine, Military.com, and the SHRM HR Magazine. He has presented at various professional conferences as a panelist and subject matter expert for the hiring and retention of military talent. Ken is a retired Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the United States Army with over 25 years of service and continues to serve as an ally, and champion for inclusive, and equitable, employment for the military community."



Charles McCaffrey*

Trends and Opportunities for Disabled Veteran Employment

Charles McCaffrey is a Navy Veteran with over 35 years of military, government contracting and small business experience. He serves as the Director of the Veterans Career Program (VCP) at Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) that provides no-cost employment support and vocational counseling assistance to all Veterans, transitioning service members, spouses, and caregivers. Prior to joining PVA in October 2021, he served as the Executive Director of Eastern Market Main Street (2019-2021); and was on the staff at George Mason University's Community Business Partnership serving as Director of the Business Incubation Center (2012-2013), Director of the South Fairfax Small Business Development Center (2013-2015), and Director of the Veterans Business Outreach Center for the Mid-Atlantic region (2015 to 2019).



George McEntyre*

Promising Practice – Texas: Coordinated Mental Health Resources for Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families.

George McEntyre is the Director of the Texas Health and Human Services Veterans Mental Health Services Department. His department administers two grant programs for mental health services to service members, veterans, and their families. They coordinate with other state/federal entities that provide mental health services or other entities that provide support services for individuals receiving mental health services. The Texas Legislature appropriates approximately \$30 Million each Biennium to fund these two grant programs. His department also oversees veteran suicide prevention efforts across the state. They provide technical assistance on veteran suicide prevention strategies as well as coordinates with other federal, state, and local suicide prevention efforts. His department is also responsible for developing and implementing the Veteran Suicide Prevention Long-term Plan. Prior to this position, George worked for over 20 years for the Texas Workforce Commission in a variety of policy positions. He served as the State Veterans Coordinator for the Jobs for Veterans State Grant for a number of years. He also served on the NASWA Veteran Affairs Committee for 13 years. He brings years of experience working with programs designed for military service members, veterans, and their families. George served our nation in the United States Army for over seven years. He is a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.



Brandon McPherson*

Task Force Movement Strengthening our Economy and National Security – Filling the Workforce Shortages

Brandon McPherson grew up in Stone Mountain, GA, earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Information Technology from the United States Naval Academy and a Master of Business Administration from Cornell University. He started his professional career serving as an officer in the United States Navy eventually earning the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He later transitioned to Wall Street and served as a strategy executive at Goldman Sachs, Bank of America and JP Morgan. Today, he serves as a Senior Vice President at Warner Music Group where he leads cross functional initiatives within the Strategy and

Business Operations division. Brandon also currently serves as Treasurer for Task Force Movement (TFM). He and his wife, Sherrie McPherson, reside in New Jersey and support several non-profits and community initiatives.



Cody Melton*

Promising Practice – Florida: Empowering Veterans Through Coordinated Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) Service Integration

Cody Melton is an Air Force Veteran with nearly six years of workforce experience. He has served as a LVER, Program Manager for JVSG and Wagner-Peyser, and now as Program Director for Business Services in Palm Beach County. Cody holds a master’s degree in business administration from Florida Atlantic University.



Paul Messett*

Promising Practice – Oregon - Serving Veterans and Businesses in Rural and Frontier Communities

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.



Colleen Miller

The Veterans Consortium: Legal Services for Veterans

Colleen Miller serves as the Deputy Director of Volunteer Outreach, Education, and Placement, CAVC Practice. Prior to joining The Veterans Consortium, Colleen Miller served as sole legal counsel of operations for The Collier Companies, a multifamily housing management and real estate development company with over \$2.0B assets under management and over \$1.0B in development. She also served as a Career and Professional Development Advisor for the University of Florida Levin College of Law. Colleen Miller previously served as the co-managing partner for Quarles & Brady LLP’s Tampa office. With over fifteen years of experience, she specialized in commercial loan disputes, title issues, creditor’s claims, construction defects, and insurance coverage disputes in both state and federal courts. While at Quarles & Brady, Colleen chaired Quarles Cares for the Tampa office and grew its community outreach programs and charitable contributions. She also developed and implemented Quarles’s partnership with The

Veterans Consortium across its ten offices. Through this partnership, attorneys represented veterans in their appeals for disability benefits before the United States Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims. Colleen Miller is a Florida native. She graduated summa cum laude from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. In 2007, Colleen graduated magna cum laude with a Juris Doctor from the University of Miami School of Law. She will reside in Maryland with her husband, Joshua Miller, and their retired racing greyhound, Lara, and adopted cat, Mac.



Kimberly Mitchell*

Living the American Dream

Adopted as an infant from a Vietnamese orphanage in 1972 by an American airman and his wife, **Kimberly Mitchell** grew up in rural Wisconsin and dreamed of following in her father's footsteps by joining the Air Force. A chance meeting with a Navy admiral inspired her to change her course and apply to the US Naval Academy at Annapolis. Though she chose to defer her entrance for a year due to her father's unexpected death, ultimately, she embarked on a 17-year career with the Navy as a Surface Warfare Officer. She was serving in Washington, DC, working with the State Department on Iraq sanctions and Middle East peacekeeping operations, during the September 11 terrorist attacks. She recalls in her oral history the overwhelming confusion and panic of that day: "That was my first experience of being truly scared not only for us, but for what was happening to our country. What was happening?" After working on issues of warrior and family support and transition policy, she chose to leave the military in 2012 to help found the Dixon Center for Military and Veterans Services and has gone on to serve in numerous leadership roles at organizations supporting veterans in transition. She is currently the Senior Advisor, VSO Liaison, Office of the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.



Sam Mitchell*

Opening Ceremonies; Mark Sanders Award

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 the 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; he earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Evergreen State College. He has three daughters, Dianne, Amber, and Cathy.



Patrick Murphy*

Panels: Operation Open Road/Task Force Movement

The Honorable Patrick Murphy led the U.S. Army – a Fortune 2-sized workforce with 1.3 million employees and the most millennial and Gen Z employees in the nation, operating on a \$148 billion budget. He was instrumental in achieving Army recruiting goals for the first time in five years, recruiting 120,000 Gen Z troops in 2016. He also led the expansion of the Soldier for Life initiative and generated over \$250 million in public-private partnerships. To better connect the Pentagon to the 20 million Veterans, he initiated the opening of over 2,500 AAFES retail stores for the first- ever, tax-free online shopping which increased annual sales to over \$6.7 billion. In 2007, Murphy became the nation’s first Iraq War Veteran elected, representing Pennsylvania. He authored several groundbreaking pieces of legislation into law including the 21st Century GI Bill, the Repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, and Affordable Healthcare Act. He currently serves as a commissioner on the US Cyberspace Solarium Commission and as Distinguished Chair of Innovation at West Point. Before transitioning into civilian life, Murphy was an All-American paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division where he served on two combat deployments and earned the Bronze Star for service. He is a co-founder of WorkMerk, a winning habits tech company focused on employee engagement (\$50m+ valuation), as well as founding board member of Psych Hub, the world’s most comprehensive online educational platform on mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention (\$50m+ valuation). He founded Taking the Hill LLC, a Clio & Sherwood Award-winning television and film company specializing in bringing life to military veteran content. His films include Cherry (2021), The Warrior Class (2020), and Thank You For Your Service (2017). He published the book Taking the Hill and has been a television host and contributor for NBC News and CBS Sports.



Elizabeth Murray-Belcaster

Panels: Operation Open Road/Task Force Movement

Leading initiatives for Transitioning Service Members, Veterans and Military Families, **Elizabeth Murray-Belcaster** is an expert in strategic development of training to placement efforts across the country and an advisor for leadership and coalition building. She is responsible for networking with employers, military partners, and legislators as well as building independent partnerships with labor affiliates and with veteran’s service organizations across the country. She now serves as a Senior Advisor for the Task Force Movement and initiative launched on April 04, 2022, at White House with President Joe Biden, Secretary Pete Buttigieg and the Honorable Patrick J. Murphy. Ms Belcaster has served as Senior Advisor for the American Legion National Licensing and Credentialing Summits and continues to drive industry stakeholders, governing agencies, labor unions and military affiliations in collective spaces to further advance programming and policy for service members across the globe. In October of 2022 under the umbrella of the Task Force Movement Ms. Belcaster created Operation Afghan Open Road a Pennsylvania public private partnership that provided 30 SIV Afghan Refugees funding though scholarships for CDL training with Bucks Community Colleges and employment placement immediately upon completion of the training. Ms. Belcaster specializes in the development of Military Training to Placement efforts with military leadership, industry, labor, academia and regulatory agencies and stakeholders across the country. She works closely with the Department of Defense and Department of Labor on policy implementations and

workforce operations with industry stakeholders. Ms. Belcaster had concurrent experience directing political campaign initiatives for the offices of Governor, State and National Congress, Senate, Aldermanic, and regional judicial positions. In 2015, Ms. Belcaster was a presenter and at the Clinton Global Initiative and serves as a board member on the Women For Wounded Warriors Foundation since 2016. On January 28, 2017, Ms. Belcaster was the recipient of United States Field Artillery Associations, The Order of Saint Barbara award.



Patrick D. Nemons*

Task Force Movement Strengthening our Economy and National Security – Filling the Workforce Shortages

Patrick D. Nemons serves as the Director in the Office of Safety Programs for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). He is responsible for \$620 million grant programs to help reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving large trucks and buses. His portfolio also includes oversight of the national Commercial Driver’s License testing and licensing program and compliance of federal requirements, FMCSA drug and alcohol compliance, as well as oversight of the FMCSA National Training Center responsible for providing high quality motor carrier safety and law enforcement training to Federal, State, and local government officials. Prior to FMCSA, Patrick served as the Division Chief and Acting Director at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Office of Safety Review, where he developed the State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program certification process for 30 States’ oversight of approximately 65 rail transit systems, managed FTA drug and alcohol compliance, emergency management, grants, and transit safety oversight requirements. Patrick also served in the Office of the Secretary, as the Deputy Director and Acting Director of the Department’s Office of Audit Relations where he managed and advised senior executives and political officials on all Office of Inspector General, General Accountability Office, and other external audits. He also served as a Senior Aviation Industry Analyst in the General Counsel’s Aviation Consumer Protection Division ensuring compliance of customer service commitments and civil rights in air travel. Patrick began his US Department of Transportation career in 1999 as a Presidential Management Fellow in the Department’s Office of the Inspector General, conducting aviation and safety audits. Prior to joining the Department, Patrick worked for the State of Maryland in the Department of Corrections and the Department of Parole and Probations as a Correctional Officer and Sr. Drug and Alcohol Counselor. Patrick is a United States Air Force veteran where he held positions as a Human Resources Chief, Public Affairs/Spokesman, and a Law Enforcement/Police Academy Instructor. Patrick has a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and an MBA in International Management from Southeastern University, in Washington, DC, as well as Ph.D. studies in Political Science from Howard University, in Washington, DC and an Executive Education Certificate from Harvard University in Boston, MA.



Elizabeth O'Brien^

Entrepreneurship: How to Get Started

Elizabeth O'Brien is the Executive Director of Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. In this role, she oversees public-private partnerships, strategic partnerships, and community engagement, which unites leading employers to create innovative workforce development solutions for the military community. O'Brien is an accomplished, high-energy leader known for increasing productivity, driving, and maintaining operational results, and building national partnerships. Prior to joining Hiring Our Heroes, she served as the Chief of Staff at TFX Capital, a venture capital firm that invests in service-driven, high-performing, and commercially tested former military and national security leaders. Charged with working across both TFX and its platform investments, to provide operational support to drive strong investments and robust performance she served as a vital extension of TFX investment operations in support of portfolio company founders. Before joining TFX Capital, Liz served as CEO of Freedom Learning Group (FLG), a content services provider, backed by Achieve Partners, which is powered by a global remote network of military spouses and veterans. FLG intentionally built pathways for learning and earning, working to close the military community's skills gap while creating a path to economic opportunity. She currently serves as Chairwoman of the board at Freedom Learning Group. Earlier in her career, Liz 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. Liz also spent over a decade coaching college basketball at the United States Military Academy at West Point, the University of Hawaii, and Hofstra University, where she learned to value the human element in driving success through a collaborative team environment. As a Military Spouse, Liz sits on Military Spouse Jobs Advisory Council, in addition, she is actively involved with Hofstra University's Women in Leadership Advisory Board, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Council, the East Coast Women's Pro Golf Tour Advisory Council, and Tharros Advisory Council. Liz is a graduate of Hofstra University's Zarb School of Business, where she played college basketball and soccer, and lives outside of Washington D.C. with her active-duty Army spouse and daughters.



Tim Oddo*

Value of Apprenticeships for Veterans

As the Program Manager for the Ford-Lincoln Veteran Careers Program, which trains and places Veterans in rewarding careers as Automotive Technicians, **Tim Oddo** is responsible for the overall project management, including Department of Labor Standards of Apprenticeship implementation, Veteran Affairs GI Benefits administration, operations, recruiting, training and certification, project control, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. Mr. Oddo served 21 years in the United States Air Force, beginning as a front-line aircraft hydraulic mechanic, and progressing through multiple facilitation, training, production management, and supervisory roles. Mr. Oddo joined CALIBRE in 2017 after obtaining an automotive certification through CALIBRE's Jaguar/Land Rover Veteran to Technician Program. In addition to serving as a Program Manager, Mr. Oddo has filled roles as an Automotive Technical Instructor for CALIBRE's Jaguar/Land and Ford-Lincoln apprenticeship programs. Mr. Oddo holds an associate degrees in aviation maintenance technology and Instructor of Technology and Military Science certification from the Community College of the Air Force, along with

many aircraft and automotive technician certifications. He has completed extensive training in leadership and personnel management, interpersonal relationships, counseling/conflict management, cultural sensitivity, and ethics.



Meghan Ogilvie

Entrepreneurship: How to Get Started

Meghan Ogilvie is Chief Executive Officer of Dog Tag Inc (DTI), a 501c3 that empowers service-disabled veterans, military spouses, and caregivers through an innovative five-month fellowship program. Hired as DTI's first employee in 2012, Meghan partnered with DTI's co-founders to bring their shared vision to life: to create a place that equips transitioning veterans and military families with knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue their career goals, post service. Meghan assumed the role of CEO in 2015 and oversees all aspects of DTI's unique, multi-faceted social enterprise including: managing the Fellowship program, growing Dog Tag Bakery, and guiding the development and implementation of DTI's long-term strategic vision. Prior to joining Dog Tag, Meghan spent several years working in finance in New York; first in equities with Lehman Brothers and Barclays and later within executive management at Macquarie Group. Meghan comes from a military family, with both her father and sister graduating from the Naval Academy and serving in the United States Marine Corps. In 2017, Meghan Ogilvie was accepted as a Presidential Leadership Scholar and a recipient of the U.S. Army's Outstanding Civilian Service Award. The following year, Meghan was named 2018 Rising Star by the Washington Business Journal.



Helena Ota^

Utilizing Return-to-Work Strategies to Build Career Onramps for Military Spouses and Meet Today's Workforce Needs

Helena Ota is a Program Manager at Hiring Our Heroes, a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. She is part of Career Forward, a learner-to-earner program thanks to the support of Google, focused on upskilling and reskilling through industry-recognized skills. Through this role, she has been able to help thousands of military community members on their path to meaningful employment. Before joining the Career Forward program, she was a Manager on the Career Connector team. As a military spouse, Helena is passionate about working with others to successfully reach their professional goals and find meaningful careers. While working as a defense contractor, military orders took her family overseas where remote work would not be possible. This opportunity marked a career transition to serving the military community, working in various roles in community service, operations, program development, and public health. Helena holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Criminology from Florida State University ('08) and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland, Global Campus ('14). She loves to cook and travel, often visiting places to try new flavors, and currently resides in Maryland with her husband, twin sons, and their two dogs.



Richard Passarelli*

Utility Workers Military Assistance Program

Rick Passarelli enlisted in the United States Navy in 1982, where he was deployed for two tours of active duty 1982-1985, and two years active reserve duty 1985-87. During his first two deployments, he served in support of combat theater of operations Beirut Lebanon, along with his western pacific deployments. Some of the awards Rick received are. Humanitarian Service Medal, Navy Battle "E" Ribbon, Navy Sea Service Deployment ribbon with silver star 2nd award. After his enlistment and honorable discharge Rick started his career with Peoples Gas where he recently retired with 32 years of service as Business Manager and National Executive Board member. During Rick's tenure at Peoples Gas and the UWUA he founded the UMAP program in 2011 in partnership with Peoples Gas Executive Vice President. A public private partnership that has trained and placed over 1000 veterans and transitioning service men and women in the Utility Industry in Illinois, California and Michigan. Rick most recently joined the UWUA National staff and now holds the position of UWUA National Director Of Veterans Affairs and Workforce Development and organizing Under National President James Slevin for the UWUA. Rick is a committee member for Veterans in Energy Washington D.C, and is Chairman Workforce Development of AFL-CIO National Union Veterans Council and a member of the Task Force Movement which launched at the Whitehouse with President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg in April 2022. Rick was awarded a certificate of recognition from the Secretary of Defense for promoting peace and stability for this nation. Rick has two distinguished United States Flag designations, one presented by under Secretary of Labor, Honorable Jane Oates and one from the Pentagon presented by Assistant Secretary of Defense Mr. Fred Drummond. He was awarded the Helmets to Hardhats Veterans in Excellence Award by decorated US Vietnam Army Veteran, SGT President Michael Yaeger and the Teamsters Veteran Achievement Award by Teamster National President James Hoffa. Rick was also the recipient of the Dixon Center for Military and Veterans Services, Pointman Project Award. Rick is married to his high school sweetheart Lynn for 37 years. He as 2 Married sons Dan and Nick and 4 grandchildren Knox. Rocco, Peyton and Jax.



Theresa Patton, MPPA, VHA-CM

Preventing Veteran Suicide

Mrs. Theresa Patton is a Department of Veterans Affairs career employee with over 18 years of experience serving Veterans and contributing to the mission and goals of VA. Mrs. Patton has worked her way through the Veterans Health Administration organization, excelling as Supervisor, Team Leader, and Special Projects Instructor. As of August 2020, Theresa accepted her current position as Health Systems Specialist on the Suicide Prevention Innovations team assigned to the VA Central Office in Washington DC. Mrs. Patton enjoys working with internal VA Innovation teams and external stakeholders who focus on efforts for the greatest impact on reducing Veteran suicide. In 2022, Mrs. Patton was honored to serve the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP) as project manager for the Suicide Prevention Grand Challenge, called [Mission Daybreak](#)—a \$20 million dollar challenge for visionaries to develop suicide prevention solutions to reduce Veteran suicides. Mrs. Patton was recognized by OMHSP for stellar efforts in coordinating key components of the Mission Daybreak innovations challenge.



John Perez*

Military to Manufacturing – An Essential Workforce Pipeline

John Perez is the Director, Military & Veteran Affairs and US State Government Affairs at Johnson & Johnson. He has held previous Procurement, Supply Chain and Acquisition & Divestiture roles across Johnson & Johnson. Prior to joining Johnson & Johnson, John served as a US Army and US Army Reserve officer in various cross-functional roles, twice deploying to Iraq. John completed his undergraduate studies at Seton Hall University and holds an MBA from Yale School of Management and an Executive Master in Policy Leadership degree from Georgetown University. John also is a George W. Bush Institute Stand-To Veteran Leadership Program alumnus.



Seth Peterson*

Entrepreneurship: How to Get Started

Seth Peterson is a Corporate Citizenship Manager for Military and Veteran Affairs at Fiserv, where his focus has been on Military Employment, Diversity & Inclusion, and Employee Engagement. Newly relocated to the northeast, his passion for helping the veteran and military community allows him to focus on expanding the already successful Fiserv Salutes program to New York and New Jersey. Through Fiserv Salutes, the company has been ranked in the top 10 on the Military Times “Best for Vets Employers” list for the last six years, being named an SVA partner of the year for 2021 and a Partner in Excellence for 2022, named a “5 Star Employer” by VETS Indexes, and more. Before working with Fiserv, he served in the United States Army as a Civil Affairs Team Sergeant and Strategic Readiness Supervisor with 1st Special Forces Command. There, he had the honor of working alongside U.S. and foreign government agencies to solve issues affecting vulnerable communities in southeast Asia. His experiences abroad in the military now drive him to collaborate with organizations and colleagues on veteran programs. Seth is completing his BPS in Technology Management and PMP certification before pursuing his MS in Human Resource Management with an Emphasis in Diversity and Technology. Seth is married to his wife Alicia, with whom he has two children.



Ellis Pinder*

Promising Practice – North Carolina: Veterans Treatment Court – Striving to Serve

Ellis Pinder is a Consolidated Veterans Career Advisor at the NCWorks Career Center in Asheville, NC. Even though he is assigned to the Asheville Career Center, his primary place of duty is at the Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministries (ABCCM) Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ) where he provides dedicated services to the resident veterans. Ellis also serves as the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) representative to the Buncombe County Veterans Treatment Court. He is a proud veteran that served over 20 years in the United States Marine Corps and is equally proud to serve the veterans in his current role.



Jonathan Pruett*

Navigating Military Transition and the President's Management Agenda (PMA) Lifecycle Journey Collaboration

Jon Pruett has a rich and diverse background in public communications, graphic design, software engineering, Lean Six Sigma, human-centered design (HCD) and customer experience (CX). He is currently a Senior CX Strategist at the Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Experience Office, Washington, D.C., where he spearheads nationwide research and the design of systems, processes, and products to significantly improve Veterans' experiences across the VA enterprise. Previously, he served in a systems improvement and patient experience role at the Iowa City VA Health Care System. During his tenure, he steered remarkable operational growth and improved satisfaction metrics. He has also led several complex initiatives - driving growth in service-delivery and strengthening data analytics capabilities. Pruett is a U.S. Army Veteran and holds an MBA in Project Management and BFA in Visual Communications from AIU. He also holds a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and certificates in Data Science and Customer Experience. Away from his professional commitments, he enjoys spending time with family, making music, woodworking, and cooking. His multi-dimensional personality combines creativity, logic, strategy, and leadership - helping to pave new roads wherever he travels.



Dr. Laura Purdy*

Bringing Telemedicine to the Veteran Community

Dr. Laura Purdy, also known as 'America's Favorite Doctor', is a highly respected veteran, physician, consultant, and telehealth pioneer with a decade of medical experience. She served as a US Army physician for 14 years, caring for men and women from all over the country undergoing basic training, airborne school, ranger school, and soldiers on post. After her time as an Army physician, she relocated to North Carolina to serve as Battalion Surgeon, where she first practiced telemedicine while overseeing the care of special operations combat medics deployed to Africa. She then went on to help build the Army's extensive telemedicine networks before doing the same for dozens of private virtual health companies. Fueled by a passion and drive to help as many people as she can, Dr. Laura Purdy uses her role as a C-Suite executive to carry out a vision of establishing the most advanced telehealth systems. Dr. Purdy resides in Nashville, Tennessee with her husband of 10 years, juggling life as a busy mom, entrepreneur and provider.



Juliane Ramic

Task Force Movement Strengthening our Economy and National Security – Filling the Workforce Shortages

Juliane Ramic joined ORR with nearly 25 years of direct service provision, training and technical assistance, national coordination and oversight, and state-level support to refugee resettlement. After teaching English as a Second Language in Hanoi, Vietnam, she worked in Ethiopia's Somali and Sudanese refugee camps through Save the Children and USA for UNHCR's *Camp Sadako* program. Returning to the U.S., she monitored federal contracts and provided technical assistance to USCRI's 26

network agencies, leaving in 2004 to join Philadelphia’s largest resettlement agency, Nationalities Service Center, where she expanded programming to support refugee self-sufficiency as Senior Director for Refugee and Community Integration. At ORR, Juliane serves as the ORR Regional Representative providing support for State Refugee Coordinators in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Washington, DC, and West Virginia.



Chris Rawlings*

Veteran Business Owners: Our Journey

After 5 years active duty as a U.S Marine (SGT), two combat deployments to Iraq, and 10 years in aviation, **Chris Rawlings** made the transition to energy & entrepreneurship after attending Florida State Universities Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities in 2014. Chris is the host of the Energy Sense Podcast, a Certified Energy Manager with the Association of Energy Engineers, a LEED Green Associate with the U.S Green Building Council and sits on numerous ESG / EH&S advisory boards. Chris has been named a Top 40 Under 40 by Style Magazine and featured on outlets such as Forbes, Fox News, Virginia Business, and NBC most recently for his work surrounding indoor air quality, air purification, and the battle against the spread of COVID-19.



Carolyn Renick

Task Force Movement Strengthening our Economy and National Security – Filling the Workforce Shortages

Carolyn Renick is the Apprenticeship, Licensing and Credentialing Lead in the Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service where she leads projects and participates on initiatives that impact veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses. These projects include informing and educating individuals about apprenticeship, licensing and credentialing and their value to our transitioning service members as they transition from service. She also contributes to interagency work groups and initiatives that shape policy, transition curriculum, and digital applications that improve the employment outcomes of our veterans. Prior to joining the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, she worked in the U.S. Department of Labor’s National Office of Apprenticeship where she was the lead for business engagement and outreach. She developed innovative strategies to increase brand awareness through education and outreach efforts primarily focusing on the cybersecurity and financial services sectors. In addition, Carolyn worked at the Bureau of Labor Statistics as a Senior Economist in the International Price Program where she specialized in industry analysis and system development in the collection, compilation and review of import and export price data.



Tommizene Rice

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

Ms. Tommizene Rice has over 20 years of experience and made a substantial effort and investment in providing invaluable services to people with disabilities, employers, and disability organizations, including: outreach, recruitment, interviewing techniques, reasonable accommodations, employee and employer development, retention and legal information. She has served thousands of people with disabilities and employers by delivering disability awareness training, vocational assessments, counseling and guidance, entitlement decisions, and job placement services connecting job seekers with disabilities to employers to achieve meaningful employment. Ms. Rice holds a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA and a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA. Her achievements include vocational counseling for people with disabilities, founder of the Richmond Friendship Club of the Deaf in Richmond, VA, Certification in Federal Acquisition, and several other service accomplishments and awards. Ms. Rice is a disability employment and resource expert and her work experiences include Social Security Disability Analyst, Employment Service Manager with local and national programs, disability consultant, vocational evaluator, and vocational rehabilitation counselor. Ms. Rice currently serves as a national employment coordinator with the Department of Veterans Affairs. In this capacity she is responsible for assisting counselors and Veterans with disabilities across the nation in finding and maintaining employment opportunities. She has dedicated her entire working career to serving people who are disadvantaged and experience barriers to inclusion.



James Rodriguez*

Opening Ceremonies

The Honorable Mr. James D. Rodriguez is the US Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service. 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.'s 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 Master 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.



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 the 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. He was responsible for managing the operations of the agency, its 1,000+ employees, WorkOne offices across the state, and its \$2+ billion-dollar expenditures. 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.



Tyler Nicole Smith

Workforce Agencies and Legal Aid: Removing Barriers to Employment through Criminal Record Clearing

Tyler Nicole Smith is the Managing Attorney of the Veterans Justice Center and the Veterans of Color Advocacy Project at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA). Prior to joining the Veterans Justice Center, Tyler Nicole served as a staff attorney for LAFLA’s Restoring Communities workgroup where she used her expertise in criminal law and criminal record clearing remedies to remove barriers to employment for justice involved residents of Los Angeles County and working with community based organizations and legislature to draft and implement law and policies aimed at reducing barriers for the justice involved population. Prior to joining LAFLA, Tyler Nicole was the lead staff attorney at California Legal Aid So Cal, where she ran the organizations criminal record clearing practice. Prior to moving to legal services, Tyler Nicole was a criminal defense attorney representing defendants in felony and misdemeanor DUI, rape, assault, drug, and theft cases throughout Southern California. Tyler Nicole obtained her bachelor’s degree in economics from Spelman College in Atlanta and received her Juris Doctorate with a concentration in trial and appellate advocacy from Suffolk University Law School in Boston.



Kevin Tanaka

Workforce Agencies and Legal Aid: Removing Barriers to Employment through Criminal Record Clearing

Kevin Tanaka is an attorney at the Veteran’s Justice Center at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. He focuses on record-clearing to remove barriers to employment, housing, and other benefits. Prior to his current position he was a deputy public defender at the Orange County Public Defender in Orange

County, California. He frequently worked with veterans who did not have legal counsel while dealing with complicated VA benefits issues, housing, discharge upgrade applications, and employment. He is committed to ensuring that client-based legal work includes holistic, empowering representation. Kevin received his B.A. in Political Science, *magna cum laude*, from the University of California, Irvine. He received his J.D. from the New York University School of Law.



Amy Thomas[^]

Military to Manufacturing – An Essential Workforce Pipeline

Amy Thomas is the National Director, Military and Veterans Initiatives at the Manufacturing Institute, the nonprofit affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). In her role, Amy oversees the growth and expansion opportunities for Heroes MAKE America – the Institute’s initiative to connect the military community with the manufacturing industry to build a pipeline of military-trained and industry-certified candidates. Before joining the Manufacturing Institute, Amy was the Program and Events Development Specialist for Grantham University in Lenexa, Kansas. She was responsible for developing the institution’s national events platform, including the university’s commencement ceremony and student and alumni career branding workshops. Amy also specialized in producing programs to assist our nation’s transitioning military members and veterans. As director of events at the University of Kansas School of Business, she played a key role in the development efforts to build a \$70.5 million new business school facility during KU’s \$1.6 billion capital campaign. Amy sits on the executive board for the Honor Flight Network of Kansas City. She is a former executive board member of the Council for College and Military Educators. Amy is a Certified Professional in Catering and Events. Amy is a proud fourth-generation graduate of the University of Kansas. She and her husband, Jerrold, a Marine veteran, reside in Kansas with their two daughters, Payton and Riley.



Tracy Timby

Task Force Movement Programmatic Solutions – Task Force Movement Partner Successes

Tracy Timby, JD, MS, is an accomplished higher education professional with a passion for fostering strong internal and external relationships to benefit both students and the institution at large. With a proven track record in resource management and risk mitigation, Tracy excels in creating collaborative teams and driving strategic partnerships. As Vice President for Workforce and Strategic Partnerships, Tracy's expertise as a faculty member and private industry trainer enhances her ability to bridge academia and practical training. Her extensive work history includes leadership roles such as Associate Vice President for Strategic Partnerships and Workforce Innovation and Dean of Business + Innovation at Bucks County Community College. Tracy's visionary approach has resulted in remarkable achievements, including securing substantial corporate donations, managing multimillion-dollar budgets, and successfully implementing innovative training programs. She has also been instrumental in securing grants, introducing cutting-edge technologies like virtual reality skills training, and developing interdisciplinary curriculum offerings. Tracy's commitment to student engagement is evident in her work on campus-wide engagement programs focusing on soft skill development and

events that promote entrepreneurship and empower underrepresented populations. Her dynamic insights are a driving force for success in the world of higher education.



Elliot Tommingo*

Opening Ceremonies

Elliot J. Tommingo served 15 years in the US Marine Corps and is the current Director of the D.C. Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs (MOVA). 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, serving till 2021 with the rank of Major. In May 2017, he was hired as an Outreach Specialist/Public Information Officer for MOVA. In January 2019, he was appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser as the Director of MOVA, serving the 30,000 veterans and families who reside in the District. Director Tommingo lives in the Navy Yard (Ward 6) with his lovely wife Diana, their beautiful daughter Noel, and their Kings Charles Cavalier Spaniel Chelsea.



Jana Toner

Utilizing Return-to-Work Strategies to Build Career Onramps for Military Spouses and Meet Today’s Workforce Needs

Jana Toner is a Senior Vice President with American Corporate Partners with a portfolio of continuing ACP’s growth trajectory, maintaining corporate relationships, and government relations. Based in Washington, D.C., she has over 20 years’ experience in the private and public sectors. Previously, Jana served as Deputy Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the Second Lady Karen Pence where she launched initiatives around mental health, veteran suicide prevention, and military spouse employment. She is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin where she ran track and cross country. In her spare time, Jana enjoys spending time with her husband Michael, their 3 kids, 2 dogs, and playing tennis.



Hannah Toney, Ed.D.

US DOL Listening Sessions; What’s New at the National Veterans Training Institute, 2023,

Hannah R. Toney is a Director in Custom Learning Solutions at Management Concepts and serves as a program manager and the curriculum director 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. In her free time, she enjoys painting, creating wheel thrown pottery, gardening, and hanging out on her farm with her pack of rescue dogs.



Teresa Watson

Task Force Movement Programmatic Solutions – Task Force Movement Partner Successes

Teresa Watson, is a third-generation driver and has been around trucks all her life. At an early age, Teresa worked alongside her Dad performing administrative tasks in the field. As an adult, Teresa was a Court Reporter for the Federal Government while she would travel back home to help with the family business, but he never pressured her to become part of the business. The vision to start her own trucking company began after the untimely death of her father, Olin Watson Sr. Mr. Watson had been a truck driver for over 30 years, and always wanted to own his own trucking company but did not do so. Since his death, Teresa had the dream of Olin's Transport Lines, Inc. Later she restructured her business after an almost fatal truck accident and changed the business name to TRJ TRANSPORTATION INC. Teresa restructured TRJ to include hiring all military drivers after finding out that recently deployed soldiers returned home jobless. She partnered with FastPort to start an apprenticeship program. Employer Support of the Guard Reserve (ESGR) invited Teresa to the Pentagon where TRJ was recognized as one of the 29 leaders in the country who displayed their continued dedication to our nation's heroes. TRJ is in partnership with Georgia Works, a homeless shelter for men where they transform chronically men into self-sufficient and productive members of society. Since 2016 Teresa has mentored those with a desire to obtain their CDL license. She provides education, training, and job placement for each individual person. In 2019, she received the Hardin Community Award for her community service. TRJ partnered with Community Restoration Project where TRJ will continue to build a footprint and be a pillar within the community. In 2021, Teresa launched the Minority Professional Truckers Association (MPTA) a National Non-Profit Organization that seeks to globally impact the trucking and transportation industry for minority professionals by expanding opportunities for members through leadership, development, education, training and providing benefits, and resources. MPTA currently is working with the Black Farmers of America and Cargill offering minority owner operators access to contracts to deliver produce from farm to retail stores across the country. Teresa presently serves as a Board Member for Task Force Movement. Task Force Movement was launched at the White House in response to the Biden-Harris Trucking Plan and Cyber Security Executive Order. MPTA in partnership with TFM is preparing to launch and Owner Operator Academy for Veterans, Minority and Women interested in becoming Trucking Entrepreneurs. This will be an advance certificate program that will assist individuals with all the tools and resources to become an Owner Operator in the Trucking Industry. Teresa is extremely proud of what she has built along with the outstanding reputation in the industry, and an overwhelming rich history of professionalism and leadership.



Monty Webb*
Compassion Fatigue Awareness

Monty Webb's career as a Disabled Veteran Case Manager began in December of 2021 at the WorkSource office on Joint Base Lewis-McChord. In July 2023 he was reassigned to the American Lake Veterans Administration Medical Center in Tacoma, WA. Prior to his employment with the State of Washington Monty had completed over three years of Active Service with the Washington National. This included a deployment to the Country of Jordan and serving as the Command Chaplain for the state's COVID Task Force. Monty's military career spanned 20 years, beginning with a tour as an Active-Duty Infantry team member in Germany. He then took a 15-year break in service, returning to the Army National Guard where he deployed to the Middle East and subsequently commissioned into the Army Chaplain Corps. Monty's service includes three Federal deployments and five state activations. He is scheduled to retire in August 2023. Originally from Riverside, California, Monty has called Western Washington home since he was 7 years old. His education includes a Bachelor of Religion and a Master of Divinity from Faith International University in Tacoma, WA. Monty married his wife, Cynthia in 2000, and has three children: Tyler, Madalyn and Danielle.



Stephanie*^ and Bryce Wein*^
Veteran Business Owners: Our Journey

Pinup Coffee Co. was established with a passion for coffee and a deep appreciation for local craftsmanship. The co-founders, **Stephanie and Bryce Wein**, embarked on this venture while serving in the U.S Navy for a period of six years. With their extensive background in the craft cider industry on the west coast, they have successfully developed the company by adhering to the principles of mutual respect for fellow veterans and a shared commitment to bringing individuals together through exceptional coffee, while simultaneously fostering a sense of community. Through their experiences, they have come to realize that respecting the ingredients, processes, and promoting transparency in the products they offer enhances the sense of connection and fosters relationships throughout the supply chain. Stephanie holds various responsibilities such as head roaster, green coffee purchaser, and head administrator and visionary. On the other hand, Bryce is more involved with the "behind-the-scenes" duties including operations, order fulfillment, financial management, and advertising. Both Stephanie and Bryce are alumni of Oregon State University and The University of West Florida, respectively, and are avid learners who continuously strive to enhance their offerings for their customers and community.



Sam Whitehurst*
Task Force Movement Programmatic Solutions – Task Force Movement Partner Successes

Colonel (Ret.) Sam Whitehurst served over 29 years in the U.S. Army in multiple command and staff positions. Upon graduation from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Officer Candidate School, he was commissioned as an infantry officer in 1990 and served in various locations both outside and within the U.S., culminating in his recent retirement from

the Army. His Army career spanned training deployments to Japan and Thailand, an operational deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina, two combat deployments to Afghanistan, and three combat deployments to Iraq. Highlights of his career included commanding a brigade combat team in Afghanistan and serving as the chief of staff for the 18th Airborne Corps in Iraq. His civilian and military education includes UNC-Chapel Hill, Louisiana State University, U.S. Army Airborne and Ranger School, Command & General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, and National War College. He now serves as the Vice President for the Dixon Center for Military and Veterans Services; a non-profit that supports and serves military members, veterans, and their families. He has been married to the former Sallie Ann Boyd for 28 years and they have four children: Olivia, Audrey, Matt, and Ben.



Phyllis Wilson*

The Military Women's Memorial

Phyllis Wilson served 37 years in the Army as a Military Intelligence (MI) Voice Intercept Operator. She has served around the globe – visiting more than 35 countries – in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and North America. She has been mobilized numerous times to shoulder the duties of defense of the nation and has deployed to Iraq several times as an Intelligence Analyst with Special Operations. Chief Warrant Officer Five Phyllis J. Wilson served as the most senior Warrant Officer in the entire United States Army Reserve, and a key member of the Executive Team managing an organization of more than 200,000 personnel with an annual operating budget of more than \$8 Billion. She was a Senior Military Fellow with the Chief of Staff of the Army's Strategic Studies Group focused on Global issues 2050 and beyond. Phyllis is a Registered Nurse and holds two master's degrees, two Bachelor of Science degrees, and a certificate in Non-Profit Management from Duke University. She attended the Defense Language Institute for both German and Spanish. She is a graduate of the Program in Advanced Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center and School in Garmisch, Germany. She has received numerous military decorations and awards ranging from the Legion of Merit to the Army Parachutist Badge. She has been inducted into the Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame and the U.S. Veterans Hall of Fame. She is President of the [Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation](#) – the only major national memorial honoring the 3 Million women who have defended America from the Revolutionary War to today. The Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, has appointed her to the [Reserve Forces Policy Board](#). She is a member of the Board of Directors for [Policy Vets](#) and the [Association of the United States Army \(AUSA\)](#). She is also a Senior Fellow at AUSA. Phyllis serves as an [Army Reserve Ambassador](#) for Maryland which is afforded the rights, privileges, and protocol status equivalent to that of a 2-Star General Officer. Phyllis is a member of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Order of the World Wars, Association of the United States Army, Association of the United States Navy, Women Marines Association, Reserve Organization of America, Military Women Across the Nation, Army Women Veterans Association, Military Officers Association of America, Disabled American Veterans, Air Force Association, U.S. Army Warrant Officers Association, the Mayflower Society, the Daughters of the American Revolution, National Defense Industrial Association, and Women In Defense. In March 2020, Phyllis was named a Power Player of the Week on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace. View the video [Here](#). She has eight children. Four of her sons are in the military and all are combat veterans. She has fifteen grandchildren and one on the way – October 2023!



Dennis Wimer*

Opening Ceremonies - 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 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. He is passionate about coaching youth soccer and enjoys the time it gives him with his children and their friends.



Tim Winter*

Off-Base Transition Training – What is it, Where is it, and Who is it for?

Tim Winter is the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Director for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). In this capacity, Tim manages DOL's contribution as part of the TAP Interagency Partnership. Each year VETS delivers over 11,500 employment workshops to approximately 260,000 transitioning service members worldwide. Tim works closely with OSD and the military service branches to coordinate DOL's portion of TAP. He represents DOL on several of the interagency working groups associated with transition assistance and has been an integral member in major government wide initiatives to redesign and improve the program. Tim has been with DOL VETS since 2006. Prior to coming to the Department of Labor, Tim worked in the Army's Wounded Warrior Program. Tim has also held a variety of leadership and management positions within the corporate world and non-profit organizations, to include contract work with SAIC in Baghdad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Tim served as a Marine Corps tank officer from 1985 to 1993 and is a 1985 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy.



Nikki James Zellner[^]

WATCHDOGS: Embrace Your Role in Building Stronger, Safer, More Connected Communities; Brandable: Helping those you serve create a personal brand they can own (and love)

Nikki James Zellner is a content strategist who empowers all to use their personal experiences + authentic voices to express themselves, build their legacy brands, and change the world. A dual business owner with a background deeply rooted in community, marketing, and storytelling, she's launched 15 lifestyle magazines, helped build the success of hundreds of brands, and worked in front of and behind the scenes to share written and visual stories in a way that captivated audiences. She was awarded the *2022 Trailblazer of the Year* award in the National Veteran and Military Spouse Entrepreneur Awards, and in her spare time, she fought the law for safer schools in Virginia...and won.

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.