30 FEATURES & PRESENTERS

2019 NASWA VETERANS CONFERENCE

Lori Adams

*Brain Drain, Brain Gain & Our Sustainable Future: Boosting Employment Options for Veterans and Military Spouses*

Lori Adams is the Veterans Policy Director and National Labor Exchange (NLx) Senior Advisor at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies. One of her primary duties is staffing the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee, working with state veteran representatives as well as USDOL VETS, and planning the annual Veterans conference. She represents NASWA on the Department of Labor Advisory Committee on Veterans’ Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach. She joined NASWA in 2015 after over 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 delivery at all of the state’s American Job Centers. Lori has a Bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from Iowa State University, and received her Certified Public Manager accreditation from Drake University.

Emily Appel-Newby

*Warm Handoffs: Connecting Transitioning Service Members to an American Job Center*

Emily Appel-Newby contributes to multiple technical assistance and evaluation projects in the areas of family economic security, asset building, and employment for disengaged populations. She has developed a focus on inclusive employment for people with disabilities, including integrated and supported employment. She regularly assists public agencies and community programs in making their work more data-driven by mapping program theory and examining their collection and use of data. Ms. Appel-Newby earned a Masters in Public Administration from George Mason University in 2015.

Danielle Applegate*

*Serving Military Caregivers*

Danielle Applegate is the Vice President of VetsFirst, within the United Spinal Association, where she leads legislative, advocacy, and programmatic efforts serving the military and veteran community through applying her subject matter expertise in all things veteran. She previously served as the National Outreach Coordinator for the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Center for Women Veterans, and operated Applegate Solutions, a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business that provided management consulting to an array of clients including the Departments of Commerce, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, as well as private and nongovernmental organizations. She previously served as the Director of Veteran’s Initiatives and Outreach at Business and Professional Women’s Foundation, and executed executive program management for both Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security. Danielle was enlisted in the United States Army and Army National Guard for five years; her service included a tour in Korea. Due to service-connected injuries, she left the
service and utilized Vocational Rehabilitation services and the Montgomery GI Bill to complete a Bachelor’s degree in Human Resources and Business Administration, a Master’s degree in Business Administration from the University of Massachusetts, and the Nonprofit Executive Management certificate from Georgetown University in 2014. She has served on the Advisory Council for Final Salute, on the Women Joining Forces Council for Business and Professional Women’s Foundation, the American Legion’s Small Business Council, and the Camp Lejeune Community Action Panel. She is currently raising two kids and performing full-time caregiving duties for a terminally-ill fellow veteran.

**Francheska Atchison**
*Listening Session with USDOL Vets Leadership*

Francheska Atchison has over ten years’ professional federal experience working for Department of Defense and Department of Labor providing employment programs and services directly to veterans, transitioning service members and their families. As a Program Manager for the Department of Defense’s Employment Readiness Program, Francheska led program initiatives for an Army installation to address the unique employment challenges of military spouses. Francheska continues to serve military service members, veterans and their families in her current role at Department of Labor, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) agency as the National Office Jobs and Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Program lead. The JVSG program provides federal funding to 54 State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment and to assist employers fill their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans. As an active duty US Army veteran, Francheska has a deep passion and commitment to continue to advance the JVSG program for the greater of the benefit of the Veterans served.

**Debbie Ball**
*Veterans Return to Integrated Competitive Employment (Veterans RICE)*

Debbie Ball has spent over 20 years advocating for societal change and creating pathways to make it happen. In addition to building vision and aptitude within Easterseals Southern California’s Employment Division, she works with stakeholders throughout the country to build capacity and create urgency around customized employment and Employment First. Her concurrent roles as an Easterseals Vice President, board member on both CA APSE and Foundation for Developmental Disabilities boards of directors, advisory committee member of the UCLA Tarjan UCEDD, and membership in numerous coalitions connect Debbie with some of the country’s best minds and allow her to continue working with, and on behalf of, others committed to ending isolation and building brighter futures for people with barriers to employment including veterans and individuals with dual diagnosis.
Martin (Marty) Bangert*

Promising Practices: Colorado

Marty Bangert is currently the State of Colorado Regional Veteran Employment Representative for Arapahoe and Douglas counties in the south Denver area. He works with the Business Development Representative Team at the AD Works! Workforce Center to facilitate veteran employment with local businesses. Marty is a retired Air Force veteran hailing originally from the NYC area but currently living in Colorado Springs. Marty has had a wide mix of jobs during his military career including adult training facilitator, curriculum developer, event planner, and counselor/mentor/career planner. Previously, he spent three years as a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist at the Pikes Peak Workforce Center working for the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in Colorado Springs. Marty spent two years after his military retirement searching for meaningful employment and knows how tough it can be for some individuals to reach that goal. Now, he can’t think of a better way to give back to his newly adopted State than helping its veteran population also find jobs through the development of local area businesses. Marty is married to his lovely wife Erin who is a teacher for the Colorado Springs' School Districts 11 and 49. His hobbies include building scale models, studying history, leadership development, hiking, computer gaming, watching classic movies, and spoiling his three pug puppies.

Archie Barrow*

Promising Practices: North Carolina; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Promising Practices

Archie Barrow is the director of Veteran Employment Services for the North Carolina Department of Commerce – Division of Employment Security. Archie served in the U.S. Army for six years, where he attained the rank of Captain. He is a member of the NASWA Veterans Affairs committee. He has worked as both a DVOP and LVER before becoming director of Veterans Employment Services. He is involved in other activities in providing assistance to veterans and their families as he volunteers at Christmas to visit the Marine children on the bases in North Carolina as Gunny Claus.

James M. Beamesderfer*

Microsoft Software & Systems Academy

Jim Beamesderfer is a vice president for Prudential’s Office of Veterans Initiatives. He is responsible for the company’s internal veterans programs, which includes supporting Diversity and Inclusion activities, implementing the communications strategy and overseeing philanthropic activity in coordination with internal business partners. In addition, he oversees the VETalent program that in partnership with the nonprofit organization Workforce Opportunity Services, recruits, trains and hires Iraq and Afghanistan-era military veterans and military spouses. Beamesderfer has been a driving force behind the development of the company’s military spouse employment program and was recently appointed as the Co-Chair of the US Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Employment Advisory Council. He also plays a key role in expanding the VETalent program and other Military Talent employment programs to other companies around the country. Beamesderfer joined Prudential in 1997. Prior to his current role, he was a director, Information Systems in Prudential’s Individual Life Insurance business where he supported Prudential Advisors technology functions such as Customer Relationship Management, marketing and financial
planning, and provided cross-business support to Group Insurance Affinity Marketing. Prior to joining Prudential, Beamesderfer was a captain in the U.S. Army, serving six years in Infantry units. Beamesderfer has a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point and a Master’s degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix. He also earned the Project Management Professional designation. Beamesderfer is an active member of the Rutgers Business School Military and Veteran Advisory Board.

Anne Bibb

*Brain Drain, Brain Gain & Our Sustainable Future: Boosting Employment Options for Veterans and Military Spouses*

Anne Bibb is currently the Senior Director of Customer Care for Hilton Reservations & Customer Care. Anne has over twenty years’ experience in call center and the BPO environment, demonstrating strength in building high performing teams to drive operational excellence and consistency, relying on strong communication as the core of the business, strengthening client relationships, and driving results. Anne has held a variety of management roles in the contact center industry across multiple verticals including operations, client services, contract management, WFM, training and recruiting. Most recently, Anne was the Sr. Director & Global Head of the Remote Engagement Solutions team for Sutherland. She was responsible for all the existing and new client relationships, employee engagement, and growing the geographic footprint of the remote side of Sutherland’s business. She was previously with Harvey Hotels, Wilson World Hotels, Holiday Inn Hotels, MCI/WorldCom, EDS, Alpine Access and Sykes. A passionate advocate for remote work, employee engagement and leadership, she has been a speaker and featured attendee at webinars and conferences such as Remote Work Summit, University of Utah, AgileWorks, Running Remote, and more. Anne is a member of the National Association for Professional Women and an Advisory Board Member of Intent Management Group, as well as youth advocacy groups, Queen Talk and Too Fly. She also is a member of several leadership organizations and takes every opportunity to mentor up-and-coming management talent. Anne lives in Plano, TX with her husband, adult high-functioning autistic daughter, six seriously spoiled dogs (who have their own Instagram!), and always keeps a room for her active duty Marine son when he comes home.

Cathy Breeze

*An Employer’s Perspective*

Cathy Breeze is a Vice President at Booz Allen Hamilton who leads large portions of our Department of Homeland Security (DHS) business as part of the Firm’s Civil - Justice, Homeland Security and Transportation (JHT) business. At DHS, she focuses primarily on Science & Technology (S&T), US Coast Guard (USCG), Undersecretary for Management (USM), Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD), and Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) as well as our cross-market Geospatial business. Prior to this assignment, Ms. Breeze was responsible for Department of Defense (DoD) Combatant Command (COCOM) business at US Africa Command (USAFRICOM), US European Command (USEUCOM), US Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), US Strategic Command (USTRATCOM) and US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). With over 35 years of Intelligence and Combatant Command experience, Ms. Breeze provides deep expertise and insights to Booz Allen engagements that involve: Space Operations, Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD), Counter-Narcotics Terrorism, and Homeland Security/Defense. Before joining Booz Allen in 1993, Ms. Breeze spent 10+ years in the US
Navy working Signals Intelligent (SIGINT) activities. She engages in DHS topics with the Homeland Security Defense Business Council (HSDBC), National Defense Industry Association (NDIA), Women in Homeland Security (WHS) and Women in Defense (WID). Ms. Breeze received a B.A. degree from Golden Gate University. Given her 10+ years in the military and over 12 years as an AF spouse she leverages her leadership, passion and expertise as a member of the Firm’s Veteran Agenda as well as the Executive Sponsor for our Military Spouse Forum (MSF).

Matthew Brogdon*
An Employer’s Perspective; Microsoft Software & Systems Academy; American Indian/Alaska Native Americans: Becoming Culturally Competent

Matt Brogdon, Senior Engagement and Public Relations Manager for Military Affairs at Microsoft, specializes in managing relationships with military installations, community organizations, and employer partners involved with the Microsoft Military Affairs team as well as six separate Microsoft Software and Systems Academy classroom locations across the western United States. Matt served as an officer in the Army after graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1994. He joined Bradley-Morris, Inc. after the military and was responsible for military recruiting and placement for the western United States. In 2009 Matt founded Pathfinder Consulting, a veteran and diversity recruiting consulting firm for Fortune 500 companies and educational institutions. Before Microsoft, Matt worked in the biotech industry leading university relations, diversity & inclusion, and military recruiting and retention programs. Matt is passionate about diversity and veteran employment and educational opportunities for all of those who have served.

Edward Carr*
Veteran Jobs Mission

Ed Carr is the Director, Military and Veteran Affairs at Comcast NBCUniversal. In his role, Ed manages the company’s partnerships with governmental and non-profit veteran-focused organizations, as part of Comcast NBCUniversal’s broader programs and outreach in support of the military community. Ed’s military career spanned 23 years active duty, as a combat medic and then a medical recruiter, he served on overseas combat and humanitarian deployments to the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia. His military service was recognized with numerous military awards and commendations, including the Meritorious Service Medal with six oak leaf clusters, the Combat Medical Badge, and the Glen E. Morrell Order of Recruiting Excellence Medallion. Ed’s work at Comcast NBCUniversal has been instrumental in the company being recognized as a private sector leader in military hiring and community outreach.

Shaun Castle*
Keynote speaker: “Unstoppable”

Medically-retired Army Sergeant Shaun Castle is an accomplished college and professional wheelchair basketball player, and outspoken advocate for Paralyzed Veterans of America. Born in Elmira, N.Y. Castle enlisted in the Army in 2000. A military police officer with the U.S. Army stationed in
Heidelberg, Germany, Castle served deployments to Kosovo, Macedonia and missions in support of the Global War on Terrorism. In 2002, he served as a protective services guard to two four-star Generals—Gen. Burwell B. Bell III and Gen. Montgomery Cunningham Meigs. In 2003, Castle was injured during a training exercise in Heidelberg in which he suffered three herniated discs and two cracked vertebrae. While a lengthy prosthetics surgery enabled him to walk again and return to private sector police work, the weight of his duty belt over time caused further damage to his spinal cord. Not only was a second surgery unsuccessful, Castle learned while undergoing treatment at the VA medical center in Birmingham, Alabama, that he had a life-threatening allergy to all pain medications and muscle relaxers, a complication that nearly took his life and forced him to resort to natural methods of pain management. In 2012, Castle embraced the healing power of adaptive sports. He began training six days per week became a team member for the University of Alabama’s men’s wheelchair basketball team. Castle went on to play professional wheelchair basketball in Lyon, France. Castle also pursued a degree in Communications with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership, graduating summa cum laude from the University of Alabama in 2017. He intends to next pursue a Master’s degree in Global Business Management. In 2016, Castle pioneered the construction of an arena dedicated solely to wheelchair basketball at the University of Alabama. He was later honored by the college for an award recognizing his contributions to veterans, adapted athletes and the disabled student body on campus. In 2018 Castle was appointed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities.

Heath Clayton

An Employer’s Perspective; Accelerating Transition: Helping Military Veterans Identify and Launch their Next Career

Heath Clayton is a Talent Development Leader at Deloitte, creating engaging learning experiences for audiences around the world to help them reach their full potential. He began his professional career in 2007 at The White House, where he worked for President George W. Bush. After the administration, Heath served in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Department of Energy before ultimately deciding to continue his career by making an impact in the private sector. He currently runs community impact initiatives focusing on workforce development for military service members, veterans, LGBTQ professionals, and other groups to help them successfully transition to corporate careers. Heath also leads global learning and curriculum initiatives across the globe to equip Deloitte’s talent with the leadership development and industry knowledge required to provide outstanding service to their clients. Heath speaks frequently on a range of topics including diversity and inclusion in the workplace, Native American youth issues, and workforce development. He serves on the national board of directors of Out for Undergrad, and is an adjunct faculty member at the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University, lecturing on corporate social responsibility and ethics. A native Texan, Heath splits his time between Dallas and Washington, DC. Heath is Chickasaw and attended Carnegie Mellon University for graduate school in Public Policy and Management on a tribal affairs fellowship.
Mika Cross*^  

*Brain Drain, Brain Gain & Our Sustainable Future: Boosting Employment Options for Veterans and Military Spouses*

Mika J. Cross is a distinguished human capital workplace expert, strategist and innovator. Mika has extensive experience designing and implementing innovative talent management training solutions, recruitment strategies, next generation workplace predictions, workforce skills development, performance management and employee engagement in both the public and private sector. Mika is the Vice President of Employer Engagement and Strategic Initiatives at FlexJobs. In this role, Mika works with federal and commercial company executives to customize their talent management capabilities, establish recruiting brands and workforce planning strategies for attracting, recruiting, hiring and retaining top talent. Ms. Cross is also the Founder of Strategy@Work, LLC., a small woman owned, service-disabled business. Mika collaborates with executives to design human capital transformational strategies and training solutions for federal agencies, companies, nonprofits and start-ups. Mika began her 20+ year career in public service in the United States Army, having served as both an enlisted soldier and commissioned officer. Mika’s federal service also includes mission critical assignments throughout the United States Intelligence Community and across the Federal government. In her roles at the Department of Labor and Office of Personnel Management, Mika worked on precedent setting, federal government-wide human capital policy and workplace initiatives to enhance employee engagement, performance and the successful training and transition of military servicemembers, military spouses and veterans into the civilian labor market. She also led the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO) on behalf of the Secretary of Labor. Mika volunteers her time with numerous public/private human capital focused associations. She currently serves as the Senior Executives Association (SEA) Vice Government Chair for the Governance and Innovation Community of Change; is a Board member for WorldatWork’s Alliance for Work/life Progress (AWLP) Greater Work/life Network and serves on the Executive Board for the Association of Federal Information Resource Management (AFFIRM) as the liaison to the Human Resources community. Mika is the past Government Chair of the Evolving the Workforce Community of Interest (COI) for the American Council for Technology-Industry Advisory Panel (ACT-IAC). She also is a visiting faculty member at the Brookings Institution. In 2017, Ms. Cross was recognized as a FedTech Trending 40 Rising Star and is an awardee of other industry awards to include the Fed50, and the Next Gen Gov public service award. She was also named a ‘Work-Life Rising Star’ by the WorldatWork Alliance for Work-Life Progress and was awarded the Excellence in Telework Leadership award from the Mobile Work Exchange. Mika is a recurring monthly guest on workforce issues, on the Government Matters television show and is a regularly featured expert for the Federal Employment Law Training Group (FELTG), the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) Association and a recurring presenter at the Federal Managers Association (FMA) annual National Training Seminar.
Tiffany Daugherty*
*Veteran Jobs Mission; Military Spouses as Assets in the Modern Workforce

Tiffany Daugherty is Vice President of Military & Veteran Outreach for Barclays. She joined the bank in 2019, and is charged with driving the strategy for veteran and military spouse hiring, retention, internal mobility and community engagement. Prior to joining Barclays, Tiffany led military efforts at First Data enhancing the company’s strategy to provide the military community with access to career opportunities and best-in-class education resources, while offering premier business solutions to veteran-owned businesses. While Tiffany was responsible for military employment at First Data, the team won several national awards based on innovative programming and outcomes including being ranked #1 on Military Times’ Best for Vets: Employers list in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Tiffany is a mayoral appointee and Vice Chair of the New York City Veterans Advisory Board. She is a graduate of the inaugural 2018 George W. Bush Institute’s Stand-to Veteran Leadership Scholars Program. Tiffany began her career as a U.S. Army Air Traffic Controller, serving in the U.S. as well as the Republic of Korea. After service, she spent 10 years in the career counseling field, serving diverse student populations in technical colleges and traditional universities, including Vanderbilt University. Prior to joining First Data, Tiffany spent four years at Wounded Warrior Project where she served as both a regional and national employment program manager. While with Wounded Warrior Project, Tiffany led a team of 11 specialists nation-wide in providing direct employment services to veterans with disabilities and their spouses. As a rehabilitation counselor and career coaching professional, she has directly helped over 2K students and veterans find careers and move forward in their transition. Tiffany completed her Bachelor degree at Austin Peay State University and received her Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling from Assumption College. Tiffany has served as an expert panelist or speaker for multiple events regarding veteran employment or entrepreneurship, including: National Women Veterans Summit (VA), Operation Homefront – Homefront Celebration, Student Veterans of America (SVA) National Conference, Employer Assistance & Resource Network on Disability and Inclusion (EARN), and the Veterans on Wall Street Annual Symposium.

Richard Davis
*Veterans Return to Integrated Competitive Employment (Veterans RICE)*

Richard Davis, M.S.W., is a Senior Policy Advisor on the Workforce Systems Policy Team at the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Richard works across government agencies to align policy in support of competitive, integrated employment. He has primary responsibility for a number of Federal policy initiatives focused specifically on promoting the employment and socioeconomic advancement of youth and adults with disabilities, including the Department’s Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) and Provider Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive-Integrated Employment (Provider VOICE) initiatives. Prior to ODEP, Richard was the Director of Public Policy for The Arc Maryland, former President of the Maryland APSE Chapter, and the 2013 Disability Policy Leadership Fellow for AUCD.
Ivan Denton*

Warm Handoffs: Connecting Transitioning Service Members with an American Job Center

Ivan Denton is a member of the Senior Executive Service within the Department of Labor, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service or DOL VETS. As Director of the Office of National Programs, Ivan serves as the principal career advisor regarding VETS programs. He oversees three VETS program offices that collectively administer five congressionally mandated employment and compliance related programs that serve military members and veterans. Last year, DOL and DOL VETS served over 464,000 military members and veterans. DOL served over 310,000 veterans through the Public Workforce System, which is a nationwide network of over 2,400 One-Stop Centers (currently branded as American Job Centers or AJCs). DOL provides employment related grants to each State Workforce Agency (SWA), and these federal grants fund employment related services and training to veterans within local service delivery areas. VETS administers the Jobs for Veterans’ State Grants (JVSG) Program, and the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program (HVRP). Via the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), VETS partners with Department of Defense, Veteran Affairs and other interagency entities to provide employment related services and support to over 154,000 transitioning service members at over 180 world-wide sites. VETS also partners with the Department of Defense and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) to administer the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) program. USERRA protects the employment rights and benefits of those that serve or have served in the uniformed services. Prior to joining VETS, Ivan served in the Army for over 34 years. During his first active duty tour as an Infantry officer, he served in Korea and participated in two tours along the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. He also served with the 75th Ranger Regiment, to include participating in a combat parachute assault during OPERATION JUST CAUSE into Panama. He left active duty in 1990 and rejoined the Indiana Army National Guard (INARNG) as a full time Infantry officer. His command and staff assignments were numerous, to include two combat deployments to Iraq. The first as an Infantry Battalion Commander in 2003, and the second as a Brigade Commander in 2011. His last military assignment was as the National Guard Bureau, Director of Manpower and Personnel in Arlington, VA. He retired in 2016 as a Brigadier General and earned numerous awards, to include Air Assault, Airborne (with combat jump star), Ranger Tab, Combat Infantryman’s Badge (2nd Award) and the Army Distinguished Service Medal. He earned a Master’s Degree from the Army War College. He is married to Kimberly, who serves as an Instructional Coach for Fairfax County Schools, VA. He and Kim have three children.

Tom Downs*

Veteran Jobs Mission

Tom Downs joined Gartner, the world’s leading research and advisory company, in 2019 and he leads their global Inclusion and Engagement (I&E) Talent Acquisition efforts, which includes Veterans and military spouses. Prior to Gartner, Tom was with Capital One for over 5 years and he led their enterprise wide Diversity recruiting efforts for Veterans, military spouses and Persons with Disabilities (PwD). Prior to Capital One, Tom retired from the U.S. Army after 21 years of honorable service, which included deployments to Kosovo and Afghanistan. Tom earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Training and Development from the University of Louisville and is also a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). Tom resides in Alexandria, Virginia with his wife and son.
Lane Dyer*

Promising Practices: North Carolina; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Promising Practices

Lane Dyer was named the North Carolina State Director for the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS), US Department of Labor, in June 2015. The Veterans’ Employment and Training Service provides grant funds to assist veterans in overcoming barriers to employment. In addition, VETS investigates employment discrimination cases involving veterans, provides job readiness seminars to transitioning service members and advocates on behalf of veterans. Prior to joining USDOL, Dyer worked for the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, now the NC Division of Workforce Solutions, retiring in October of 2014. Over his long workforce career, he held positions as an Unemployment Insurance Claims Supervisor, a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER), an AJC Manager, a Regional Manager and the Deputy Director of the North Carolina Employment Service Division, before being named Employment Service Director. Dyer is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, serving from 1981-1985 as an Aircraft Armaments System Specialist and a graduate of Appalachian State University.

Carol Eggert*

An Employer’s Perspective

Brigadier General (Ret.) Carol Eggert is Senior Vice President, Military and Veteran Affairs at Comcast NBCUniversal. She leads an eight-person team and provides strategic leadership to all aspects of Comcast NBCUniversal’s programs and outreach to the military and veteran community. Carol completed her distinguished military career in 2014 as the Assistant Adjutant General for the Pennsylvania National Guard and the Deputy Commandant for the Army War College. She served in a variety of command and staff positions and completed numerous overseas deployments, including a 15-month combat tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as Chief of the Women’s Initiatives Division and Senior Liaison to the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, and received numerous military awards and commendations, including the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart. In her role at Comcast NBCUniversal, Carol serves on the Corporate Advisory Board for West Chester University, and the Boards of Directors for the Philly POPS and PsychArmor. Her leadership in the private sector has been recognized by We are the Mighty, who recognized her as one of the top 25 Influencers supporting the Military Community in 2018, by HillVets, who placed her on their 2017 list of the 100 most influential veterans in America, and by the Philadelphia Business Journal, who named her one of their 2016 Veterans of Influence. Carol holds Master’s degrees in instructional design and strategic international studies and recently earned her doctoral degree in organizational leadership.

Laurel Farrer

Brain Drain, Brain Gain & Our Sustainable Future: Boosting Employment Options for Veterans and Military Spouses

With a background in virtual Operations Management, Laurel Farrer is the CEO of Distribute Consulting and founder of the Remote Work Association. As a global thought leader on the topic of remote work, she collaborates with the world’s top remote-friendly companies to strengthen virtual communication, streamline digital processes, and develop long-distance management strategies. Additionally, she writes about remote work for Forbes, is a subject matter expert for business education curriculum, and advises
international governments, educational institutions, and industry associations on how to share remote work resources with their audiences to fuel socio-economic progress.

Prescott Farris*

Soldier for Life

Colonel Prescott Farris was commissioned as an ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate through the University of Rochester ROTC program in 1994. COL Farris has served in command and staff positions within the United States and overseas including combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan culminating as the commander for Task Force ODIN during Operation Resolute Support. COL Farris' last assignment was Commander, the Army Aviation Brigade, Military District of Washington. He assumed duties as the Director, Soldier for Life in September 2018. COL Farris' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with three Campaign Stars, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War on Terror Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, National Intelligence Meritorious Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Citation, Air Assault Badge, Parachutist Badge, Master Aviator Badge, and the Army Staff Identification Badge. COL Farris holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Economics and a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science from the University of Rochester, Rochester, NY, and a Masters of Arts in Leadership and Management from Webster University. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College, the United States Army War College, the Military Intelligence Officer Career Course, and the Aviation Officer Basic Course. COL Farris and his wife, Jennifer, have been married for 24 years and have two sons; Prescott and Robert.

Kayla Flaten

Disability Accessibility is Just an App Away

Kayla Flaten has been a Technical Specialist for Microsoft for the past two years and she covers the Federal Government customers. She specializes in Windows and Office 365 with a focus on the accessible technology that is built in to the products. She has a passion for educating others about the accessibility features that Microsoft has to offer to not only assist those who require accessible technology, but also to help improve each individual’s productivity.

Rebecca Flemming*

Promising Practices: Michigan

Rebecca Flemming is a United States Marine Corps Veteran, and an employment services manager for the State of Michigan. She is also an author, speaker, and leader in her community. She lives in Detroit, Michigan. Rebecca holds a doctorate degree in Adult Education. She is married and has six sons.
Dr. Keita Franklin

Seeing the Signs – What You Can & Should Do to Help Prevent Suicide

Dr. Keita M. Franklin is Psych Hub’s, Chief Clinical Officer. In this capacity, she serves as a key member of the executive team overseeing the development and production of all clinical content for Psych Hub’s ever-expanding repository of educational videos and informational materials. A nationally-recognized expert, Dr. Franklin, ensures all clinical content is on the cutting edge of the intersection between health care and information technology. Key to Psych Hub’s goal of revolutionizing how mental health care education and training is delivered, Dr. Franklin leads the esteemed Psych Hub, clinical team, ensuring all Psych Hub products are evidence-based and trauma-informed. With over 25 years of progressively responsible experience, Dr. Franklin is spearheading efforts to improve mental health literacy across the Nation by championing the development of specialized evidence-based training for providers thereby improving mental health care outcomes for at-risk population groups. A public health expert and transformational leader, Dr. Franklin has spent her career driving complex organizational change in the federal sector, always improving the systems that provide care for our Nation’s military, family members, and veteran populations. Before joining Psych Hub, Dr. Franklin served as a senior executive at both the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Department of Defense. In these roles, Dr. Franklin served as the principal advisor to Department leadership for all matters on suicide prevention, and she is widely credited with leading a transformative, enterprise-wide shift from a crisis intervention posture to an upstream, broad public policy approach focused on continuous surveillance and early prevention. Dr. Franklin was also responsible for leading a multi-disciplined team of experts in advancing evidence-based prevention practices for over 20 million Veterans and reaching our Nation’s heroes wherever they live, work, thrive, and receive care. A poised and articulate communicator of strategic messaging, Dr. Franklin has been frequently asked to testify before committees in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate and led numerous caucus roundtable discussions with members of Congress. While serving as a senior executive within the Department of Defense, Dr. Franklin was responsible for suicide prevention policy, programs, and oversight. During her tenure, she conducted a first-of-its-kind comprehensive, program review and authored new DoD policy directives and instructions, optimizing higher headquarters guidance for all military service branches. She also chaired several DoD senior leader committees charged with developing solutions for vexing mental health issues impacting our service members and their families. Adept at building partnerships and coalitions, Dr. Franklin was singularly responsible for bolstering relationships with both the private and public sector in the advancement of key suicide prevention initiatives. An experienced manager of large programs, she proved critical during congressional-level advocacy for budget and programming activities while simultaneously directing a multi-million dollar research and evaluation program. Her efforts resulted in high-quality service delivery for active duty, reserve, and National Guard members and their families. Dr. Franklin is a licensed social worker with a specialization in children and families. She earned a Ph.D. in social work with specialized training and certifications from the Center for Advancement of Research Methods and Analysis (CARMA). Dr. Franklin began her career in child welfare and has dedicated much of her work to researching the impact of wartime trauma and post-traumatic stress on families. She serves on several national panels, including the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. Dr. Franklin has received numerous federal and civilian awards for her efforts leading military, family, mental health, and suicide prevention programs. Dr. Franklin has published work in the areas of military social work, child abuse, domestic violence, suicide prevention, and substance abuse. She and has served as an adjunct professor in the graduate programs at Virginia Commonwealth University and George Mason University. Dr. Franklin holds certificates from Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education on “Leading Large
Organizational Change” and Women in Leadership” as well as the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Kenan-Flagler Business School course on “Executive Leadership.”

Bob Gear*

*Warm Handoffs: Connecting Transitioning Service Members with an American Job Center*

Bob Gear is the Director of the Texas Workforce Commission’s Veterans Leadership Program, a network that connects returning Veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with resources and tools to transition to civilian life. Bob served in the United States Army for over 20 years, including a tour of duty in Desert Shield/Desert Storm and two tours of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bob is a member of the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee.

Harvey Godwin Jr.

*American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Promising Practices*

Harvey Godwin Jr. became the Tribal Chairman of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina in January 2016, and was recently reelected to a second three-year term. During his leadership, the tribe partnered with the US Department of Labor and the North Carolina Department of Commerce to provide a native Disabled Outreach Veteran Program staff for the tribe to provide services for tribal members who served in the US armed forces.

Sheretha Gordon*

*Veteran Entrepreneurs Panel*

Ms. Sheretha Gordon is the owner of Strategic Steps Consulting, LLC a management consulting firm; that specialize in business strategy, operations, organizational management, and corporate training. She has over 19 year’s administration and business development, strategic planning, entrepreneur/CEO mentorship and consulting experience within private, public and nonprofit sectors. Customers have included: entrepreneurial, small to mid-size businesses, primarily in the Mid-Atlantic area of Virginia, D. C.; as well as, internationally in Japan. In January of 2019, Sheretha joined the Veteran Business Outreach Center (VBOC) at Old Dominion University Research Foundation (ODURF), Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, as a Senior Business Counselor. The VBOC is a U. S. Small Business Administration funded grant program awarded to ODURF in Norfolk, VA; where she served veteran entrepreneurs and small business clients in the Hampton Roads and Mid-Atlantic region to grow their small businesses thru economic development, business advising and/or mentoring, she also delivers business training for veteran-owned start-ups, military spouses and existing veteran owned small businesses; in all areas of the business cycle, no matter the industry, to include nonprofits and franchising. Sheretha served 16 years on active duty in the United State Air National Guard and United States Navy until her retirement in July 2001. She joined the military in 1989 and worked as a Communication System Operator, Aviation Ordinanceman, and Legalman. Sheretha holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from University of Maryland and a Master of Law in Business from Regent University Law School. She is a native of Montgomery, Alabama and currently resides in Charleston, South Carolina. She enjoys helping
entrepreneurs and small businesses be successful in understanding the strategic foundation of business ownership and management.

Robyn Grable*
*Focus on Skills for Success*

Robyn Grable is the chief executive officer of Veterans ASCEND, which she founded in 2018 to bring veterans and employers together, improving corporate bottom lines as well as the lives of America’s service heroes and their families. Her unwavering commitment to veteran employment is well-served by her corporate and military experience, including more than 30 years of private sector human resources after a decade of service in the U.S. Navy. Her ongoing study of America’s veteran workforce have made her a leading voice on the barriers and keys to success for their employment. She is a seasoned speaker and media resource, earning respect and praise from her peers. Today she is focused entirely on ensuring veterans are recognized for their skills, valued for their talent and that America’s employers realize the full value and skills of America’s heroes, poised in the civilian workforce to truly ascend.

Florent “Flo” Groberg*
*Keynote Speaker*

Florent “Flo” Groberg shares stories of bravery and leadership from combat that inspire audiences to see the opportunity in challenging environments and to find the strength to complete any mission. On August 8, 2012, Florent was on his second deployment to Afghanistan when he made a split-second decision that prevented greater catastrophe and changed his life forever. His selfless display of courage in tackling a suicide bomber while protecting a command team on that fateful day earned him the Medal of Honor, and the distinction as the 10th living American to receive the nation’s top award for valor in combat since the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Today, as director of veteran’s outreach at Boeing and LinkedIn’s veteran’s program spokesperson, he is a powerful and prominent advocate for veterans’ issues. Florent’s new book, “8 Seconds of Courage,” reveals lessons he learned on leadership, teamwork and overcoming adversity on the battlefield, and their direct application and connection to executives, managers and business situations. Armed with indispensable takeaways on overcoming adversity and powerful insight on dynamic leadership, teamwork and sacrifice, Florent reveals how the people and experiences throughout his life influenced his heroism. With gratitude, gallantry and reverence, he inspires audiences to go above and beyond the call of duty, find the positive in the negative, and summon their absolute best in the most adverse conditions.

Patrick Groome*
*Veteran Jobs Mission*

Patrick Groome has been on JP Morgan Chase’s Military & Veteran Recruiting team for three years, advancing quickly from Recruiter to Recruiting Manager. In his current role, Patrick supports the JP Morgan Chase firm wide effort to expand the diverse military, veteran and spouse talent pipeline for all five lines of business. He has a focused priority of building the National Banker and Operations talent pipeline with in the largest line of business Consumer & Community banking.
Patrick also Co-Chairs the Phoenix VETS (Voices for Employees that Served) Business Resource Group. Prior to joining JPMorgan Chase, Patrick was in the Army for 26 years. During this time he spent 6 years as an Airborne Infantryman, then 20 years in the Army’s Recruiting Command where he served in many roles. Patrick’s awards and decorations include the Combat Infantry Badge, 3 Meritorious Service Medals, 6 Army Commendation Medals, and Overseas Service Ribbon. Patrick is a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and now resides in Surprise, Arizona with his wife Gina, 2 daughters, April and Brittany, and 2 grandsons, Ethan and Jaedyn.

Elizabeth Guevara
How Virtual Engagement is Changing the Landscape of Veteran Recruitment

Elizabeth Guevara is the Project Opportunity Lead at Nestlé. She leads and builds program strategy for military employment and retention within Nestlé and steers the Project Opportunity Alliance. Project Opportunity is an initiative led by Nestlé in the US. It is intended to address unemployment gaps through skill-building and training, with a primary focus on supporting military and military spouses. As part of this initiative, Nestlé has launched the Project Opportunity Alliance to further the impact on the military community by partnering with other like-minded organizations. We are committed to joining forces to create meaningful solutions to address workforce needs in the US. Elizabeth has a successful 20+ year career in Talent Management spanning Fortune 500 companies, mid-sized businesses, and start-ups. A native of the Washington, D.C. area, she earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Industrial & Labor Relations at Cornell University. In her free time, she is an active volunteer and former board member of several professional organizations, as well as a class officer for Cornell University and Connelly School of the Holy Child. She loves to travel, create art, experience other cultures, learn about history, and enjoy new cuisines.

Chip L. Hawkins*
An Employer’s Perspective

Chip Hawkins retired as a Senior Chief Petty Officer from the United States Navy in 2003 after serving 24 years of active duty. 18 of those years was spent working in the Navy’s elite Career Recruiting Force, leading and managing over 185 offices, 1,300 Navy recruiting personnel, spanning the entire Eastern US, Caribbean and Europe. He also brings over 20 years’ experience in both Talent Acquisition and Business Development supporting both Federal and Commercial spaces. Chip also was a Principle of a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business, operating as a Recruit Process Outsource/Staffing Agency supporting several GSA TASK ORDERS for Afghanistan-Africa. Having previously worked with McKesson and other large-scale retail, health and insurance companies, Chip joined Aetna’s Military and Veteran Recruiting team back in September 2015, and was responsible for leading all veteran recruitment strategies, external partnerships, veteran outreach sourcing and hiring stakeholder relationships to support Aetna’s robust veteran and military spouse hiring initiatives. In 2018, Chip became Aetna’s first ever diversity and military talent team lead, being responsible for the development and execution of complex recruiting strategies to ensure a best in class hiring program. In 2019, CVS Health acquired Aetna, and now Chip has taken on a new role as their Military Program Manager for the now combined Enterprise of nearly 300,000 colleagues. CVS Health is ranked as #8 on the Fortune 500 list for 2019. Chip graduated in 2004 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management/Marketing at University of North Florida, Jacksonville, FL., and currently works and resides in Orlando, FL.
Mininia Hawkins

*Brain Drain, Brain Gain & Our Sustainable Future: Boosting Employment Options for Veterans and Military Spouses*

Mininia Hawkins is a Program Analyst in the Department of Defense, Military Community Support Programs within the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. She manages the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program with specific emphasis on career readiness and spouse employment and oversees the Military Spouse Employment Partnership. She also coordinates events and develops awareness by educating military spouses and other stakeholders of the SECO program. Mrs. Hawkins entered the federal government as a Presidential Management Fellow and previously worked in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), Washington Headquarters Service, and other DoD offices. Mrs. Hawkins is the wife of a retired Airman and they have two daughters.

Todd Karch

*Veteran Jobs Mission*

Todd Karch, born in Mendota, IL and raised in St. Nazianz, WI. In 1994 he joined the United States Army and worked as an Aviation Crew Mechanic for six years. Soon after joining the Army he met his wife (Aileen) in 1995, then had two beautiful daughters, Alexandra and Lea. In 2001 he transitioned into recruiting and was stationed in Barberton, OH for three years. In 2003 Todd decided that Career Recruiting was his new passion and made the commitment to stay in the field for the remainder of his career. In 2016 he made another career decision to retire as a First Sergeant after serving for over 22 years. In October of 2016 he was offered a Staffing Manager position with Amazon and is currently a North America Regional Leader.

Kristy Kaufmann

*Navigating Resources: PATRIOTLink*

Kristina (Kristy) Kaufmann is the Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of the Code of Support Foundation. Kaufmann has served as an advocate for military and veteran families for over 18 years and is a subject matter expert regarding the mental health impacts of war on military families. In her role as the CEO of the Code of Support Foundation, she combines her first-hand experience as a wartime Army wife with her knowledge of research, programs and organizational strategies to raise awareness inform policies and facilitate collective effort necessary to meet the needs of the military/veteran families. Her publications and media appearances include The Washington Post, New York Times, NPR, CNN, and major network broadcast channels. Kaufmann is a leader in the cross-sector collaboration drive to facilitate the public-private partnerships necessary to meet the needs of the veteran space. She was a 2017 Presidio Institute Fellow and a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley.
Robin Kelleher
Serving Military Caregivers

Robin Kelleher currently serves as President and CEO of Hope For The Warriors®, the organization she co-founded in 2006. Robin’s entrepreneurship, leadership, and passion has led this highly successful once grassroots effort to national heights, raising over $53M and significantly impacting the wounded and fallen military communities. Robin is responsible for developing and implementing the strategic direction of the organization, providing budgetary and mission-focused guidance to the growing staff of Hope For The Warriors®. She works directly with the Board of Directors and plays a key role in developing the board, ensuring the future of the organization. She maintains complete oversight of all operations. Robin is a member of the Washington Board of Trade and serves on their Membership Committee and Health & Wellness Solution Group. She also sits on the Forbes Executive Nonprofit Council, the Military Family and Veterans Service Organizations of America (MFVSOA) Board of Directors, the Virginia Chamber’s Military & Veterans Affairs Executive Committee, and the Advisory Council of Blue Star Families. Robin has worked extensively with military families, caring for family units during multiple deployments as the wife of a Marine. Additionally, her experiences as the daughter and granddaughter of United States Soldiers (dating back to World War II) have given her a unique insight into the needs of service members and their families. Previously, Robin founded and operated two successful for-profit businesses and one nonprofit organization. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Business and Economics from Randolph Macon College and Certificate in Executive Leadership from Duke University. Robin resides in Northern Virginia with her family.

Christopher Key
American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Addressing the Challenge; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Becoming Culturally Competent

Christopher Key is a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe. He is an advocate and consultant for Native American communities, supporting their efforts in economic and workforce development, education program development, and healthcare, while creating greater visibility and opportunities for Native American Military service members and veterans. He is Executive Director of True North and resides in Arizona and California. He is a graduate of Northern Arizona University and UCLA and has spent much of his professional career in STEM.

Roy Kyles
What’s New at NVTI?

Roy Kyles primarily serves as the program manager for the National Veterans’ Training Institution (NVTI), a DOL VETS program. In this role, he manages the client relationship with DOL, stakeholders, and all program vendors while overseeing the program scope, schedules, and budget. His past roles have included training center management, business development, sales, and marketing. Roy holds a BS in Marketing and Public Relations from New York University. In his free time, he enjoys reading, cooking, traveling and enjoying quality time with his family.
Tammi Leclerc
Promising Practices: Washington

Tammi Leclerc is the Employee Engagement Specialist for Washington State’s Employment Security Department. Tammi has been a cornerstone to the development, implementation and reporting around the Professional Pathways program. Tammi personally and professionally understands the needs of our veterans and their families as she is the daughter of a retired Naval veteran and a proud blue star mom of a currently serving Daughter (CTR2).

Nona Mallicoat*
Promising Practices: Washington

Nona H. Mallicoat currently serves as the Strategic Operations Manager for the Employment Connections Division of the Washington State Employment Security Department. Prior to that, she held a myriad of roles (Director of Programs; WorkSource (AJC) Administrator in both urban and rural settings; Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Employment and Training workshop facilitator) within the state workforce agency. Before working for the state, she managed a professional archery sporting goods store and shooting range that she purchased after leaving the military. A 10+ year Marine Corps Veteran, her passion is working with and supporting Veterans, which she does through her volunteer work with the international Young Marines program (www.youngmarines.com). She is also a mother to a teenage boy, so when not working she can usually be found at a wrestling tournament, archery competition, football game, or long distance race cheering him on.

Chelsea Mandello*
Veteran Entrepreneurs Panel

Chelsea Mandello, a U.S. Navy veteran, is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Troopster, a military care package charity that helps communities, friends and families send personalized quality deployment packages to the 1.3M service members around the world. In 2011, after receiving her Bachelor of Science degree from Ball State University, Chelsea joined the United States Navy as a Photojournalist, where she traveled the world to provide media support and witnessed the accomplishments, capabilities, and needs of the Armed Forces. It was during her experiences with the military, serving across 13 countries and nine naval platforms, that she was inspired to establish Troopster. Her impacts include: • Affiliate and Sponsor Partnerships with: Microsoft, Jersey Mike’s Subs, Chris Gronkowski - Gronk Ice Shaker Bottle, Tijuana Flats, Chick Fil-A, Jody’s Popcorn, iFly Virginia, ONE Nation Coffee • Supported more than 6,000 deployed U.S. soldiers with Troopster kits • 400 + Volunteers who participate and work with Troopster to support those deployed. Chelsea has been recognized for multiple achievement awards, including the Small Business Administration (SBA) Person of the Year (2018), Microsoft Empower Possibility Winner in which Microsoft donated $10K in equipment and a $10K grant toward Troopster’s efforts, Inside Business Entrepreneurial Excellence Award, Coastal Virginia Giving Back Award and Coastal Virginia Business Innovator of the Year. Also, Troopster has been given multiple five-star accolades by users and recipients as an "Amazing" service that supports all aspects of the military and their families.
**Monique Martin**

*Promising Practices: Washington; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Promising Practices*

Since November, 2018, Monique Martin has served as Washington State Employment Security Department’s (ESD) State Wide Veteran Program Coordinator. Monique started with ESD in 2011 as a Labor Exchange Specialist in Vancouver, Washington. In 2013 she became a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist and was selected as DVOP of the Year in 2016. In 2017 she became a Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and selected LVER of the Year for 2017. Monique retired from the Army as a Master Sergeant after 26 years in the Army and Army Reserves. She served in Germany as a Signal Intelligence Operator, and stateside as a Drill Sergeant, Instructor, Recruiter, and as Acting Sergeant Major, Personnel & Information Management, 104th Div (IT). Monique earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Personnel Psychology and Human Resources Management from Washington State University in 2008. Monique is a member of the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee.

**Jim McDonough**

*Promising Practices: New York*

Colonel (U.S. Army, Retired) James D. McDonough, Jr. was appointed Director of the New York State Division of Veterans’ Services on April 4th, 2019. Prior to becoming Director, Colonel (U.S. Army, Retired) McDonough served as Managing Director, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University, where he was responsible for the global deployment of the Institute’s widely recognized programs and services. Jim also served as Chief Executive Officer for Veterans Outreach Center in Rochester, New York, where he led the nation’s oldest continuing serving nonprofit dedicated to the needs of military connected individuals and families. Following his active duty retirement, Colonel (U.S. Army, Retired) McDonough initially served as Director of the New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs, followed by a senior fellowship within the New York State Health Foundation, where he managed the Foundation’s veterans’ initiatives and grantmaking. Jim was commissioned an Air Defense Artillery Officer upon graduation from Officer Candidate School, Class 1-82 on March 11, 1982. Following graduation, he attended the Air Defense Artillery Officer Basic Course, Improved Hawk Weapons Course and the Air Defense Command and Control Course at Fort Bliss, Texas. He is a graduate of the Army’s Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. His first assignment was as Platoon Leader, Battery C, 1st Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Fulda, Germany. Following a stint as Brigade Electronic Counter-Counter Measures Training Officer, 10th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Darmstadt, Germany, he returned to Fort Bliss, Texas, to attend the Air Defense Artillery Officer Advance Course and PATRIOT Weapons Course. Upon graduation he returned to Germany and assumed command of Battery A, 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery, Giessen, Germany, where he commanded for twenty-nine months. Following command, he was selected to participate in the Army’s Advanced Civil Schooling Program at Indiana State University where he earned an M.A. in Communications. Following graduate school, he was assigned as Strategic Planner in the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs and then Speechwriter to then Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Togo D. West. From 1995-1996 he served as Battalion Operations and later, Executive Officer, for 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Suwon, Republic of Korea. Following Korea, he reported to the Joint Staff, Operations Directorate, for three years. COL McDonough was selected to command the 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Fort Bliss, Texas, where he commanded.
from 1999-2001. In 2001 he was selected to attend the United States Army War College, Centennial Class, and Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Following the Army War College, he was assigned to the United States Military Academy, West Point, as Professor of Outreach, the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic. In 2003 Jim deployed as G3, Current Operations Officer, 32d Army Air and Missile Defense Command, Camp Doha, Kuwait, for OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. Colonel (Retired) McDonough was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Legion of Merit Medal (w/1OLC), Defense Meritorious Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (w/2OLC), Joint Staff Commendation Medal (w/1OLC), Army Commendation Medal (w/5OLC), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Army Service Medal, and Overseas Service Ribbon (w/2OLC). During his service he wore the Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge, the Army Staff Identification Badge, and Parachutist Badge.

Suzie Mills*

*Veteran Entrepreneurs Panel*

Suzie Mills is the Founder of Honest Soul Yoga a company launched from Suzie’s basement and now an enterprise of studios in Northern Virginia poised to enter new markets. Suzie’s desire to launch HSY and share a message of women’s empowerment came from time in the US Air Force and serving in Afghanistan. Recognized as a Founder that gives back Suzie remains connected to her female-veteran roots through studio-driven programs that support women’s issues, needs of military families, and veterans. In addition to expanding HSY, Suzie’s best role is Mom to two kids raising them in Alexandria, VA.

Sam Mitchell*

*Promising Practices: Washington; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Promising Practices*

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

Madison Moore serves as the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, where she works closely with the President & CEO and the Executive Director on the implementation and stewardship of all corporate and foundation partnership initiatives. Prior to joining the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Madison was a Branding Associate at Vertana Group in New York, NY, where she managed promotional efforts for six eCommerce brands. She has also previously worked with a children’s education nonprofit in Brussels, Belgium. A native of the Boston area, Madison graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from St. Lawrence University in 2015 with a degree in Government.

Juanita Mullen*
American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Addressing the Challenge; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Becoming Culturally Competent

Juanita Mullen is a member of the Seneca Nation of Indians (Keeper of the Western Door), Cattaraugus Indian Reservation located in western New York. She currently works for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, D.C., as the American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans Liaison within the Center for Minority Veterans and has worked in this position for the last 14 years serving both our Native Veterans and all other Veterans. Juanita retired from the Air Force after 20 years of service in the year 2000. Half of her career was spent serving under Headquarters U.S. Air Forces Europe. She has received numerous medals to include; the Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, NATO Medal, and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. Upon retirement, she was hired by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C. She worked as a Self Determination Specialist in Contracts & Grants with the Eastern Regional Office, Education Specialist with the South-Eastern States Agency (SESA), and as an Administrative Officer for Budget Management at the Department of Interior. Juanita has a Master of Science Degree in Administration from Central Michigan University, Michigan, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management from University of Maryland University College, Maryland, and an Associates Degree in Transportation from the Community College of the Air Force, Alabama. She is a graduate of Leadership VA for 2011. She enjoys reading American Indian History, guest speaking, art collecting, book collecting, loves animals, the wildlife, and the outdoors. She is a lifetime member of SAIGE.

Elizabeth O'Brien^*Serving Military Caregivers

Elizabeth O'Brien is the senior director of the Military Spouse Program at Hiring Our Heroes. Hiring Our Heroes is an initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. In her role, O'Brien advocates for meaningful employment opportunities for the more than one million members of the military spouse community. She oversees the Military Spouse Program's strategic and hiring events as well as the Military Spouse Employment Advisory Council, comprised of national companies committed to hiring military spouses and creating best practices in military spouse employment. At the grassroots level, O'Brien's program includes a nationwide network of Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zones as well as the Hiring Our Heroes' Military Spouse Professional Network, which establishes community strategies to support 50+
networking chapters for military spouses on U.S. military installations around the world.

Karen Pence
Opening Ceremonies

Karen Pence, wife of Vice President Mike Pence, is a mother, educator, and award-winning watercolor artist. As Second Lady of the United States, Mrs. Pence works to bring attention to art therapy and to the sacrifices made by military service members and their families. Mrs. Pence dedicated 25 years in the classroom as an elementary school teacher before becoming the First Lady of Indiana in 2013. In her role as First Lady of Indiana, Mrs. Pence created the Indiana First Lady’s Charitable Foundation, a 501 (c) 3, established with the purpose to encourage and support youth and families of Indiana. The Foundation’s board awarded over $600,000 in grants to charities throughout Indiana in three years. As Second Lady of the United States, Mrs. Pence is committed to raising awareness and educating the public about the mental health profession of art therapy in the United States and around the world. She has observed art therapy programs in Canada, Japan, Germany, Belgium, Indonesia, Australia, South Korea, and across the United States. Mrs. Pence is the honorary chair of the Art Therapy Initiative at Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health in Indianapolis and is a member of Riley Children’s Foundation. She also serves as a board member for Tracy’s Kids, an art therapy program for young cancer patients. In February 2017, Tracy’s Kids honored Mrs. Pence with the Courage Award for her support of art therapy programs across the United States and world. Children’s National Health System also recognized Mrs. Pence for her support of art therapy and presented the Second Lady with the Hero Award in February 2017. In March 2017, Mrs. Pence received the Sister Cities International Diplomatic Leadership Award for her exceptional support of Sister Cities International mission: to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation—one individual, one community at a time. Mrs. Pence also serves as an encourager to military service members and their families. She has hosted and participated in numerous events to honor and recognize of all those in the Armed Forces. In September 2018, Mrs. Pence launched an awareness campaign to elevate and encourage our nation’s military spouses. As part of the campaign, Mrs. Pence educates military spouses about the available resources and opportunities to support spouses and their families. Mrs. Pence earned a B.S. and M.S. in Elementary Education from Butler University in Indianapolis. She is a Blue Star mom with a son in the United States Marine Corps. Mrs. Pence and Vice President Mike Pence have been married since 1985 and are proud parents of their adult children, Michael and his wife Sarah, and daughters Charlotte and Audrey.

Christopher Pilkerton
Small Business Administration

Chris Pilkerton serves as the Acting Administrator and General Counsel of the U.S. Small Business Administration. As leader of the SBA, he is an advocate for America’s 30 million small businesses and works to connect entrepreneurs to the resources they need to start, grow and expand businesses of their own. Prior to his time with the SBA, Pilkerton was a compliance director at JP Morgan Chase, helping businesses manage risk and regulatory change. He began his legal career as a prosecutor in New York and later investigated cases related to insider trading and accounting fraud at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. He has also worked in private practice and taught public policy at Catholic University’s law school.
Michael Quinn*
*Leveraging LinkedIn for Veterans, Military Spouses & Business Engagement; How Virtual Engagement is Changing the Landscape of Veteran Recruitment*

A prominent voice on the military to civilian transition, Sergeant Major (Ret.) Michael Quinn led our Nation’s Soldiers for more than 24 years and has an incredible passion for giving back to the Veteran community. While planning for his own retirement from the U.S. Army in 2017, Michael immediately recognized the challenges returning Veterans face in finding meaningful careers and resolved to make a difference. Through interaction with industry leaders, educational posts on LinkedIn, teaching workshops on military installations, personal mentoring and advising the Army on the transition assistance program, Michael has positively impacted the lives of over 100,000 Veterans. In his last military assignment at the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM), Michael managed the operations, training, and professional development of more than 17,000 personnel in 45 countries. Along with tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, the Philippines and Korea, Michael served as Director of Security for the White House Communications Agency and as the Army Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Defense Intelligence Agency. Michael resides in Northern Virginia and is excited to be a member of the EY team as a Senior Manager in Advisory Services for the Government and Public Sector. He is also the Founder and CEO of HireMilitary.us, a web-based platform that connects transitioning service members and employers for 4-month internships anywhere in the country.

Shannon Razsadin^*
*Serving Military Caregivers*

Shannon Razsadin is a Navy spouse, mom, and the executive director of the Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN). MFAN is a national nonprofit that convenes leaders and influencers in the military community to achieve its dual mission of understanding the needs of military families, and ensuring military families are aware of the programs and resources designed to serve them. Through her years of distinguished work in partnership development, Shannon has built relationships with community, state, and federal leaders; national nonprofit organizations; and community agencies. Shannon's leadership, authenticity, fresh approach, and focus on collaboration have set MFAN apart as the premiere convener of military families globally. Shannon earned a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from Merrimack College and a Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from the George Washington University. Shannon, her husband, CDR Aleksei Razsadin, USN and their children, Sophia and George, live in Newport, Rhode Island.

Sarah Roberts*
*Leveraging LinkedIn for Veterans, Military Spouses & Business Engagement*

Sarah Roberts has joined LinkedIn as the Head of Veteran and Military Programs. Prior to joining LinkedIn, Sarah led the Talent Acquisition and Operations strategy for Nordstrom retail. Sarah served in a variety of roles supporting the veteran community in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors. She led efforts focused on community building at Team Red, White, and Blue, a national veteran service organization, where she served as the Northwest Regional Director. In her role, Sarah spearheaded business development efforts, designed and executed leadership development programs, and led over 40 community leaders in their mission to
“Enrich veterans lives through physical and social activity.” She built Talent Acquisition and Diversity programs in the tech industry for both Amazon and Microsoft where she led teams focused on recruiting, employment branding, and program management to support the veteran community. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Sarah is passionate about service and efforts to support social impact across the communities she supports.

**Linda Rouse**

*Military Spouses as Assets in the Modern Workforce; Warm Handoffs: Connecting Transitioning Service Members with an American Job Center*

Linda Rouse is a native of San Diego, California. She enlisted in the United States Marine Corps out of high school and honorably served 20 years active duty at various bases in California, Tennessee, and Okinawa, retiring as a E-7/Gunnery Sergeant. In 2006, she joined the Veteran Representative team with Iowa Workforce Development. In 2010, her team in Ottumwa was awarded the Mark Sanders Award for exceptional services to disabled Veterans. Linda is currently serving as a District Manager for Iowa Workforce Development.

**Lewis Runnion**

*An Employer’s Perspective*

Lewis Runnion cofounded Eleven 09, LLC to deliver innovative solutions to American businesses, government agencies and philanthropies helping them develop transformative programs impacting active military, their families and the Nations’ veterans. As Cofounder and Managing Partner, he advises senior executives and organizations on building integrated programs and helps them in navigating complex environments to best apply resources available to gain measurable outcomes. Lewis has a nearly 20 year history in the financial services industry both in private banking and, most recently, public policy. Lewis’ experience includes engagements with national organizations, both for profit and non-profit, as well as local, state and federal governmental entities. As Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Director of Military Affairs at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, he oversaw initiatives that assisted military veterans and their families with needs related to financial services, education, employment and housing. During his career, Lewis has helped to construct workforce development programs that have proven track records of success by adding more than 8,000 veterans to the work force. He has been the lead architect in the allocation and management of tens of millions of dollars of philanthropic partnerships taking close care to align outcome based programs with strong, integrated marketing and communication strategies for the organizations and communities that he serves. Lewis built some of the most recognized post 9/11 veteran programs in America. Lewis and his team were innovators by initiating government/private partnerships, such as the first ever Social Impact Bond (SIB) focused on veteran employment programs. Discovering a need for veteran entrepreneurs to access low cost capital, Lewis helped to build national programs to make tens of millions of capital available through Community Development Funds. Lewis and have built some of the most recognized post 9/11 veteran programs in America. Lewis serves on the board of directors for both America Warrior Partnership and The Infinite Hero Foundation and he was a cofounder of Veterans on Wall Street. His previous board role included Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International, Connecticut Cycling Advancement Program, YMCA Fort Worth, The R4 Alliance, among others. Prior to beginning his financial services career, Lewis served as both an enlisted soldier and commissioned officer in the United States Army, attaining his commission from the Reserve Officer Training Corps.
Following his discharge from active Army, Lewis spent an additional five years in the United States Army Reserve.

**Cherylynn Sagester**

*Veteran Entrepreneurs Panel*

Cherylynn Sagester has over 25 year’s business and economic development, government contracting, strategic planning, networking and innovative coaching and consulting experience within public, private and non-profit sectors. Customers have included: DoD, all branches of U.S. military, Veterans Administration (VA), entrepreneurial, small to mid-size and large businesses, primarily in the Mid-Atlantic area of Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland; as well as the Central Florida area. In March, 2013, she joined the Veteran Business Outreach Center (VBOC) at Old Dominion University Research Foundation (ODURF), Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) as the Director and Senior Business Advisor. The VBOC is a U.S. Small Business Administration funded grant program awarded to Old Dominion University Research Foundation in Norfolk, VA; where she currently, oversees operations of the center and serves veteran entrepreneurs, transitioning active-duty military and small business clients in the Hampton Roads and Mid-Atlantic region; supporting economic development, business advising, mentoring and training for veteran-owned start-ups and existing veteran/military spouse-owned small businesses, to include scale-up; in all areas of the business cycle, as well as advising in the areas of franchising and non-profit. Cherylynn’s academic experience includes a Master’s of Science Degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from Old Dominion University. Cherylynn recently acquired her Certification as a Professional grant writer from the University of Virginia, Darden School of Business. She is also an Adjunct Professor for Tidewater Community College (TCC), Webster University and Barry University, teaching entrepreneurship, business management, finance and marketing courses to both undergraduate and graduate students.

**Scott B. Sanders**

*Opening Ceremonies; Mark Sanders Award; Closing Ceremonies*

Scott B. Sanders is NASWA’s Executive Director. 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 was recently named to 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 degree in finance, management and policy from Northwestern University, and his Bachelor’s in accounting from Miami University. His son served in the US Navy after graduating from the US Naval Academy in 2012.
Laura Schmiegel

Military Spouses as Assets in the Modern Workforce

Laura Schmiegel is Head of Military and Veteran Affairs at Booz Allen Hamilton, where she is responsible for all aspects of the firm’s military partnership strategy and for advising the firm’s military recruiting, diversity and government relations teams. Prior to Booz Allen, Laura had a career in military nonprofits. She was a founding member and later Chairman of the Board at Blue Star Families, she created and directed the military spouse program at Hiring Our Heroes and served as a regional director for The Mission Continues. Her writing has been published in the Washington Post and the Christian Science Monitor. Laura lives in Arlington with her husband Kevin Schmiegel (USMA Ret.) and children.

Tim Shatto

Warm Handoffs: Connecting Transitioning Service Members with an American Job Center

Tim Shatto was selected as the Director, Veterans Employment Services on September 1, 2017. Tim began his career with the Texas Veterans Commission in December 2010 as a Local Veterans Employment Representative in Wichita Falls, TX. In January 2014, Tim was transferred to Austin, TX where he Public Entity Liaison, which focused on the government sector and providing technical assistance to state agencies while implementing Veteran’s Preference. In April 2016, Tim began his duties as the Operations Manager, Veterans Employment Services and responsible for the daily activities of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant. Tim Shatto was born and raised in Orrick, MO and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in September 1981. Tim retired as Sergeant Major in September 2010 after 29 years of honest and faithful service. He is a member of the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee.

Sam Shellenberger

Opening Ceremonies

Sam Shellenberger, a member of the Senior Executive Service, is the Acting Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS). In this role he oversees budget of $300M and over 220 employees who provide oversight for grants and contracts that support employment for veterans and transitioning service members; conduct investigations related to USERRA and Veterans Preference; conduct outreach to employers, and provide administrative and operational support. Mr. Shellenberger has overseen improvements and expansions to the Transition Assistance Program and provided greater support to states in providing individualized career services to Vietnam era veterans. Prior to coming to VETS, Mr. Shellenberger served as the Comptroller for the Department of Labor’s Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs, overseeing the financial and performance aspects of DOL benefit programs for workers who are injured or become ill on the job. Other executive assignments have included Deputy Inspector General for Management and Policy at the US Department of Health and Human Services. Sam is a career public servant. He began as a Surface Warfare Officer in the US Navy where he spent 8 years on active duty aboard 2 combatant ships, and served as a Navy ROTC instructor at Purdue University. He transferred to the Navy Reserve in 1989 and served for 17 years in assignments supporting a number of
US and NATO commands. In 2007 he retired as a Navy Captain (O6) with 25 years of service. Sam holds an MA in Political Science / Public Policy from Purdue University; a BA in Social Science from Colorado State University, and is a graduate of the Navy War College, College of Command and Staff. He and his wife Laurie live in Springfield Virginia and have three adult children. Sam is a volunteer with the Massanutten Ski Patrol and serves on their board of Directors. In addition, he volunteers with the Arlington County Extension Service as a Master Financial Education Volunteer. His hobbies include kayaking, camping, and travel.

**Mike Slater**

*The Voice*

With more than 13 years of Federal service, Mike Slater currently serves as a Strategic Outreach Specialist at the Department of Labor’s Veterans Employment and Training Service. In this position, Mike is responsible for the agency’s legislative affairs, outreach functions, interagency working groups, process improvement, and policy development. Prior to VETS, Mike served in the U.S. Navy for six years as an Operations Specialist aboard the USS Hopper (DDG-70) in Pearl Harbor Hawaii. It would not be a NASWA Veterans Conference without Mike as the announcer! Thanks to USDOL VETS and Mark Toal for allowing Mike to be part of the event again this year.

**Sara Sommarstrom**

*When Legal Issues Get in the Way*

Sara Sommarstrom serves as the Vetlaw Director for the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, working with attorneys and non-lawyers across the state of Minnesota to remove and reduce legal barriers to stability for veterans experiencing homelessness and other life crises. Sara is a past member of the ABA Veterans Legal Services Initiative, past co-chair of the ABA Coordinating Committee on Veterans Benefits and Services, continues to serve as a liaison to the ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty, and is an active member of several state and local bar association committees. Ms. Sommarstrom was honored to receive recognition as a 2014 Unsung Hero from the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans for her work addressing legal barriers to housing and employment stability for homeless veterans.

**Aimee Stoddard**

*Serving Military Caregivers*

Aimee Stoddard is the Military Spouse and Caregiver Careers Manager for Blue Star Families. She started her role with BSF in February 2019 and is honored to be supporting Military spouses and Caregivers in finding meaningful employment in the DC area. Aimee comes to the Careers Program as a Military Spouse who has been committed to serving Military Spouses as a member of Family Readiness Group and serving as a Family Readiness Group Senior Advisor for the last 17 years. Aimee like many other Military Spouses comes with a diversity of career experience ranging from the Cosmetics Industry to Behavioral Health with her most recent positions at Community Connections as a Rehabilitation specialist and then at the Hopewell house as the program manager. Aimee is a graduate of the University of Phoenix with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Human Services with a focus on Addition.
Charlie Terrell

An Employer’s Perspective

Charlie Terrell serves as NASWA’s Director of the National Labor Exchange, where he manages all aspects of this unique public-private partnership with DirectEmployers Association. Charlie is also the staff liaison to the NASWA Technology Committee, and is active in WAPES, the World Association of Public Employment Services. He has held a variety of positions at NASWA including Staff Assistant, Program Assistant, Project Manager and Operations Manager of the National Labor Exchange. Charlie is involved in workforce employment and training programs, workforce technology and NASWA member services. Charlie has also worked for Accenture as a Management Consultant in the State and Local Government practice where he was on the North American Employment Team. A graduate of Grand Valley State University, he earned a Master’s degree in Legislative Affairs from George Washington University.

Michael Thompson

Military Spouses as Assets in the Modern Workforce

Michael Thompson has been in the US Army and Indiana National Guard for over 26 years. He first joined the US Army by serving as an Airborne Ammunition Specialist with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina from 1992 to 1996. In 1996, he came home to Indiana and joined the Indiana National Guard 38th Division Support Command (DISCOM), receiving accommodations and achievements on many of the Divisions training missions. He served from 1996 to 2012 in the 38th Infantry Division DISCOM and Alpha Company 113th Support Battalion, 76th Combat Infantry Brigade. In 2010, Mike decided to pursue his education with benefits earned on active duty and Title 10 activation at Camp Atterbury. He then Graduated from Ivy Tech Community College Columbus in 2012, and Indiana University Purdue University Columbus in 2016 with degrees in business and political science. He has two overseas deployments, the first a military deployment with the 38th Sustainment Brigade to Kuwait in 2012/2013. There he served as the Brigades Ammunition Deputy and Contracting Officer Representative to the Camp Arifjan Ammunition Supply Point. Then in 2018, Mike left to deploy with the 38th Sustainment BDE once again, providing ammunition knowledge and expertise to inspect, advise, and train munition leadership teams at sites in Iraq, Syria, and Qatar forward bases. He returned to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) January 2019. Currently Mike serves as the State Veterans’ Program Director at DWD under the Department of Labor’s Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) and as a Staff Sergeant in the Indiana National Guard. He is attending college at Trine University where he is three classes away from completing a Master’s of Science in Leadership. At home, he is married to his military wife Karen, with one adult child (Kendra) and two teenage children (Seth and Tiffany), and one eleven month old son (Tristan).
Ryan Thompson*
*Opening Ceremonies; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Addressing the Challenge

The Assistant Deputy Director in the Office of Workforce Development for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ryan J. Thompson will be moderating one of the three sessions focused on American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans at this year’s conference, and also leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ryan is a United States Air Force Veteran, and was a member of the Air Force’s elite security force, the Phoenix Ravens. Ryan is an active member of the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee, serving as the group’s technical vice-chair. He also chairs the Conference subcommittee.

Eleanor (Ellie) Thornton*^
*Veteran Entrepreneurs Panel

Eleanor (Ellie) Thornton, M.S., MCHES, AE-C is the President, CEO and founding Principal Consultant of Visionary Consulting Partners, LLC (Visionary), a Woman-owned, Service-Disabled Veteran-owned, and Small Disadvantaged Business headquartered in Fairfax, Virginia. Ms. Thornton provides operational and fiscal direction for the firm’s employees and oversees multiple corporate to client engagements that aim to promote optimum health for all persons, with a special emphasis on socially and medically underserved populations. Since founding Visionary in 2008, Ms. Thornton has significantly increased the company’s revenues through purposeful management and offering relevant consulting services to Federal, State and Local government clients, as well as select academic institutions and non-profit partners. Her leadership has helped Visionary provide essential services and solutions for the National Institutes of Health, US Department of Veterans Affairs, Defense Health Agency, US Agency for International Development, George Washington University, Merck Childhood Asthma Network, and Federally Qualified Health Centers throughout our nation. Ms. Thornton is a United States Air Force Veteran (4.5 years) with more than 40 years of experience in planning, designing, implementing, and managing comprehensive health promotion and behavior interventions, as well as related health policy initiatives. As one of the nation’s first Master Certified Health Education Specialists (MCHES), Ms. Thornton is recognized for her research and co-investigation expertise on behalf of emerging national healthcare priorities including evidence-based practices for asthma care; health education and outreach to our nation’s Service members and Veterans; capacity building between healthcare providers, community-based organizations and public health agencies; and implementation research. Her extensive work has been cited in peer-reviewed journals as well as various media outlets, including The New York Times and The Washington Post. Ms. Thornton also provides advice, services, and support to numerous councils and boards. She currently serves as an advisory board member of the Transdisciplinary Collaborative Center for Health Disparities Research Health Information Technology Policy of the Morehouse School of Medicine where she provides insight for enhancing the academic and community partnership by leveraging Health Information Technology. She served on the Prevent Cancer Foundation’s Corporate Executive Council, which was comprised of a select group of business leaders who worked to expand awareness of the Prevent Cancer Foundation and its life saving messages of cancer prevention and early detection. Ms. Thornton was also avidly involved in promoting the Small Business Administration’s Women-owned Small Business program through a collaboration between Heinz College School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University and the Small Business Administration’s Office of Women’s Business Ownership and
the National Women’s Business Council, where she served as an advisory board member on a student-led research project focused on understanding the current ecosystem of support within the Women’s Business Center and developing a comprehensive framework that can guide future decision-making. In addition to Ms. Thornton’s notable contributions, she was the recipient of the 2018 Top 100 Minority Business Enterprise Award from the Capitol Region Minority Supplier Development Council and the 2017 Humanitarian and Outstanding Asthma Community Service Award by the Association of Asthma Educators. These acknowledgements honor Ms. Thornton’s achievements as an entrepreneur and her longstanding commitment to improving asthma outcomes across the nation. Ms. Thornton holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Respiratory Therapy from Georgia State University, and a Master of Science in Health Promotion Management from Marymount University in Virginia.

Michael (Mike) Thornton*
*Veteran Entrepreneurs Panel

Michael (Mike) D. Thornton, Sr., M.S., PMP®, CPHIMS, FHIMSS is the Chief Operating Officer and Co-Owner of Visionary Consulting Partners, LLC (Visionary). He is a retired military career officer and private sector corporate executive with over 40 years of experience. Mr. Thornton effectively balances his breadth of experience and deep, operational knowledge with the ability to strategically manage and translate Visionary’s mission and vision into demonstrated accomplishments. Mr. Thornton is also the Principal Consultant offering information technology, program management, and organizational development services. His extensive practice with information technology activities includes applications development, systems and network integration, innovation diffusion, marketing, customer support, and personnel management. Mr. Thornton oversees all consulting support for contracts related to information technology and project management. His consultancies include the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense (DoD), and affiliates of the Healthcare Information Management and Systems Society. Mr. Thornton’s remarkable skills and experiences have enabled him to successfully lead and participate in the process of realizing organizational missions, visions, and strategies. While employed by Axiom Resource Management, Inc. as Program Manager/Vice-President, he built the DoD Military Health System Healthcare Requirements and Informatics Strategic Business Unit to provide oversight of contracts supporting the Defense Health Information Management System Office (DHIMS) and Defense Health Services System Office (DHSS). When assigned to the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General and in support of the agency’s medical technology mission, Mr. Thornton led a team of information technology professionals to develop and implement short and long-term information technology plans that included infrastructure renovation, operating system overhaul, applications replacement, and end-to-end training to provide critical support for the Air Force medical information technology mission. Mr. Thornton is well recognized in both profit and not-for-profit communities for his knowledge and understanding of organizational operations. He has many professional affiliations and has made notable contributions to organizations that include the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved, National Military Family Association, Project Management Institute, National Contract Management Association, Small Business Association for International Companies, Morehouse School of Medicine Transdisciplinary Collaborative Center for Health Disparities Research, Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated. Mr. Thornton holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Care Administration and Planning/Business Administration from Tennessee State University/Meharry Medical College and a Master of Science degree in Administration from Central Michigan University.
Elliott Tommingo*
Opening Ceremonies

Elliott J. Tommingo is the Director of the D.C. Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs (MOVA) and currently serves as a Major in the US Marine Corps Reserves. In 2006, Elliot enlisted in the USMC Reserves while attending Iowa State University and was assigned to Echo Co, 2nd Bn, 24th Marines as an 0311 Rifleman. Upon graduating ISU in 2009 with a BA in Political Science, LCpl Tommingo was commissioned as a 2ndLt and began active duty service. After graduating The Basic School and Communications Officer Course in Quantico, Virginia, 2ndLt Tommingo was stationed throughout US Pacific Command from 2010 – 2013 serving in Japan, Republic of Korea and The Philippines. He supported multiple humanitarian missions and assisted the ROK and Filipino militaries with defensive operations. From 2013 – 2016 Capt. Tommingo was stationed in the National Capital Region with Marine Corps Combat Development Command as a Requirements Officer overseeing the USMC software programs. Capt Tommingo left active duty service in July 2016 and returned to the USMC Reserves as the Communications Officer for Marine Wing Support Squadron 472 out of Ft Dix, NJ. In Jan 2019, he was promoted to the rank of Major and appointed Director for MOVA serving the 30,000 veterans within the District’s borders.

Dr. Hannah Toney
Navigating the New NVTI

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

Beth Townsend*
Master of Ceremonies

Director Beth Townsend has general supervision over the various services IWD provides to Iowans. The Director prepares, administers, and controls the budget of the agency and its divisions along with Rod Roberts, Commissioner of the Division of Labor and Joseph S. Cortese, II, Commissioner of the Division of Workers’ Compensation. Director Townsend was appointed by Governor Branstad and confirmed by Iowa Senate unanimously on March 24, 2015. Director Townsend previously served as the Director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Director Townsend served in the Air Force Reserve and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after 21 years of active and reserve duty.
Damion Trasada
Serving Military Caregivers

Damion Trasada is the Regional Director of Wounded Warrior Project’s Warriors to Work Program which provides veterans and family members with employment counseling and placement services. Damion has been involved in practical and policy initiatives around workforce development, education, and community engagement for over twenty years. Prior to joining Wounded Warrior Project, Damion worked for the Governor of Missouri as a legislative liaison and federal program manager in the Department of Social Services, Deputy Director of the state’s Housing Development Commission, and Deputy Director of State Boards and Commissions. While a student at Temple University, he co-founded a staffing agency that assisted a variety of populations, including veterans, with finding stable employment. He currently resides in Maryland.

Jennifer Vercellone
Military Spouses as Assets in the Modern Workforce

Jennifer Vercellone is vice president, corporate counsel for Prudential Financial’s technology and contracts law group. She focuses on a variety of corporate transactions with an emphasis on technology acquisition, intellectual property, privacy, and information security. Jennifer is a skilled, in-house corporate attorney with 15 years of experience. Prior to Prudential, Jennifer worked for a variety of companies including T-Mobile, Union Pacific Railroad, Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores, and Giesecke & Devrient. Her law practice spanned diverse fields such as collective bargaining, real estate acquisition and development, franchise, employment, general contracting, privacy, transportation, and information security. In addition to her career as an attorney, Jennifer is a proud wife of an attorney in the Air Force JAG Corps. Jennifer graduated from the University of Arizona with a bachelor’s degree in history and political science. She earned her Master’s degree in public administration from the University of Illinois Springfield, and received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Kansas School of Law.

Joe Wallis
Microsoft Software & Systems Academy

Joe Wallis is currently Director of Military Engagement, Microsoft Military Affairs. Joe is a retired Lieutenant Colonel from the United States Marine Corps Reserve. Upon commissioning as a Second Lieutenant, Joe served over five years on active duty as a Communications Officer and Recruit Training Commander. He continued serving in the Marine Corps Reserve with 28 years of combined active and reserve service. Post 9/11/2001, Joe served over 5 years on active duty. He worked on NATO accession in Eastern Europe with EUCOM and then supported SOUTHCOM in Central and South America designing training for UN Peacekeeping Missions globally. Joe completed his reserve time on active orders with Headquarters Marine Corps Manpower Management as the Section Head of Active Duty Officer Career Counseling. Joe’s corporate experience has been in talent management and acquisition. He has held staffing, consulting and leadership positions with Bradley-Morris, Accenture, A.T. Kearney Executive Search and Washington Mutual Bank. His recruiting experience spans over 20
years supporting IT, Manufacturing, Finance, Consulting and Supply Chain. Well over half of his experience in recruiting has been focused on transitioning veterans. He is honored to have a role at Microsoft that allows him to serve military veterans. Joe has a BS from the U.S. Naval Academy and a MA from the University of Miami in International Relations. He has also studied at the Naval War College, Joint Forces Staff College, and the National Defense University.

**Tyler Way**
*50 States: Veterans + Artists United*

**Tyler Way** is the Co-Founder/Creative Director for [HAS HEART], a Michigan-based nonprofit that partners military Veterans with graphic designers with the mission to share their story through art, design, and fashion. Tyler and his wife Kendra quit their careers in the fashion industry to take [HAS HEART] across the country on the "50 States: Veterans + Artists United" working tour, partnering a Veteran with a designer in every state. Prior to hitting the road in July 2017, he was a footwear designer for Wolverine Worldwide, Inc. and has also created pointillism-style artwork for various NBA athletes including LeBron James, Chris Paul, Rip Hamilton, and others.

**Kayla Williams**
*Serving Military Caregivers*

**Kayla M. Williams** is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Military, Veterans, and Society Program at Center for a New American Security. She previously served as Director of the Center for Women Veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs, where she was primary adviser to the Secretary on department policies, programs, and legislation affecting women veterans. Kayla spent eight years at RAND researching servicemember and veteran health needs and benefits, international security, and intelligence policy. Ms. Williams was enlisted for five years as an Arabic linguist, serving in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). She authored the memoirs *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army* and *Plenty of Time When We Get Home: Love and Recovery in the Aftermath of War*. Kayla graduated *cum laude* with a BA in Literature from Bowling Green State University and earned an MA in International Affairs from American University. She is a member of the Army Education Advisory Committee and Department of Labor Advisory Committee on Veterans’ Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach; a former member of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans; and a 2013 White House Woman Veteran Champion of Change.

**Lorena Wilson**
*American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Addressing the Challenge; American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Becoming Culturally Competent*

**MSG Lorena Wilson** is the regional deputy director for the Northeast US and Europe for the US Army’s Soldier for Life program.
Dennis Wimer*

Opening Ceremonies

Dennis Wimer started his military career at Undergraduate Navigator Training at Mather Air Force Base in Sacramento, California where he received the Paul F. Lorence Award as the top navigator student. Upon graduation, he served in the 16 Airlift Squadron at Charleston Air Force Base as a C-141B Starlifter Navigator. His last duty assignment was at McGuire Air Force Base in Wrightstown, New Jersey. At McGuire, Dennis became the first operations officer for McGuire AFB’s C-141B Special Operations Low Level II squadron. At the same time, he completed his MBA at the University of Pennsylvania. After leaving the Air Force, Dennis has worked in multiple sectors of the economy; small private businesses, large public enterprise, non-profit, government and higher education. He has worked at companies like McKinsey & Company, Eli Lilly & Company, ExaroMed LLC, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Indiana and Kentucky, Butler University and most recently his family business LADS Consulting, LLC. Dennis was appointed Deputy Commissioner, field operations in the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. In this capacity, he led multiple state and federal programs including the Jobs for Veterans State Grants, ReEmployment Services Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance. Dennis started the Hoosier Initiative to Re-employ Ex-offenders (HIRE) and the Indiana Robotics Initiative. Dennis served on the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) board and was the chair of the NASWA Veteran Affairs Committee. Dennis is honored to be selected by Governor Eric Holcomb to serve as the Director of the Indiana Department of Veterans’ Services. He brings a servants mindset to the department and is excited to lead the department to serve Indiana’s Veterans and their families. Dennis has been married for 29 years and has two children, 18 and 15. He is passionate about coaching youth soccer and enjoys the time it gives him with his children and their friends.

Monte Zaben*

An Employer’s Perspective

Monte Zaben is a Principal in the Deloitte Risk and Financial Advisory practice based in Arlington, Virginia. Monte is the Lead Principal for the US Department of Education, and leads the Program Integrity service offering within Deloitte’s Government and Public Services practice. During Monte’s 22-year career with Deloitte, he has developed a brand revolving around large project/team leadership, significant executive client relationship development, and cutting-edge innovative problem solving. Monte began his professional career as a United States Marine Corps Officer, serving 12 years beginning in 1981. During that time Monte supported garrison organizations and fleet units as an Information Systems Management Officer, equivalent to an organizational CIO. Monte’s unit postings included the 1st Marine Brigade, the 3rd Marine Air Wing, and Headquarters, US Marine Corps. Captain Zaben was a competitive marksman, leading the Pacific Division Shooting team in the 1987 Marine Corps Matches, and a graduate of the Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School in 1990. Major Zaben was medically separated from the Marine Corps in 1993. Monte leans upon his Marine Corps career as foundational to his professional success. He is passionate about the value military veterans provide to civilian organizations, championing awareness for military veterans both inside Deloitte and in the Veteran Service Organization (VSO) community. That passion is delivered through Monte’s role as Deloitte’s US leader for veteran recruiting and retention, and his leadership of veteran-focused pro bono services with the George W. Bush Institute in Dallas, Texas.
Christian Zafra*

American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans: Promising Practices

Chris Zafra is the JVSG Program Manager in New Mexico. He began his career as a Local Veterans Employment Representative in September 2000. He represented the JVSG program in the National Hire Vets First as Marketing Manager. His agency collateral appointments include as Tribal Liaison, Point of Contact for Federal Contractors, proxy Commissioner in the Governor’s Commission on Disability and Advisory Board member in the Technology Assistance Program. He served on active duty for 20 years in the U.S. Army and New Mexico Army National Guard and retired in September 2000 as Staff Sergeant. He is a member of the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee.

Coral Zelachowski

How Virtual Engagement is Changing the Landscape of Veteran Recruitment

Coral Zelachowski is the Recruitment Manager of the Strategic Sourcing team within Sodexo’s Talent Acquisition Group. A graduate of Penn State University, she has been in the recruitment industry for over 15 years. Spending the last six years with Sodexo, she leads a team of Strategic Sourcers who take pride in building pipelines of passive talent and filling hard to fill positions. Coral works on several initiatives within Talent Acquisition, including Military and Diversity recruitment.