



# NASDVA

National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

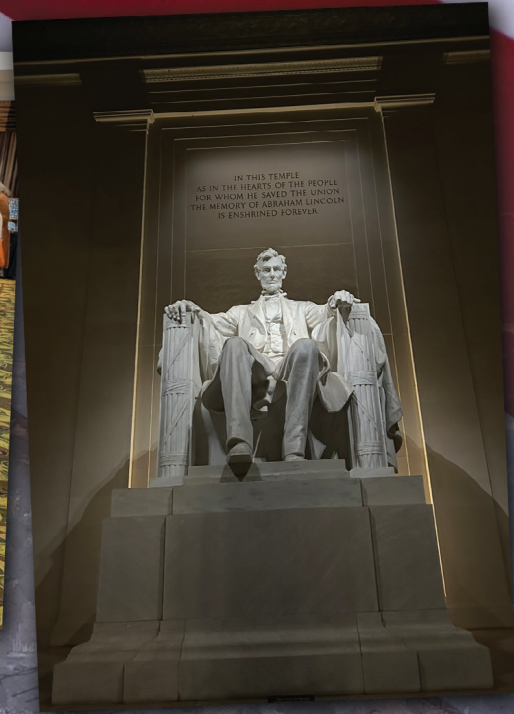
# 2025 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE CHEYENNE, WYOMING





# 2025 Midwinter Training Conference





# REMEMBRANCE & SERVICE

## NASDVA MEMBER SERVICE PHOTOS







2026 Save the Dates

2025 Annual Training Conference

# NASDVA 2026 Conferences

## Midwinter Conference March 1-4, 2026

DoubleTree - Crystal City  
Arlington, VA



## Annual Training Conference August 9-12, 2026

Hyatt Regency Savannah  
2 W Bay Street,  
Savannah, GA 31401

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*Hosted by the Georgia Department of Veterans Services*





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# Wyoming Governor's Welcome 2025 Annual Training Conference



July 29, 2025

Dear Members of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs,

It is my honor to welcome you to the great state of Wyoming. The Equality State embraces you and appreciates the important work you do to serve our nation's heroes. We often refer to Wyoming as one small town with very long streets. Folks embody the cowboy spirit of helping their neighbors and building relationships that matter. They care deeply about their heritage, are driven by solutions, and often punch above their weight.

I also welcome you to Cheyenne, the Magic City of the Plains. With an origin story intertwined with the Union Pacific Railroad and the booming cattle industry of the late 1800's, Cheyenne was once the cultural hub of the Wild West. Her entertainment offerings and lavish amenities attracted cattle barons from the East and from Europe, who brought with them sophistication and an entrepreneurial spirit. During that time, the Cheyenne Club was founded, a world famous establishment for these stockmen to patronize.

While I hope you are able to enjoy Cheyenne's history of hospitality, I am humbled by the purpose of your gathering. About 9.2% of Wyoming's population are veterans. We honor those who have served to protect the freedoms we hold dear. Our nation's veterans did not hesitate to answer the call to duty, requiring them and their families to make immense sacrifices for the principles of our great nation. For many, those sacrifices continue today. They are in our communities, bearing the visible and invisible wounds of war. Returning home is not the complete journey back. Thus, we must focus on that mission to offer support, care, and unwavering respect.

You are a part of this legacy. On behalf of the people of Wyoming, I thank you for the work you do and I implore you to carry on. President John F. Kennedy once said, "as we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." As we thank our service men and women for their sacrifice, let us remember the promise we make to them and their families, and let us commit to it.

I am proud of your leadership, and I am proud to welcome you to our great state. I hope you find meaning in your conversations and return home with some dust on your boots.

Sincerely,

Mark Gordon  
Governor of Wyoming



## The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

Tim Sheppard (WY)  
President

Terry Prince (IL)  
Senior Vice President

Patrick Farrell (VI)  
Junior Vice President

John Scocos (WI)  
Executive Director

### Welcome to Cheyenne and the Annual NASDVA Conference! Giddy Up!

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), it is my pleasure to welcome you to Cheyenne, Wyoming—where history runs deep, the skies are wide, and the Western spirit is alive and well.

This week, we gather not only to celebrate our shared mission but to advance the important work that defines NASDVA. Our **vision** remains steadfast: *To ensure the nation's Veterans, their families, and Survivors receive the benefits and services they have earned in order to improve their quality of life and overall well-being.*

Throughout the conference, we will explore key issues impacting our states, territories, and the District (the 56), develop thoughtful resolutions, and share innovations to help each of us better serve our Veteran communities. This gathering is a powerful opportunity to **network and collaborate with our peers**, to learn from one another, and to build partnerships that carry our mission forward.



We're also proud to offer meaningful engagement with our **sponsors and vendors**, who are essential to the success of our work. Please take the time to visit with them—they bring valuable resources and solutions to the table.

And of course, no visit to Cheyenne would be complete without a little fun. In the evenings, we invite you to unwind, kick up your boots, and enjoy a taste of the **American West**—where the frontier spirit meets warm hospitality. Whether you're exploring the rich history of the region, enjoying some local fare, or simply swapping stories with fellow directors, we hope you make memories that last long after the conference ends.

Thank you for your leadership, your service, and your dedication to those who have served. We're glad you're here—and we're ready for a great week together.

**Let's ride!**

Warm regards,

Tim Sheppard  
President, NASDVA

P.S. Don't forget your boots!



## REMEMBERING 9/11 & SERVING THE VETERANS OF NEW GENERATIONS

On a clear and sunny Tuesday morning 24 years ago, on September 11, 2001, American citizens reeled from the unexpected attacks that planned to cripple the major centers of our nation. That day came to be called “9/11,” a phrase coined for the national emergency telephone number synonymous in our minds with catastrophe. The attacks came by air using hijacked passenger aircraft that crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan, NY, the



U.S. Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a field in Shanksville, PA. Many compare that day to “Pearl Harbor Day” on December 7, 1941, when Japanese aircraft destroyed American structures and lives, and our oldest World War II Veterans remember both historical days of infamy within their lifetimes.

Only a little over a year prior to 9/11, our nation prepared for possible catastrophic computer malfunctions from the “Y2K” bug, but no one expected such a tragedy in the following year—one that thrust us into a war in the Middle East that has spanned over twenty years and three presidencies and has witnessed the demise of Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden.

Since September 11, 2001, thousands of soldiers, sailors, coastguard members, airmen, Marines, Reservists, National Guardsmen, and Guard Women have served in combat, security, support, and logistical roles. Our States responded to the need of these new veterans, many whom served multiple tours, through our state programs assisted these Veterans and their families in the critical adjustment period after returning home.

I myself experienced the effect of September 11th during my two deployments to Iraq. Our 9/11 Veterans are our new generation of heroes carrying on the torch from previous generations.

Our mission at NASDVA is to collectively address the needs of our nation’s Veterans and their family members and to coordinate efforts to ensure they receive all the federal and state VA services and benefits to which they are entitled.

New challenges facing today’s veterans such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnoses, military suicides, traumatic injuries, unemployment and homelessness are concerning. But as State Departments of Veterans Affairs, we will continue to adapt to meet their needs and continue to work together with the government, the Veteran Community, and the public to tackle these problems head on and identify solutions to ensure our States Veterans are healthy, employed, and treated with the respect they deserve.

*John A. Scocos*  
Executive Director, NASDVA



*Eugene "Stoney" Wages*  
*August 1, 1941 - July 1, 2025*

Gene, husband of Katharine (Kay) Reynolds Wages, passed away on Tuesday, July 1, 2025. Born in Buffalo Junction, VA, he was the son of the late Lomas Wellington Wages, Jr., and Malloy Morris Smith. He proudly served in the US Army, completing three tours in Vietnam, and retired after almost 34 years. He then served as State Director of Veteran Affairs in SC under three governors and in Kansas under two. He ended his career as a consultant for veterans nursing homes.

A graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and the Army War College, Gene was a Master Army Aviator and Master Parachutist. Among service awards he earned are three Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Medals, numerous air medals (including two for valor), and the Army Accommodation Medal for Valor.

Gene was a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto from Governors Campbell and Beasley, and the Order of the Silver Crescent from Governor Hodges. He was a life member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (former past president), and various other civic organizations.

In addition to his wife, Gene is survived by his children, Michael Wages (Leah) of Jackson, TN, Kevin Thuerwaechter of Lockhart, TX; G.W. Aadnesen of Ft. Walton Beach, FL, Katie Chmiel (Paul) of Camden; and Judd Sahr of Cincinnati, OH; 10 grandchildren, Lydia, Piper, Juniper, Zachary, Cayden, Crickette, Lillian, Mila, Josie, and Jessi; and sister, Shelba King of Cary, NC.

Gene was predeceased by his parents and his daughter, Suzanne Wages.



# Thank you to our sponsors!

NASDVA's Annual Training Conference brings our members together to learn best practices, share ideas, get briefed by senior VA leadership, and better serve the veterans in the states and territories they serve. Without our generous sponsors and vendors, NASDVA's conferences would not be possible. Be sure to visit them in Grand Ballroom ADB.

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## Conference Sponsors

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The Road Home Program at Rush University

Mentor Agility

TransUnion

National Cemetery Administration

USDVA Office of Suicide Prevention

Patriot Rehabilitation Services

Walker

Powerlink Healthcare Support Services

Don Weber and Family



## Mission

The mission of NASDVA is to foster the effective representation of persons claiming entitlements on account of the honorable military service of any person as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101; to provide a medium for the exchange of ideas and information; to facilitate reciprocal state services; to secure uniformity, equality, efficiency, and effectiveness in providing services to veterans and their family members in all States and Territories; and to maintain an interest in all veteran legislation.

## Vision

To ensure the nation's Veterans, their Families, and Survivors receive the benefits and services they have earned in order to improve their quality of life and overall well-being.

## Conference Priorities

- Committee and Business Meetings
- Networking Between State and Territory Directors
- Sponsor and Vendor Engagement
- Pillars of Excellence Awards
- Updates from Senior USDVA and DoD Officials

Two special conferences will be taking place alongside the NASDVA Annual Training Conference.

***Women Veterans***

Sinclair Room

Monday, September 8th, to Wednesday, September 10th

***Cemetery Directors***

Big Horn Room

Tuesday, September 9th, & Wednesday, September 10th



**2025 Annual Training Conference**  
**September 7 – 10, 2025**  
**Little America Hotel, 2800 W Lincolnway, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009**

**Focus of Conference: Committee Meetings, Networking, Sponsor Engagement, Pillars of Excellence Awards, USDVA Updates.**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> (Western Wear, Business Casual, & State Apparel)**

**8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.** Registration and Information  
*Grand Ballroom Hall* **Wyoming Team**

**10:00 – 11:00 a.m.** Executive Committee Meeting  
*Cheyenne Room* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President  
(Coffee and Bagels provided for EXCOM members)

**11:00 – 12:00 p.m.** New Directors Orientation  
*Cheyenne Room* **Terry Prince (IL)**, NASDVA Senior Vice President  
**Patrick Farrell (VI)**, NASDVA Junior Vice President  
**Mark Tschampf (ID)**, NASDVA Secretary  
**John A. Scocos**, NASDVA Executive Director  
**BG (ret) Les Beavers (KY)**, NASDVA Legislative Director  
**Diane L. Cullo**, USDVA

**12:00 – 1:00 pm** Lunch (on your own)

**1:00 – 2:30 p.m.** Committee Breakout Sessions:  
(Room assignment will be posted)

- Legislative
- Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
- Veterans Benefits/Education (SAA)
- Memorial Affairs
- Veterans' Health Care and Mental Health
- State Veterans Homes
- Outreach and Homelessness
- Veterans Transition and Employment
- Women Veterans
- Minority Veterans

**2:30 – 4:00 p.m.** **District Vice President Meeting** – Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Far west  
(Room assignment will be posted)



**4:00 – 5:00 p.m.** Business Meeting (**NASDVA Members Only – Separate Agenda**)  
*Wyoming Ballroom* Treasurer Report, Passage of Annual Budget, Strategic Plan Review, Legislative Update, 2026 Annual Training Conference Updates  
**John A. Scocos**, NASDVA Executive Director  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President  
**Mark Tschampl (ID)**, NASDVA Secretary  
**Lonnie Wangen (ND)**, NASDVA Treasurer  
**BG (ret) Les Beavers (KY)**, NASDVA Legislative Director

**5:30 – 7:30 p.m.** Vendor Social  
*Grand Ballroom* **Sponsor: NASDVA**  
*Patio* **John A. Scocos**, NASDVA Executive Director  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President

## **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup> (Western Wear, Business Casual, & State Apparel)**

**8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.** Registration and Information  
*Grand Ballroom Hall* **Wyoming Team**

**6:00 – 7:45 a.m.** Breakfast  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Elizabeth Dole Foundation**

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.** NASDVA Opening Ceremony  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **John A. Scocos**, NASDVA Executive Director

NASDVA Welcome  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President

National Anthem & Honor Guard  
**Wyoming National Guard**

Native American Veterans Ceremony  
**Wind River Dancers**

Pledge of Allegiance  
**BG (ret) Les Beavers (KY)**, NASDVA Legislative Director

Invocation  
**Verdie Bowen (AK)**, Past President

Introduction of **Governor Mark Gordon**  
Introduction of **Major General Gregory Porter**, Adjutant General  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President



- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.** NASDVA District Meeting Report  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **District Vice Presidents**
- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.** NASDVA Committee Reports  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President
- 10:00 – 10:15 a.m.** Qualtrics Brief  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Alex Craft**, Enterprise Account Executive, State and Local Government
- 10:15 – 11:00 a.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Heroes with Hearing Loss**
- 11:00 – 11:45 a.m.** Caring for those Who Have Borne the Battle  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **James D. Ridgway**, Bergmann & Moore, LLC.
- 11:45 – 12:00 p.m.** TriWest Healthcare Alliance  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Glenn Gray**, Vice President, Military & Veteran Engagement
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: AARP – National Veterans and Families Program**  
**Speakers: Peter Jeffries**, Director, **Juanita Jimenez-Soto**, Manager  
**Sam Shumway**, State Director, AARP Wyoming
- 1:00 – 1:20 p.m.** National Association of County Veteran Service Officers Update and MOA Signing  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Andrew Tangen**, President, **Chris Hinton**, Past President
- 1:20 – 2:30 p.m.** State Veterans Home Update and Best Practices  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Fred Sganga**, Legislative Director, NASVH  
**Diane Lynch**, President, NASVH
- 2:30 – 3:15 p.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education**
- 3:15 – 3:30 p.m.** Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Bonnie Carroll**, President & Founder
- 3:30 – 3:40 p.m.** VetPro, Claims and Electronic Submission Software for Veteran Services Offices  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Jeff von Waldburg**, President & CEO
- 3:40 – 4:00 p.m.** The Road Home Program: The Center for Veterans & Families, Rush University Medical Center  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Modie Lavin**, Senior Outreach Coordinator
- 4:00 – 4:15 p.m.** Conference Recap and Announcements  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President
- 4:30 – 5:20 p.m.** Transportation to Offsite President’s Reception  
**Terry Bison Ranch Train Ride starts at 6:00 p.m. (last train of the day)**



**5:30 – 9:00 p.m.** President’s Reception  
*Terry Bison Ranch*  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President  
Recognize Reception Sponsors and NASDVA Officers  
**John A. Scocos**, NASDVA Executive Director  
**Sponsors: HMR Veterans Services, Inc., Russell Keogler, VP of Corporate Operations**  
**WellHive, Chris Bickell, CEO**  
**HereNow Help, Bryan Gray, CEO & Co-Founder**

**9:05 – 9:45 p.m.** Return to Little America Hotel  
**Wyoming Staff**

## **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> (Western Wear, Business Casual, & State Apparel)**

**6:00 – 7:45 a.m.** Breakfast  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: VetPro**

**8:00 – 8:10 a.m.** Conference Update and Announcements  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President

**8:10 – 8:20 a.m.** Tyler Technologies  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Randy Cahow**, Sr. Director, Veterans’ Benefits Program

**8:20 – 9:00 a.m.** Elizabeth Dole Foundation  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Marianne Delatorre**, Community Engagement Manager  
**Meredith Beck**, Vice President of Government Affairs and Community Engagement

**9:00 – 10:30 a.m.** Congressional Round Table  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Hunter Thompson**, Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs  
**Abby Roubal**, Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs  
**Gary Woodward**, House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs  
**Alexandra Lightfoot**, House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

**10:30 – 11:00 a.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Cohen Veterans Network**

**11:00 – 11:20 a.m.** National Association for State Women Veterans Coordinators Update & MOA signing  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Hollie Scoma**, President, NASWVC

**11:20 – 11:40 a.m.** Patton Veterans Project, Inc.  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Benjamin Patton**, Executive Director

**11:40 – 12:00 p.m.** SFCS Architects  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Kerry Buck**, Senior Principal Architect, and **Justine Sowers**, Senior Associate



- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Optum Serve**  
**Speaker: Christi Kruse**, Senior Vice President, Optum Serve  
**Advocate Award - BG Henry Huntley**
- 1:00 – 1:10 p.m.** Comcast NBCUniversal  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Mona Dexter**, Vice President, Military and Veterans Affairs
- 1:10 – 2:00 p.m.** DOD/VA Collaboration Office/Workforce/Transition Panel  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Mr. Michael Odle**, Director, DOD/VA Collaboration Office  
**Mr. Michael Miller**, Director, Military to Civilian Transition Office
- 2:00 – 2:30 p.m.** Evaluating Your Benefit Division  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tom Herthel**, Director National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP)
- 2:30 – 3:00 p.m.** Mentor Agility, Wellness Program  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Dr. Julie Elledge**, Director of Mentor Agility  
**Daniel Shannon**, Director, Wyoming Department of Corrections
- 3:00 – 3:30 p.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Grace Design Studios**
- 3:30 – 4:15 p.m.** Integrating Adult Day Healthcare into a new State Veterans Home  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Panelists: Steve Murray** - Florida Department of Veterans Affairs  
**Mike Kolejka** - Grace Design Studios  
**Tom Payton** - Grace Design Studios  
**Daily Wright** - Grace Design Studios
- 4:15 – 4:45 p.m.** Virginia Veterans Network, Suicide Prevention & Opioid Addiction Services  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Chuck Zingler**, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
- 4:45 – 5:00 p.m.** Conference Recap and Announcements  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President
- 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** Roundtable on Rural Wyoming Veterans  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Honorable Paul R. Lawrence**, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President  
**Diane Cullo**, Acting Director, VA Intergovernmental Affairs  
**David “Clay” Ward**, Rural Desk Officer
- 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.** Qualtrics Reception (TBA)



## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> (Western Wear, Business Casual, & State Apparel)

- 6:00 – 7:45 a.m.** Breakfast  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: TriWest Healthcare Alliance**
- 8:00 – 8:10 a.m.** Conference Update and Announcements  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President
- 8:10 – 8:20 a.m.** **Morning Plenary Session Sponsor**  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Sponsor: WellHive**
- 8:20 – 8:35 a.m.** WellHive  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Nadhal Eadeh**, Senior Vice President of Federal Affairs
- 8:35 – 9:00 a.m.** Military Women’s Memorial Update  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Phyllis Wilson**, President
- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.** Board of Veterans’ Appeals Update (USDVA)  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Kenneth A. Arnold**, Acting Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals
- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: NVLSP**
- 10:00 – 10:45 a.m.** National Cemetery Administration Update  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Glenn Powers**, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations
- 10:45 – 12:00 p.m.** USDVA Update, Pillars of Excellence presentation and group photo  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Honorable Paul R. Lawrence**, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* Advocate Awards: **Phyllis Wilson**, **Fred S. Sganga**  
Iron Mike Award: **Wanda Wright**, Past President  
Keynote Speaker: **Russell Keogler**, VP of Corporate Operations, HMR Veterans Services Inc.
- 1:00 – 1:20 p.m.** Combined Arms  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Bryan Escobedo**, Chief Growth Officer
- 1:20 – 2:00 p.m.** Veterans Health Administration Update  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Sunaina Kumar-Giebel (for Dr. John Bartrum)**, Under Secretary for Health, USDVA
- 2:00 – 2:45 p.m.** Veterans Benefit Administration Update  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Ms. Margarita Devlin**, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, USDVA
- 2:45 – 3:15 p.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: GenVETS, Inc.**



- 3:15 – 3:35 p.m.** HereNow Help  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Bryan Gray**, Co-founder & CEO
- 3:35 – 3:55 p.m.** Readjustment Counseling Services, USDVA  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Michael Fisher**, Chief Officer
- 3:55 – 5:00 p.m.** Fireside Chat - Office of Rural Engagement (USDVA)  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Moderator: Diane Cullo**, Acting Director, VA Intergovernmental Affairs  
**Panelists:** **Tim Sheppard**, NASDVA President  
**David “Clay” Ward**, Rural Desk Officer  
**Dr. James Shore**, Office of Rural Health  
**Dr. Leonie Heyworth**, Office of Connected Care  
**John Hilgert (NE)**, Director  
**Lonnie Wangen (ND)**, Commissioner
- 5:00 – 5:10 p.m.** Conference Closing Remarks  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President
- 5:30 – 5:50 p.m.** Transportation to Wyoming Governor’s Mansion  
*TBD* **Wyoming Staff**
- 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.** NASDVA Reception at the Governor’s Mansion (**NASDVA Members Only**)
- 8:10 – 8:40 p.m.** Return transportation to Little America Hotel  
**Wyoming Staff**

**(Conference Complete)**





## ALABAMA



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## ARKANSAS



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## COLORADO



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## CONNECTICUT

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## DELAWARE

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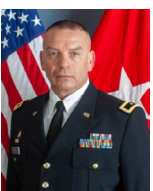
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*Tim Sheppard (WY)*  
President

*Terry Prince (IL)*  
Senior Vice President

*Patrick Farrell (VI)*  
Junior Vice President

*John Scocos (WI)*  
Executive Director

August 1, 2025

Subject: 2025 NASDVA Standing Committees

Article II of the NASDVA By-Laws allows the President and Executive Committee to create committees. The current committee list follows:

1. Constitution and Bylaws
2. Nominating
3. Finance and Audit
4. Legislative
5. Strategic Planning
6. Conference Planning
7. Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
8. Veterans Benefits/Education/SAA
9. Memorial Affairs
10. Veterans' Healthcare and Mental Health
11. State Veterans Homes
12. Outreach and Homelessness
13. Veterans Transition and Employment
14. Women Veterans
15. Minority Veterans

**1. Constitution and Bylaws**

Executive Committee Members (Article VIII, Officers Section 1)

**2. Nominating: (Article VIII, Section 1)**

Chair: Tim Sheppard (WY)  
President Past Presidents who are members  
Mark Tschampl (ID), Secretary  
5 District VPs (if they are not nominated for Junior VP)

**3. Finance and Audit: (Article X Finance, Section 4)**

Chair: Lonnie Wangen (ND), Treasurer  
John Scocos (WI), Executive Director  
Mark Tschampl (ID), Secretary  
Gary Harter (UT), Historian

**4. Legislative: (Article IV, Section 2)**

Chair: Patrick Farrell (VI), Jr VP  
Verdie Bowen (AK)  
Les Beavers (KY), Legislative Director  
John Hilgert (NE)  
5 District VPs (or their representative)

**5. Strategic Planning**

Chair: Terry Prince (IL)  
Mark Tschampl (ID), Secretary  
5 District VPs (or their representative)  
John Scocos (WI), Executive Director

**6. Conference Planning**

Chair: Tim Sheppard (WY), President/Host State  
John Scocos (WI), Executive Director  
Terry Prince (IL), Sr VP  
Mark Tschampl (ID), Secretary  
Lonnie Wangen (ND), Treasurer  
Kasim Yarn (RI), NE VP  
John Hilgert (NE)



## **7. Public and Intergovernmental Affairs**

Chair: John Hilgert (NE)  
Tom Palladino (TX)  
Verdie Bowen (AK)  
John Spangler (CA)  
Lonnie Wangen (ND)  
Kasim Yarn (RI)  
Jeffrey Newton (AL)

## **8. Veterans Benefits/Education/SAA**

Chair: Ronald P. Welch (CT)  
Keith Boylan (CA)  
Mark Tschampl (ID)  
Benjamin Pomerance (NY)  
Jennifer Donovan (OR)  
Charlie Catoe (TX)  
Cory Pearson (UT)  
Steven Combs (VA)  
Jamison Herrera (NM)  
Steve Combs (VA)  
Herm Breuer, NACVSO

## **9. Memorial Affairs**

Chair: Bill Turner (KS)  
David Richmond (ME)  
Kelly Ackerman (MT)  
Robert (Bob) Burke (VT)  
James Bynum (OK)  
Robert A. Ator (AK)  
Bruce Cowan (CO)

## **10. Veterans' Health Care and Mental Health**

Chair: Lindsey Sin (CA)  
Vice Chair: Maureen Weigl (PA)  
Jose San Agustin (GU)  
Terry Prince (IL)  
Viviana DeCohen (NY)  
Chip Osborne (TX)  
Jon Santiago (MA)

## **11. State Veterans Homes**

Chair: Steve Murray (FL)  
James Bond (WI)  
John Scott (AZ)  
Paul Kirchhoff (MO)  
Mark Smith (MS)  
Sarah Lane (OK)  
Tommy Baker (TN)  
Fred Sganga, NASVH  
David Puente Jr. (WA)

## **12. Outreach and Homelessness**

Chair: Todd Jacobus (IA)  
Brad Lindsey (MN)  
Jason Loughran (NYC)  
Randy Coleman (WV)  
Jon Santiago (MA)  
Levi Bennett (NE)

## **13. Veterans Transition and Employment**

Chair: Gary Harter (UT)  
Jake Adams (IN)  
William (Bill) Gaudreau (NH)  
Debbie Ashenhurst (OH)  
James Hendon (NYC)  
Todd McCaffrey (SC)  
Shawn Deabay (TX)  
Patrick Farrell (VI)  
James Hartsell (FL)  
Jose Agustin (GU)  
Chuck Zingler (VA)

## **14. Women Veterans**

Chair: Patricia Ross (GA)  
Gina Chandler (AR)  
Mary Devine (NV)  
Viviana DeCohen (NY)  
Patricia Ross (GA)  
Charlette Woodard (DC)  
Jocelyn Mitnaul Mallette (NC)  
Sandy McFarland (WY)

## **15. Minority Veterans**

Chair: Whitney Allen (KY)  
Xochitl Rodriguez-Murillo (CA)  
Vincent Solomeno (NJ)  
Joel Evans (NY)  
Agustin Montanez-Allman (PR)  
Brian Love (MI)  
John P. Alamodin (HI)  
William Gaudreau (NH)



**The following is a list of 26 VA advisory committees. The VA Secretary has appointed several NASDVA members to these committees.**

1. VA National Academic Affiliations Council
2. Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials \*
3. Cooperative Studies Scientific Evaluation Committee
4. Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation
5. Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education
6. Advisory Committee on Former Prisoners of War
7. Genomic Medicine Program Advisory Committee
8. Geriatrics and Gerontology Advisory Committee
9. Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses
10. Health Services Research and Development Service Merit Review Board
11. Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans
12. Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board
13. Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans
14. National Research Advisory Council
15. Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities Programs
16. Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans  
**Verdie Bowen, Committee Chair, Director, Alaska Office of Veteran Affairs, NASDVA Past President**
17. Veterans' Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation
18. Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board
19. Veterans' Rural Health Advisory Committee  
**Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner, North Dakota Dept of Veteran Affairs, NASDVA Past President**
20. Special Medical Advisory Group
21. Advisory Committee on Structural Safety of Department of Veterans Affairs Facilities
22. Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee
23. Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
24. Veterans' Family, Caregiver, and Survivor Advisory Committee
25. Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board  
**Keith Boylan, Deputy Secretary, California Dept of Veterans Affairs**
26. Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs
27. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Advisory Committee on Outlying Areas and Freely Associated States".  
**Patrick D, Farrell, State Director, Virgin Islands Office of Veterans Affairs**



**IRON MIKE RECIPIENTS**

The “Iron Mike” is awarded by the NASDVA Executive Committee to those who have contributed to the mission and success of NASDVA.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>RECIPIENT</b>	<b>AGENCY/ORGANIZATION</b>
2001	Honorable R. James Nicholson	VA Secretary
2002	Commissioner Pete Wheeler	Georgia DVS
2003	George P. Basher, Director	New York DVA
2004	Kenneth Fisher	President/CEO of Fisher House
2005	Bob Filner	Congressman
2006	John Scocos, Secretary	Wisconsin DVA
2007	John Garcia, Secretary	New Mexico DVS
2008	Les Beavers, Commissioner	Kentucky DVA
2008	Antonio Davila, Ex Dir	Delaware DVA
2008	John King, Deputy Secretary	California DVA
2008	Joey Strickland, Deputy Secretary	Louisiana DVA
2009	Arnold Schwarzenegger	Governor, California
2009	Bill Biggs	HMR Veterans Services
2010	Terry Schow, Executive Director	Utah DVA
2010	Bob Riley	Governor, Alabama
2011	Tammy Duckworth, Assistant Secretary	USDVA-Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
2011	Eric Shinseki	VA Secretary
2011	Tom Kelley, Secretary	Massachusetts DVA
2011	Charlie Smith, Director	North Carolina DVA
2011	Frank Salvas, Director	VA State Cemetery Grants Services
2011	Linda Schwartz, Commissioner	Connecticut DVA
2012	Mike Michaud	Congressman, U.S. Rep, Maine 2 <sup>nd</sup> District
2012	David Fletcher, Director	Arkansas DVA
2013	Jim Willis, Director	Oregon DVA
2013	Allison Hickey	Under Secretary, VBA
2014	Steve Muro	Under Secretary, VA Memorial Affairs
2014	Clyde W. Marsh, Commissioner	Alabama DVA
2015	Lonnie L. Wangen, Commissioner	North Dakota DVA
2015	Jason Cain	Director, VA Intergovernmental Affairs
2016	David Brasuell, Administrator	Idaho DVA
2017	Randy Reeves, Commissioner	Mississippi DVA
2018	Verdie Bowen, Director	Alaska DVA
2019	Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, Director	Washington DVA
2021	John Hilgert, Director	Nebraska DVA
2022	Thomas Palladino, Executive Director	Texas Veterans Commission
2024	James S. Hartsell, Executive Director	Florida DVA
2025	Dennis Wimer, Director	Indiana DVA





**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE RECIPIENTS**

The Distinguished Service Award is presented to NASDVA members who have made significant contributions to the growth and success of the association.

YEAR	RECIPIENT	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION
2023	Thomas Palladino, Executive Director	Texas Veterans Commission
2023	Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner	North Dakota DVA
2023	Verdie Bowen, Director	Alaska DVA
2024	John Hilgert, Director	Nebraska DVA



**ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY RECIPIENTS**

The "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty" Award is a special award to recognize those who have impacted their community and the Nation, beyond their service as a veteran leader.

YEAR	RECIPIENT	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION
2023	Joey Strickland, Secretary	Louisiana DVA
2024	Les Beavers, Legislative Director	NASDVA





VETERANS “Advocate of the Year” RECIPIENTS

Each year the NASDVA president selects the NASDVA Veterans Advocate of the Year, which is awarded or announced at the NASDVA Midwinter Conference.

Year	Recipient	Agency/Organization
1997	George Skypeck	Artist
1998	BG Wilma Vaught	WIMSA
1999	Mrs. Diane Evans Carlson	Vietnam Veterans Women’s Memorial
2000	Honorable Hershel Gober	VA Deputy Secretary
2001	Honorable Sonny Montgomery	Congressman
2002	Honorable Tommy G. Thompson	DHSS Secretary
2003	Honorable Lane Evans	Congressman
2004	Mr. Raymond G. Boland	DASDVA, CARES
2005	Honorable Anthony Principi	VA Secretary
2006	Michael H. McLendon	VA Policy (WHCoA)
2009	Jim Webb	Senator, Virginia Author and sponsor for Post 9/11 GI Bill
2010	Daniel Akaka	Senator, Chairman of Senate Veteran’ Committee
2011	Patty Murray	Senator, Chairwoman of Senate VA Committee
2012	Eric Shinseki	Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs
2013	Jan Brewer	Governor, Arizona
2013	Dave Heineman	Governor, Nebraska
2014	Michelle Obama	First Lady. Joining Forces
2014	Dr. Jill Biden	Second Lady. Joining Forces
2015	Bernie Sanders	Senator, Vermont, Chairman of Senate Veteran’ Committee
2016	MG Joshua (Joe) Robles Jr.	President and CEO, USAA
2017	Robert McDonald	VA Secretary
2017	Sloan Gibson	VA Deputy Secretary
2018	Scott Blackburn	VA Acting Secretary
2019	Johnny Isakson	Senator, Georgia Chairman Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
2020	BG Les Beavers	Past Executive Director, NASDVA
2022	Henry Huntley	USDVA Intergovernmental Affairs
2023	Robert E. Wallace	Executive Director, VFW Washington Office
2024	Michael P. Rosa	Principal SDVA Liaison, DoD
2024	Martin Caraway	VSO Liaison, USDVA



Kasim Yarn (RI) presenting the Advocate of the Year award to Michael Rosa and his wife.



BG (ret) Les Beavers (KY) presenting the Advocate of the Year award to Martin Caraway.



## NASDVA “HONORARY Members”

Honorary members are nominated and voted on during the NASDVA business meetings

Name	Position
Susan McCrea	USDVA Intergovernmental Office
Hershel Gober	USDVA Deputy Secretary and Acting Secretary
Clayton Clark	NASDVA Secretary, Former Director Vermont DVS
Louie Spinelli	MOPH Foundation Sponsorship of NASDVA
Tom Kelley	Secretary Massachusetts DVA, CMOH Recipient
Bill Biggs	CEO and President HMR Veterans Services, Inc.
Tammi Duckworth	Former Director of Illinois DVA, US Representative
Allison Hickey	Under Secretary VBA
Paul Galanti	Former Commissioner Virginia DVS, Vietnam POW
Tom Moe	Former Director Ohio DVS, Vietnam POW
Liza Narciso	Former NASDVA Assistant Treasurer
Martha Garcia	Former NASDVA Assistant Treasurer

\*All NASDVA Past Presidents per ARTICLE II DEFINITIONS Section 3, are “Honorary Members” when no longer a member (Section 1).

## PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

Through a Memorandum of Understanding, dated 13 February 2012, an “Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence” Award was established to recognize best practices from NASDVA members that have developed effective programs to address the four top-line issues: elimination of the claims backlog, ending veterans’ homelessness, improving access to VA benefits and services, and innovative state programs.

### 2014

- Illinois (Innovative) – Illinois Joining Forces
- Texas (Claims & Appeals Backlog) – Strike Force Teams
- Washington (Access) – Benefits Enhancement
- Washington (Homelessness) – Eliminating homelessness model
- Alabama (Innovative) – Veterans Treatment Court



### 2015

- Alaska (Access) – Alaska Native Sharing Agreement
- Florida (Access) – FDVA Outreach & Branding Campaign
- Idaho (Innovative) - Music and Memory Program
- Ohio (Claims & Appeals Backlog) – DOD Data Sharing
- Texas (Innovative) – Military Veteran Peer Network
- Washington (Innovative) – Washington State Transition Model
- South Dakota (Innovative) – Operation Reaching All Veterans





## 2016

- California (Access) – Women Veterans Outreach Program
- California (Homelessness) – Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program (VHHP)
- Michigan (Access) – Michigan Veterans Resource Service Center (VRSC)
- Michigan (Innovative) – Veterans Community Action Teams (VCAT)
- Nevada (Innovative) – Nevada Veterans Advocate Program (NVAP)
- North Dakota (Access) – Agent Orange Outreach Program
- Washington (Innovative) – Incarcerated Veterans Program



## 2017

- Alaska (Innovative) – Veteran Information System (VIS)
- Virginia (Innovative) – Housing Homeless
- Washington (Innovative) – Public-Private Partnerships grows Healthcare and other services for Veterans
- Alabama (Innovative) – Alabama Veterans Network
- North Dakota (Innovative) – Rural Veterans Court



## 2018

- California (Innovative) – Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise Program
- Idaho (Innovative) – Idaho Veterans Memorials and Monuments
- Maine (Suicide Awareness) – 1<sup>st</sup> annual Military Veterans Symposium: Suicide Prevention
- Massachusetts (Homelessness) – Statewide Advocacy for Veterans Empowerment SAVE
- Minnesota (Claims & Appeals Backlog) – Discharge Access Database System DADS
- Texas (Access) – Veterans Health Care Advocacy Program
- Washington (Innovative) – Vets Corps. Veterans Helping Veterans Navigate Higher Ed.



## 2019

- District of Columbia (Customer Experience) – Veteran Special Outreach & Advocacy Roundtable Series
- Michigan (Customer Experience) – Incarcerated Veteran Program
- Nevada (Claims & Appeals Backlog) – Ask a VSO
- Maine (Homelessness) – Homeless Veteran Coordinator Program
- Nevada (Innovative) – Nevada Veterans Legislative Program
- California (Innovative) – California Transition Assistance Program
- Delaware (Innovative) – Delaware Joining Forces





## 2020

- Alaska (Suicide Awareness and Prevention) – Alaska Coalition for Veterans and Military Families
- Maine (Innovative) – Justice Action Committee
- Michigan (Innovative) – The Veteran Friendly Schools Program
- Minnesota (Innovative) – Veterans Application Tracking System
- New Mexico (Innovative) – The Forgotten Heroes Funeral Program
- New York (Innovative) – The Fresh Connect Checks Program
- Wisconsin (Innovative) – Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program



## 2021

- Arizona (Suicide Awareness and Prevention) – Be Connected Program: A State-wide Model for Upstream Veterans Suicide Prevention
- Idaho (Innovative) – Ceremonial Urn Cover Program
- Kentucky (Homelessness) – The Homeless Veteran Trust Fund
- Minnesota (Delivery of Services to Tribal Governments Serving Native Americans) – Tribal Veteran Service Officer Program (TVSO)
- Nevada (Suicide Awareness and Prevention) – Operation Mission Ready
- Oregon (Customer Experience) – I am Not Invisible Exhibit Women Veterans Program
- Virginia (Claims & Appeals Backlog) – VSVA Benefits Appeals Program



## 2022

- California (Innovative) – Justice Involved Veteran Initiative
- Kentucky (Innovative) – Veterans Songwriting Project
- Maine (Innovative) – Veterans' Dental Network (MVDN)
- Maryland (Innovative) – Serving Those who Served: A Library Partnership
- Nevada (Innovative) – Patriot Employer Program
- NYC, New York (Innovative) – Mission: Vet Check
- Pennsylvania (Customer Experience) – VET Connect
- Virginia – (Suicide Awareness and Prevention) - Identify Service Members, Veterans and Families, Screen for Suicide Risk and Refer for Services (VISR) Pilot



## 2023

- Indiana (Innovative) – Specialty Programs of the Military Family Relief Fund
- Utah (Innovative) – Veteran Business Resource Center
- Kentucky (Innovative) – Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund
- Alaska (Delivery of services to Tribal Governments Serving Native Americans) – Tribal Veterans Representative Program
- Minnesota (Homelessness) – Every Veteran Deserves a Home
- Washington (Innovative) – Military Spouse Liaison
- Nebraska (Claims & Appeals Backlog) – Virtual Claims Clinics





## 2024

- Kentucky (Innovative) – Veterans Red-Carpet Welcome Home
- Minnesota (Homelessness) – SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) Program
- Nebraska (Innovative) - Veterans Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic
- Nevada (Suicide Awareness and Prevention) – Veteran Care Pocket Card
- New York (Innovative) – Veterans Welcome Center Digital Kiosks
- South Carolina (Innovative) – South Carolina Veterans Coalition One Stop Model
- Wyoming (Suicide Awareness and Prevention) – Veterans Talking to Veterans





	YEAR	HOST STATE	PRESIDENT ELECTED		YEAR	HOST STATE	PRESIDENT ELECTED
1st	47-48	Illinois	Homer G. Bradney, IL	39th	86-87	Arizona	William J. Gregg, MN
2nd	48-49	Louisiana	C.Clarence Horton, AL	40th	87-88	New Jersey	Frank Wilkes, AL
3rd	49-50	Minnesota	T.H. McGovran, WV	41st	88-89	Mississippi	Jesse G. Ugalde, CA
4th	50-51	Colorado	William R. Rice, CO	42nd	89-90	Oregon	Sam Black, VA
5th	51-52	Maine	Clinton Green, IN	43rd	90-91	Florida	Douglas Brown, TX
6th	52-53	North Carolina	Melvin T. Dixon, FL	44th	91-92	Nevada	Jon Mangis, OR
7th	53-54	Oklahoma	William K. Barrett, GA	45th	92-93	Arkansas	Dale Renaud, IA
8th	54-55	Michigan	Floyd E. Henderson, ND	46th	93-94	North Dakota	Joseph R. Clelan, PA
9th	55-56	Kansas	Alexander J. Smith, VT	47th	94-95	New Mexico	Earl Peck, FL
10th	56-57	West Virginia	Gordon A. Huseby, WI	48th	95-96	Virginia	Michael C. D'Arco, NM
11th	57-58	Oregon	Charles L. Morris, TX	49th	96-97	Arizona	Norman O. Gallion, AZ
12th	58-59	Illinois	J. Marvin Russell, CA	50th	97-98	Mississippi	Antonio Davila, DE
13th	59-60	Alabama	James L. Crider, TN	51st	98-99	Wisconsin	Dennis Foell, SD
14th	60-61	Wisconsin	Lawrence J. LaLone, MI	52nd	99-00	Hawaii	Gen "Stoney" Wages, KS
15th	61-62	Tennessee	H.C. Saalfeld, OR	53rd	00-01	Puerto Rico	Walt Ozawa, HI
16th	62-63	California	Charles N. Collatos, MA	54th	01-02	Canceled - 9/11	Raymond G. Boland, WI
17th	63-64	New Jersey	James J. Murphy, AZ	55th	02-03	South Carolina	Raymond G. Boland, WI
18th	64-65	Florida	Pete Wheeler, GA	56th	03-04	Louisiana	Joey Strickland, LA
19th	65-66	Washington	Richard C. Manning, MD	57th	04-05	New York	Les Beavers, KY
20th	66-67	Louisiana	Wayne E. Garrett, KS	58th	05-05	Washington	John King, WA
21st	67-68	Massachusetts	Melvin L. Jacobsen, NV		05-06	Mid-year apt.	George Basher, NY
22nd	68-69	New Mexico	Lloyd F. Zander, ND	59th	06-07	Utah	John Garcia, NM
23rd	69-70	Virgin Islands	Walter C. Head, Jr., AL	60th	07-08	Maryland	John Scocos, WI
24th	70-71	Oregon	Robert R. Washburn, ME	61st	08-09	California	Charlie Smith, NC
25th	71-72	Kentucky	O.C. Ball, OK	62nd	09-10	North Carolina	Terry Schow, UT
26th	72-73	Maryland	Larry Laughridge, ID	63rd	10-11	Alabama	Linda Schwartz, CT
27th	73-74	Arkansas	Harry F. Carper, VA	64th	11-12	Oregon	David Fletcher, AR
28th	74-75	Arizona	Frank A. Schmidt, Jr., MI	65th	12-13	Puerto Rico	Jim Willis, OR
29th	75-76	Louisiana	A. Leo Anderson, DC	66th	13-14	Tennessee	W. Clyde Marsh, AL
30th	76-77	Illinois	Fiberto Ruiz, Jr., NM	67 <sup>th</sup>	14-15	California	Lonnie Wangen, ND
31st	77-78	Nevada	Eryle A. Rohlesen, VI	68th	15-16	Florida	David Brasuell, ID
32nd	78-79	Pennsylvania	Ray J. Kauffman, IA	69th	16-17	Texas	Randy Reeves, MS
33rd	79-80	Texas	John H. Easton, MD	70th	17-18	Virgin Islands	Verdie Bowen, AK
34th	80-81	South Carolina	Frank Godwin III, MS	71st	18-19	Massachusetts	Alfie Alvarado, WA
35th	81-82	Louisiana	John Siemer, OH	72nd	19-20	Nebraska	John Hilgert, NE
36th	82-83	Virgin Islands	Joseph C. Anderson, NY	73rd	21-22	Nevada	Thomas Palladino, TX
37th	83-84	New York	Aubrey Bullard, TX	74th	22-23	Hawaii	Wanda Wright, AZ
38th	85-86	Alabama	Rich C. Countryman, AZ	75th	23-24	New York	James Hartsell, FL
				76th	24-25	Indiana	Dennis Wimer, IN





**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DIRECTORS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, INC.  
BYLAWS**

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**ARTICLE I**  
**NAME**

Section 1. The name of the organization shall be the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Inc.

Section 2. The headquarters of the National Association shall follow the residence of the President of such National Association. The address of the National Association shall be the same as the address of the National President or as otherwise prescribed by the Association membership.

Section 3. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Inc. 'Roberts Rules of Order, as Revised', shall govern all procedures not covered.

**ARTICLE II**  
**DEFINITIONS**

Section 1. The term 'Member' as used hereinafter is defined as follows: The Director of a State Department of Veterans Affairs of a State, Commonwealth, Territory, or the District Columbia. The State Service Officer or one holding a comparable position, or his/her designates, or, in the absence of any of the above-named persons, such persons as may be designated by the Governor of such State, Commonwealth or Territory or the Mayor of the District of Columbia and who shall have paid such dues as are hereinafter to be assessed. The person must be a full-time paid employee of the state or district he/she represents.

Section 2. The term 'Associate Member' as hereinafter used is defined as follows: An official or employee of a State Department of Veterans Affairs, or like group who shall have been approved and recommended by the member from his/her state and who shall have paid such dues as are hereinafter to be assessed, or an officer or member of a Veterans or Service organization recognized by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) or its successor.

Section 3. The term 'Honorary Member' as used hereinafter is defined as follows: Such former members previously qualified under Article II, Section 1, and such other persons who upon approval by a majority vote of President and Executive Committee, and Past Presidents are granted an Honorary Life Membership Card by the Secretary of the Association.

Section 4. All staff employees, commissioners and/or Board members directly associated with the respective offices of the members of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs shall be recognized as being non-voting members of NASDVA, in fact with no provision for a dues assessment.

Section 5. The President and Executive Committee shall resolve any questions concerning the eligibility of an applicant for membership in the Association.



**ARTICLE III**  
**PURPOSES**

Section 1. The purposes of the National Association are to foster the effective representation of persons claiming entitlements on account of the honorable military service of any person as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101; to provide a medium for the exchange of ideas and information; to facilitate reciprocal State Services; to secure uniformity, equality, efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to veterans and their family members in all the States and Territories; and to maintain an interest in all veterans' legislation.

Section 2. The National Association recognizes the great worth and merit of all existing congressionally chartered veterans' organizations and asserts a willingness and determination to cooperate with such organizations. It further declares a deep and abiding interest in the welfare of all veterans and their families regardless of organizational affiliation or the lack of it.

**ARTICLE IV**  
**SUB-DIVISIONS OF ORGANIZATION**

Section 1. The National Association shall be divided into five (5) districts comprised as follows:

**Northeast District:** Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

**Midwest District:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

**Southeast District:** Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

**Southwest District:** Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

**Far West District:** Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands.

Each such district shall, from its own membership and while in caucus prior to or at the National Association Mid-Winter Training Conference, elect a District Vice President and such District Vice Presidents shall become members of the National Executive Committee. In each such district, a majority of district members or the official designee in good standing attending the National Association Annual Training Conference shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The District Vice President of each district, or their designated representative from the district, may be a member of the National Legislative Committee. The National Legislative Committee shall meet at the call of the designated Chair of the committee.

Section 3. The representative from each state within the district shall comprise the district committee. The District Vice President may call meetings of the district committee. The District Vice President should notify the National President prior to convening any such meetings. A report of such committee meetings shall be forwarded to the National Secretary for dissemination to the members at large.



**ARTICLE V**  
**ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Each state, after having paid such dues as are hereinafter assessed, shall be entitled to one member with a vote at each National Association Annual Training Conference and/or Mid-Winter Training Conference. Each Director or his/her designee with appropriate credentials is strongly encouraged and advised by National Association to actively participate in all district meetings, the Mid-Winter Training Conference, the Annual Training Conference, and meetings of any affiliated group that will benefit our constituents and NASDVA.

Section 2. There shall be a class of membership described as Associate Members which will be composed of officials and officers, or members of veterans or service organizations recognized by the United States Department of Veterans Administration (USDVA) or its successor, or employees of State Departments of Veterans Affairs or like groups. This class of member may, only upon recommendation or approval of the State Director or his/her equivalent, be an Associate Member of the National Association.

Section 3. Associate Members shall not be permitted to vote in National Association Annual or Mid-Winter Training Conferences or district caucuses but may be permitted to participated in the deliberations and discussions at the discretion of the presiding officer.

Section 4. There shall be an additional class of membership described as Honorary Members; such shall be composed of such individuals as described in Article II, Section 3.

Section 5. Honorary Members shall not be permitted to vote in National Association Annual or Mid-Winter Training Conferences or district caucuses but may be permitted to participated in the deliberations and discussions at the discretion of the presiding officer or committee chairman; all said deliberations and discussions are to be considered advisory only, both as to floor debate and committee session.

Section 6. All staff employees, commissioners and/or board members as described in Article II, Section 4 shall not be permitted to vote in National Association Conferences or district caucuses but may be permitted to participated in the deliberations and discussion at the discretion of the presiding officer.

**ARTICLE VI**  
**AUTHORITY**

Section 1. Absolute authority of the National Association shall be vested in the majority vote of the members at the National Association Annual or Mid-Winter Training Conferences.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall have authority in the interim between National Association Annual Training Conferences, with the advice and counsel of the states that may be affected by action(s) taken by the Executive Committee interests, to take such action as will be in the best interests of the National Association and for the good of veterans generally and shall implement the mandates of the previous National Association Annual or Mid-Winter Training Conference.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**QUORUMS AND PROXIES**

Section 1. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the paid-up members.



Section 2. Any member may, by written authority, empower another official or employee of his/her department or office to act as proxy in his/her stead at any meeting of the National Association.

Section 3. Any member may, by written authority, empower the official representative of another state to act as proxy in his/her stead at any meeting of the National Association.

Section 4. In the event a District Vice President is unavailable to attend an Annual or Mid-winter Training Conference, the District members will caucus to designate a representative for Executive Committee meetings.

## **ARTICLE VIII** **OFFICERS**

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, the Senior Vice President, the Junior Vice President, the five (5) District Vice Presidents, the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Historian, and all Past Presidents who are members of the Association.

Section 2. At the National Association Mid-Winter Training Conference, members shall elect the President, Senior Vice President, and Junior Vice President. These officers will be nominated by a committee consisting of the current President and Past Presidents who are members (Article II, Section 1) and the five District Vice Presidents. Prior to election, there will be a call for additional nominations from the membership. Officers will be elected by a majority vote to serve a one-year term or until the next Mid-Winter Training Conference. If no one candidate receives a majority vote on the first ballot, the association members will conduct a runoff election choosing between the two candidates who received the most votes from the first ballot. These officers cannot be elected to the same office twice, except one who is appointed as a result of a vacancy under the provisions of Article IX, Section 1, who then shall be eligible to seek election for a consecutive term. Only members as defined in Article II, Section 1 are eligible to hold elective office. Persons who become ineligible for membership cease to be eligible to hold elective office.

Section 3. The President with the approval of the Executive Committee shall appoint members, as defined in Article II, Section 1, to serve as Treasurer, Secretary, and Historian of the Association. They will serve until such time as the President with the approval of the Executive Committee appoints a new officer, the officer's appointment is terminated, or the officer resigns. Persons serving in these positions who become ineligible for membership shall be removed from the position.

Section 4. The Executive Committee shall, in addition to other duties assigned by the constitution, be responsible for information technology, fundraising, VSO relations, public affairs and policy development and implementation.

Section 5. A National Association President who may leave office prior to 30 days of tenure because of lack of membership qualification as defined in Article II, Section 1, shall be deemed not to have held office and shall not be recognized to have been a Past President of the National Association.

Section 6. All members of NASDVA who are veterans of the United States Armed Forces and are elected or appointed as officers of the Association shall certify in writing that all periods of their individual service in the United States Armed Forces is characterized as honorable service and that such certification shall be submitted to the NASDVA Secretary within thirty days of their election or appointment. If such certification is not submitted, the office shall be declared vacated and the Executive Committee shall immediately fill, by appointment with a qualified member, the vacated office for the remainder of the term of office.



**ARTICLE IX**  
**VACANCIES**

Section 1. In the event the office of President shall become vacant for any reason, the Senior Vice President shall immediately assume the President's office; in the event the office of Senior Vice President shall become vacant the Junior Vice President shall assume the Senior Vice President's office. They shall serve in these positions until the remainder of the current term. Further, the Executive Committee shall be empowered to fill by appointment the vacated office of the Junior Vice President and solicit nominations from all members, as defined in Article II Section 1, to serve until the next scheduled conference of the Association. At the next conference, election for the Junior Vice President shall take place in accordance with Article VIII Section 1. If the appointed Junior Vice President assumes the vacant position of Senior Vice President prior to being elected by the members, then he/she serves until the next scheduled conference when an election will take place for Senior Vice President. Vacancies occurring among the District Vice Presidents shall be filled through election by and from the membership of the district affected. The President shall call an election as expeditiously as possible to fill the vacancy.

**ARTICLE X**  
**DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

Section 1. The President shall be the executive head of the National Association. He/she shall be chairperson of the National Association Annual Training Conference and of the Executive Committee, and as such he/she will establish the agendas for the Annual Training Conference and Midwinter Training Conference. The President shall be authorized to appoint the membership of the standing committees and shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office of President. The President will appoint a member of the Veterans HealthCare and State Veterans Homes Committee as a liaison to the Association of State Veterans Homes. Any other position (appointed or elected) created by the President, or the body is to be approved by the Executive Committee at each Annual Training Conference. Districts will caucus when necessary.

Section 2. The Senior Vice President shall act as the representative of the President and shall serve in his/her stead upon request. He/she shall perform such duties as delegated by the President, which shall include chairing the Strategic Planning committee and coordinating with the Executive Committee and Committee Chairs to execute the NASDVA Strategic Plan.

Section 3. The Junior Vice President shall act as the representative of the President and shall serve in his/her stead upon request. He/she shall perform such duties as delegated by the President, which shall include chairing the Legislative Committee and assisting with the preparation of the annual testimony to the U.S. Congress.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of all meetings of the National Association and of the Executive Committee and shall perform such other duties as are customarily required by his/her office. The Secretary shall compile and maintain association correspondence including Resolutions and Amendments to the Bylaws and an updated Directory of State Directors and a contact list of members, associate, and honorary members.

Section 5. The National Association Historian shall record, compile, and maintain a history of the National Association and manage historical documents in the NASDVA Dropbox. The historian will maintain an updated database of State best practices and veterans' benefits and services.

Section 6. The Treasurer is the National Association's top financial officer. Partnering with the President and Executive Director, he/she develops and administers the annual budget and provides financial reports to the



Executive Committee and the membership at the Annual and Mid-Winter Training Conferences. The Treasurer shall coordinate with the National Association’s President, Executive Director, and contracted financial institution, for the disbursement of funds.

The Treasurer will ensure the National Association files taxes appropriately with the Internal Revenue Service and all states and territories so that it may retain its status as a non-profit organization. The Treasurer will annually register the National Association as a corporation.

Section 7. The District Vice Presidents (DVPs) shall be the executive head of their respective districts. DVPs should call for a district meeting at the Mid-Winter Training Conference, Annual Training Conference and one other time within their districts annually. Encourage networking among district representatives. Each of the five (5) District Vice Presidents will, in turn, also meet during the Mid-Winter Training Conference and the Annual Training Conference. Each shall be chair of the district meeting and prepare minutes of such meeting. A copy of the minutes shall be distributed to each member of the District and the Secretary of the National Association. Each shall be authorized to appoint the membership of such standing committees as the district may determine necessary. Each shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office of District Vice President. When the Annual Training Conference is held within their district, the DVP will be responsible for hosting any special accommodations at the conference and will be assisted by the other members of the district.

## **ARTICLE XI** **STANDING COMMITTEES**

The President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs shall have the authority to form committees with concurrence of the majority of the Executive Committee. Additionally, the President shall designate membership and a Chair for all committees within sixty (60) days following each Annual Training Conference or after the establishment of a committee. If such chair’s attendance is precluded at either the National Annual or Mid-Winter Training Conferences or unable to serve during the interim between conferences, another member of the committee shall be designated by the President as chair to perform the duties of that office as required. The President may appoint members or associate members to serve on the committees. For each committee there must be clear definitions established by the President as to duties and responsibilities. The list of standing committees will be annotated in the NASDVA Operations Manual.

## **ARTICLE XII** **RESOLUTIONS/MOU/MOA**

Section 1. Resolutions, Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), and Memorandums of Agreements (MOA) may be adopted by a vote of a majority of the members present at the National Association Annual Training Conference or Mid-Winter Training Conference.

Section 2. The Executive Committee, in the best interest of the Association shall have the authority in the interim between the National Association Annual Training Conference and Mid-Winter Training Conference to prepare resolutions, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) that have not previously been considered by the membership and submit such resolutions/MOUs/MOAs to the association membership at the next NASDVA Training Conference.



**ARTICLE XIII**  
**ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE LOCATION SELECTION**

Section 1. The location of Annual Training Conferences will be determined by a majority vote at the Mid-Winter Training Conference business meeting of the preceding year (example: The 2009 Annual Training Conference will be determined at the 2008 Mid-Winter Training Conference). In the event that a state withdraws their offer to host a conference after it has been selected, the Executive Committee will select an alternate location.

Section 2. States that wish to host the Annual Training Conference will provide the President a letter of intent prior to the start of the Mid-Winter Training Conference business meeting. All states that wish to host the Annual Training Conference will be provided an opportunity to present information about their intentions prior to a vote.

Section 3. The location of the Mid-Winter Training Conference will be approved by the Executive Committee.

**ARTICLE XIV**  
**REPORTS AND RECORDS**

Section 1. It will be the responsibility of the National Association Secretary to furnish each member, within sixty (60) days of adjournment, a digest of the minutes of the business meetings held at the Annual and Mid-Winter Training Conferences to include all motions, resolutions and actions.

Section 2. The National Association Secretary will be responsible for the minutes of all Executive Committee meetings with distribution to the membership within 30 days.

Section 3. The Treasurer provides financial reports to the membership at the Annual and Mid-Winter Training Conferences.

Section 4. The National Association Secretary and Treasurer will keep all records current during his/her tenures. All records not of current value shall be retired and forwarded to the headquarters of the National Association for permanent storage.

Section 5. The National Association President is authorized to appoint a General Counsel annually.

**ARTICLE XV**  
**FINANCE**

Section 1. The membership dues of the National Association shall be established by a majority vote of the members during the Annual Training Conference or Mid-Winter Training Conference, with changes in the dues levels taking effect the following fiscal year. In the event no majority is reached, the dues level will remain the same. Honorary Members do not pay yearly membership dues but will pay Mid-Winter and Annual Conference registration member fees.

Section 2. Associate Members may, upon payment of their annual dues, participate as affiliate members. The dues for an Associate Member shall be established by a majority vote of the members during the Annual Training Conference or Mid-Winter Training Conference, with changes in the dues taking effect the following fiscal year.



Section 3. The Executive Committee shall establish the conference fees for the Annual and Mid-Winter Training Conferences.

Section 4. The fiscal year of the National Association shall run from October 1st each year to September 30th inclusive, of the next year. Dues should be paid to the National Association by the Annual Training Conference.

Section 5. An annual budget shall be prepared by the Treasurer and Executive Director and submitted to the membership for approval at each Annual Training Conference. The annual budget will include an estimate for travel expenses for the President and any Executive Committee members to represent NASDVA at nation-wide events and conferences. It will also include estimated expenses for NASDVA annual, Mid-Winter, Executive Committee and District training conferences and meetings.

Section 6. The Executive Committee may contract with an outside organization to manage NASDVA's funds and provide accounting services including membership dues, conference fees, sponsor donations, and all expenditures. This organization will provide quarterly financial reports and an annual audit of the funds to the NASDVA President, Executive Director and Treasurer.

**ARTICLE XVI**  
**BONDING OF OFFICERS**

Section 1. The Treasurer of the National Association shall be bonded in the amount of \$10,000.00 for the faithful performance of his/her duties; such bond to be provided by a reputable commercial surety company, the expense of which shall be borne by the National Association. This bond shall be a type referred to as a 'position bond' and shall be secured for a period of three to five years to take advantage of reduction in premium over a one-year bond. It will be the responsibility of each newly elected President to notify the surety company which issued the current bond of the name and address of any newly appointed Treasurer.

**ARTICLE XVII**  
**DISBURSEMENTS**

Section 1. The NASDVA annual budget may include an appropriation from the National Association treasury to the 'director-host' of each National Association Annual Training Conference to defray the necessary expenses of such conference. The Treasurer shall make this allowance available to the 'director-host' prior to the actual dates of such National Association Annual Training Conference. Each 'director-host' shall, no later than thirty (30) days after the adjournment of the National Association Annual Training Conference, forward to the Treasurer of the National Association any unexpended or unencumbered funds and a detailed written accounting of the expenditure of the National Association funds to the Executive Committee. When approved by the Executive Committee, this accounting shall be made part of the permanent records of the National Association in the custody of the Treasurer.

Section 2. The NASDVA annual budget will include an appropriation to defray expenses for travel, hotel accommodations, registration fees and other related expenses to events, trainings or meetings at which the President and Executive Committee members are representing the Association. This may include expenses incurred to attend the National Association Annual Training Conference and Mid-Winter Training Conference. Executive Committee members shall make an itemized accounting of any balance returned to the Treasurer, who will include it in their Treasurer's annual financial report to the membership.



Section 3. The NASDVA annual budget will include an appropriation for any unforeseen contingencies which may arise, and which are not provided for elsewhere in the Bylaws or other lawful action of the National Association. The fund may also be used to help defray travel costs to represent or conduct the business of NASDVA, to attend Executive Committee meetings providing the President officially calls the meeting. An itemized accounting shall be made to the Treasurer, which shall be noted in the annual financial report and reported to the membership.

Section 4. Employees: The President of the National Association shall be authorized to retain employees or contractors to meet the needs of the Association. The President shall oversee the hiring and termination of employees or contractors, with all hiring and termination decisions voted on by the Executive Committee. The President shall determine the appropriate level of compensation for employees or contractors, with all compensation decisions voted on by the Executive Committee. The President or their delegate will supervise all employees or contractors operating on behalf of the Association.

Section 5. The President and Executive Committee will retain an Executive Director for the National Association who reports to the President and Executive Committee and serves to support and conduct administration for the Executive Committee. He/she routinely informs the executive committee of the association's operational status, as well as advising members on strategies to accomplish the mission and goals. The Executive Director duties include facilitating executive committee meetings, overseeing daily operations of the association, managing the association's finances, including budgeting and account spending in coordination with the Treasurer and the contracted financial institution, develops fundraising for the organization, acts as the point of contact of the Annual and Mid-Winter Training Conferences, and represents the nonprofit with federal agencies, veteran organizations, and the public. Any expenditure of NASDVA funds must be reviewed by the Executive Director and Treasurer prior to being expended by the association's contracted financial institution.

Section 6. At each National Association Annual Training Conference, the incumbent Treasurer, Executive Director with the advice and counsel of the Finance/Audit Committee, will prepare an operating budget for the next fiscal year and present to the National Association Annual Training Conference for approval from the membership.

Section 7. The NASDVA annual budget will include an appropriation for District Vice Presidents to assist in defraying incidental expenses incurred in conducting a district meeting or meetings or may be used to help defray travel costs to attend an Executive Meeting held at a time other than the Washington, D.C. Mid-Winter Training Conference or Annual Training Conference, provided the meeting is an officially called meeting by the President to conduct the business of NASDVA. An itemized accounting shall be made to the Treasurer, which shall be noted in the annual financial report and reported to the membership.

### **ARTICLE XVIII** **AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended at any National Association Annual Training Conference or Mid-Winter Training Conference by a majority vote of two-thirds of the members present provided the proposed amendment has been distributed in writing to all members of the National Association at least thirty (30) days prior to action thereon by the National Association. The proposed amendment may be delivered to members through standard mail, fax, or Email. Approved amendments will take effect immediately unless an effective date was established in their passage.



**ARTICLE XIX**  
**RATIFICATION**

Section 1. All acts heretofore performed in connection with the organization and establishment of the National Association are hereby confirmed and ratified.

**ARTICLE XX**  
**DISSOLUTION**

Section 1. Upon the dissolution of the association and after payment of all outstanding debts of the association, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

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Last amended on March 2, 2025, during the Business Meeting at the NASDVA Mid-Winter Training Conference.



**Vision:** As a collaborative association to be the best advocates for veterans in the nation

**Mission:** Serving Those Who Served

**Agency Description:**  
 The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) is comprised of the Directors, Commissioners, and Secretaries of Veterans Affairs in each state of the U.S. as well as the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Although each state and territory is unique, with its own traditions, programs, and resources, we are united by our common goal to make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.

**Executive Summary:**  
 NASDVA is an organization with a history dating back to 1946. In the aftermath of World War II, veterans earned State and Federal benefits which required coordinated efforts to ensure that veterans received these entitlements. Thus, states developed a Department or Agency specifically to manage veterans affairs and carry out the responsibility for veteran services and program.  
 The NASDVA members represent all fifty states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Nationally, we are the second largest provider of services to veterans and our roles continue to expand.  
 State Directors as leaders of governmental agencies are tasked by their respective Governors, State Boards and/or Commissions with a responsibility to address the needs of veterans regardless of age, gender, era of service, military branch or circumstance of service. We are connected by the bonds of honorable service and united by our common goal to make a positive difference in the lives of our veterans.

Summary of Multi-Year Strategic Priorities			
#	Three Year Strategy	Start Year	Progress / Successes
1	Become a trusted Partner with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs	2016	Executive Leadership meets with VA IGA monthly. Deputy Secretary attended Annual training conference. Undersecretary for VBA attended annual training conference
2	Create systematic strategies to enhance relationship with state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT) government entities	2025	
3	Establish a formal relationship with pertinent veteran service and non-profit organizations that serve veterans	2025	Meet annual with national veterans organizations.
4	Enhance NASDVA's Presence and Capabilities	2025	NASDVA Operations Manual Developed to include job description of Executive Director, Legislative Director, President, VPs, RDVPs, Committee Chairs and submitted for Membership review and approval. Completed a review of Bylaws and the Constitution. Develop Committee Strategic Plans (Strategic Plan Committee) in progress. Fundraising (Conference Planning Committee) is in process Establish 501(C) (19) and associated fundraising.
5	Develop and Enact a Legislative Strategy	2025	Establish a Positive presence on Capitol Hill for NASDVA.



## Current Annual Focus

### Annual Initiatives

## National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

### Fiscal Years 26 - 28 Strategic Plan 3-pager

#### FY22 Annual Objectives

#### Objective Metrics

Strategy #	Objectives	Objective Metrics	Annual Initiatives
#1 Become a trusted Partner with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include NASDVA in VA strategic plan</li> <li>● Create Legislative Initiatives based on research</li> <li>● Create relationships with VA leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Current NASDVA/VA MOU</li> <li>● Inclusion in the VA strategic plan</li> <li>● Each committee meets with associated VA office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Talk with Chief of Staff/Deputy Secretary to make appointment with Strategic planning office (<b>President and Executive Director</b>)</li> <li>● Write language to support VA strategic plan (<b>Strategic Plan Committee</b>)</li> <li>● Meet with SECVA 2 times a year outside of conferences (<b>President and Executive Director</b>)</li> <li>● Meet with Undersecretaries 4 times a year (NCA, VBA, VHA) (<b>NASDVA Committee Chairs for Healthcare, Memorial Affairs, and Benefits</b>)</li> <li>● NASDVA Committee Chairs meet with the corresponding VA office ( <b>All Committee Chairs</b>)</li> <li>● Engage White House IGA and VA IGA (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs sub-committee</b>)</li> <li>● Amend VA/NASDVA MOU annually (<b>President</b>)</li> <li>● NASDVA members on VA Committees (27) (<b>Executive Director</b>)</li> </ul>
#2 Create systematic strategies to enhance relationship with state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT) government entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess the current activity with other federal and state agencies to determine what can be leveraged for the association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Current MOU with other organizations</li> <li>● Meet and greets with DOD, DOL, HUD, USDA, HHS, and SBA leadership</li> <li>● Meet and greets with state legislation associations</li> <li>● Presentation to the NGA and other associations</li> <li>● Press release/announcement of partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a formal relationship with the National Governors Association (NGA) (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs sub-committee</b>)</li> <li>● Create relationships with DOD, DOL, HUD, USDA, HHS and, SBA (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs sub-committee</b>)</li> <li>● Executive Summary that states the business case for the relationships with organizations (<b>President and Executive Director</b>)</li> <li>● Brief NGA at its annual conference (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs sub-committee</b>)</li> <li>● NGA brief NASDVA members at midyear conference (<b>Conference Planning Committee</b>)</li> <li>● Update state fact sheets (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs sub-committee</b>)</li> <li>● Meet with Association Legislative Exchange Council, National Council of State legislators (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs sub-committee</b>)</li> </ul>
#3 Establish a formal relationship with pertinent veterans service organizations (VSOs) and non-profit organizations that serve veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess the current activity with non-profits and veteran service organizations to determine what can be leveraged for the association</li> <li>● Create relationships with VSOs and nonprofits that serve veterans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Each Committee will have one member attend VSO national conferences</li> <li>● Invitation and acceptance of VSOs to speak at NASDVA conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create relationships with VSOs (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs sub-committee</b>)</li> <li>● Send a representative to National VSO conferences (<b>Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, Executive Director</b>)</li> <li>● Exec. Dir. to Exec. Dir. and Pres to Pres. meetings between organizations (<b>Executive Director and President</b>)</li> <li>● Organizations to brief at NASDVA conference (<b>Conference Planning Committee</b>)</li> </ul>



National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs  
Fiscal Years 26 - 28 Strategic Plan 3-pager

Current Annual Focus

Strategy # FY22 Annual Objectives

Objective Metrics

Annual Initiatives

Strategy #	FY22 Annual Objectives	Objective Metrics	Annual Initiatives
<p><b>#4 Enhance NASDVA's Presence and Capabilities</b></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand Website and make more user friendly</li> <li>Become part of leadership and professional development training</li> <li>Increase membership</li> <li>Create effective Committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New website launch</li> <li>Opportunities for all membership to do Executive Leadership training and professional development</li> <li>A strategic plan for the association and a plan from each committee</li> <li>Social media metrics/reach to followers</li> <li>Meeting fundraising goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire Web Designer/Develop a comprehensive IT plan (<b>Executive Committee</b>)</li> <li>Create job description for Executive Director (<b>Executive Director</b>)</li> <li>Investigate executive Leadership training, e.g. SES, Harvard (<b>Executive Committee</b>)</li> <li>Coordinate request for leadership training (<b>Executive Director</b>)</li> <li>Develop Committee Strategic Plans (<b>Strategic Plan Committee</b>)</li> <li>Develop marketing plan (<b>Executive Committee</b>)</li> <li>Continue fundraising (<b>Conference Planning Committee</b>)</li> <li>Create professional development training curriculum for Committee Chairs/Executive Committee/District VPS Standard work for all positions, i.e. President, VPs , RDVPs (<b>Executive Committee</b>)</li> <li>Create a NASDVA Operation Manual (<b>Executive Committee</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>#5 Develop and Enact a Legislative Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend Legislation at the Federal level to Congress</li> <li>Update Membership on significant Veteran Legislation being considered at the Federal Level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bills forwarded to the House or Senate Veteran Affairs Committees</li> <li>Complete timely testimony dates to meet with SECVA and Undersecretaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create legislative agenda (<b>Legislative Committee and Committee Chairs</b>)</li> <li>Meet with Senators/Representatives and White House members (<b>Legislative Committee</b>)</li> <li>Create job description for Legislative Liaison (<b>Legislative Committee</b>)</li> <li>Meet with the Chairs of the HVAC and SVAC (<b>President and Executive Committee</b>)</li> <li>Educate NASDVA members on VSO legislative strategies and legislation (<b>Legislative Committee</b>)</li> <li>Prepare Congressional testimony (<b>Legislative Committee and Committee Chairs</b>)</li> </ul>





## **Governor Mark Gordon**

### **Wyoming**

Mark Gordon grew up on the family ranch in Kaycee, Wyoming, where he learned the values of hard work, integrity, and the importance of working together. As Governor, he brings those values to the table, maintaining his commitment to a Wyoming where her citizens can pursue their dreams while the state retains her unique character. He strongly believes that Wyoming must chart its own course and is a steadfast defender of its interests to do so.



As a conservative, Governor Gordon has worked tirelessly to set Wyoming on a sustainable fiscal path. He is committed to making government more transparent, accessible, productive, and efficient. He believes government is best when it is closest to the people and is committed to giving local communities the tools they need to thrive. He is a staunch advocate of quality education in all modes, public and private, and for all children.

Governor Gordon served as Wyoming State Treasurer from October 2012 until January 2019, when he was sworn in as Governor. During his time in office, he was ranked in the top 100 “most significant and impactful public investor executives.” In addition, under his guidance, Wyoming’s sovereign funds earned a No.1 ranking for the United States and No.3 in the world for transparency by the Peterson Institute.

First elected Governor in 2018, he successfully led Wyoming through some historically difficult times. Consistently rated as one of the top ten governors in the country, he has spearheaded efforts to diversify Wyoming’s economy from technology and finance to agriculture, energy, research, and tourism. He and his wife, Jennie, are dedicated to making Wyoming the best place to raise a family.

Shortly after becoming First Lady, Jennie called on her upbringing and management acumen as a rancher and mother to establish the Wyoming Hunger Initiative, which has meant so much for many in Wyoming suffering from food insecurity.

Governor Gordon and Jennie have four grown children - Aaron; Anne; Bea with husband Austen and their son Crawford and daughter Anntonia; and Spencer with wife Sarah, their son Everett, and twin daughters Violet and Eloise.



**Major General Gregory C. Porter**

**The Adjutant General, Wyoming**

SOURCE OF COMMISSIONED SERVICE ROTC

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES

University of Wyoming - BS - Political Science  
United States Army War College - MSS - Strategic Studies

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED

Field Artillery Officer Basic Course  
Joint Operational Fires and Effects Course  
United States Army War College  
Dual Status Commanders Course (NORTHCOM)  
Joint Task Force Commanders Course (NORTHCOM)  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Level IV Antiterrorism Executive Seminar  
Interim Guard Senior Leader Training (IGSLT)  
United States Judge Advocate School, Reserve Component - General Officer Legal Orientation Course (RC-GOLO)  
Enabling Mission Command Workshop (EMCW)  
Army Strategic Education Program - Basic (ASEP-B)



FOREIGN LANGUAGE(S) None Recorded

PROMOTIONS DATE OF APPOINTMENT

2LT	20 Dec 87	LTC	10 Feb 03
1LT	7 Oct 91	COL	2 Aug 06
CPT	15 Jun 93	BG	20 Jan 15
MAJ	1 Oct 98	MG	27 Jun 19

FROM TO ASSIGNMENT

Mar 19 Present The Adjutant General, Joint Force Headquarters - Wyoming, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Oct 14 Mar 19 Director, Joint Staff - (WY), Cheyenne, Wyoming

Feb 14 Oct 14 Land Component Commander, Joint Force Headquarters, Cheyenne, Wyoming; dual-hat, January 2014 - June 2014 Project Manager, Project Chrysalis, National Guard Bureau, Arlington Virginia

Nov 13 Jan 14 Director, Joint Staff, Joint Force Headquarters, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Jul 07 Oct 13 Chief of Staff, Joint Force Headquarters, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Mar 06 Jun 07 Director of Information Management, Joint Force Headquarters, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Jan 04 Feb 06 Troop Commander, 94th Troop Command, Laramie, Wyoming

Jan 02 Dec 03 S-3, Headquarters, 115th Field Artillery Brigade, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Jan 00 Dec 01 Operations Officer, Headquarters, 115th Field Artillery Brigade, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Nov 99 Dec 99 Administrative Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery, Sheridan, Wyoming

Jul 97 Oct 99 Operations Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery, Sheridan, Wyoming

Oct 96 Jun 97 Commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery, Sheridan, Wyoming

Jun 96 Sep 96 Operations Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery, Sheridan, Wyoming

Jul 94 May 96 Commander, C Battery, 1-49th Field Artillery, Thermopolis, Wyoming

Jun 93 Jun 94 Battalion Fire Direction Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1-49th Field Artillery, Sheridan, Wyoming

Jul 92 May 93 Executive Officer, A Battery, 1-49th Field Artillery, Newcastle, Wyoming

Jan 90 Jun 92 Personnel Officer, 1-49th Field Artillery, Sheridan, Wyoming

Nov 89 Dec 89 Fire Direction Officer, A Battery, 1-49th Field Artillery, Lander, Wyoming

Jul 89 Oct 89 Fire Support Officer, Detachment 2, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3-49th Field Artillery, Laramie, Wyoming

Dec 87 Jun 89 Aerial Observer, 115th Field Artillery Brigade, Cheyenne, Wyoming

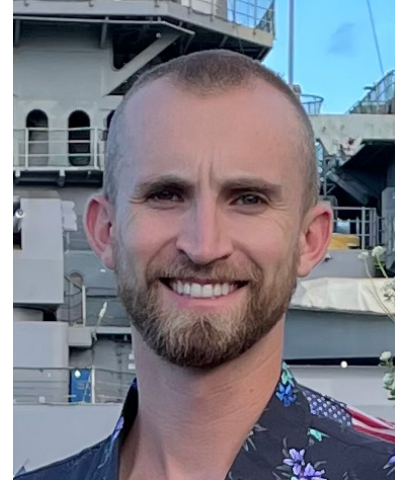


## **Alex Craft**

### ***Enterprise Account Executive for the State & Local Government, Qualtrics***

Alex Craft has been at Qualtrics for almost nine years, focusing his entire time on working with clients in the public sector. Currently, he is an Enterprise Account Executive for the State & Local Government team in the public sector region. During his time at Qualtrics he has really loved growing the ability for Experience Management (XM) in the public sector and helping clients in several aspects of the work they do. That includes helping organizations and those they serve feel engaged; improve trust, retention, satisfaction, etc.; and better understand experiences with services and processes across the board along with helping programs to do things like drive down operating costs, digitize and streamline processes, and deliver experience breakthroughs.

Alex is a native of Utah where he and his wife run a small hobby farm with their two small children. He's also a graduate of Brigham Young University.





### James D. Ridgway

James Ridgway is a partner at the law firm of Bergmann & Moore, LLC where he serves as Director of Programs and Training. He is the author of numerous articles on veterans law, the history of veterans benefits, and argument theory. His work has been cited by the Solicitor General to the Supreme Court, by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to Congress, and by Jon Stewart on the Daily Show. The second edition of his textbook, Veterans Law: Cases and Theory, was published in May 2022.



Previously, Mr. Ridgway was a judge on Board of Veterans' Appeals, where he served as the Chief of Strategy, Innovation, and Programs from 2016-2017 and Chief of Policy and Procedure from 2012-2016. He clerked for the Hon. Kenneth Kramer, an original member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC), and was the senior law clerk to the Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr. In between his periods with the CAVC, Mr. Ridgway was an assistant state's attorney in Chicago. While in Chicago, he taught appellate advocacy at the Loyola University of Chicago School of Law.

Mr. Ridgway has also served as president of the CAVC's bar association, co-chair of the Federal Circuit Bar Association's Veterans Appeals Committee, and editor-in-chief of the Veterans Law Journal. He was the founder and administrator of VeteransLawLibrary.com, a co-founder the National Veterans Law Moot Court Competition (NVLNCC), a founding member of the CAVC Historical Society, and a member of Squadron 8 of the Sons of the American Legion.

Mr. Ridgway's father was a decorated Air Force fighter pilot who flew F-4s for two tours in Vietnam. Mr. Ridgway's career in veterans law began when his father passed away from a service-connected heart condition and he spent his second year of law school successfully disputing VA's denial of his application for educational benefits.

**Glenn Gray****Vice President, Military and Veteran Engagement  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance**

**Mr. Glenn Gray** is Vice President, Military and Veteran Engagement for TriWest Healthcare Alliance, a Department of Veterans Affairs contractor headquartered in Phoenix, AZ. TriWest supports the VA nationally through the Community Care Program, assisting with access to care for our nation's Veterans.

Glenn has more than 30 years of experience and accomplishments in the public, private and non-profit sectors in varying leadership roles. In his current role, he is responsible for oversight of TriWest's customer care and service recovery operations, which include educating Veterans, providers, Members of Congress, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) about the programs and services TriWest provides through its VA contract, as well as addressing customer service concerns for Veterans. Glenn also directs TriWest's community support and outreach efforts and represents TriWest at local, regional and national meetings and conventions.

In addition to his 26 years at TriWest, Glenn has also held roles as the Executive Director of the ASU Alumni Association, Director of Casework and Community Engagement for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and as a constituent services staff member for the late Senator John McCain.

Glenn is an Arizona native and graduate of Arizona State University. He and his wife reside in Chandler, AZ.



### ***Peter Jeffries, MBA***

#### ***National Director, Strategic Campaigns & Integrated Field Management, AARP***

Pete Jeffries leads the Strategic Campaigns & Integrated Management Team for AARP, the nation's largest membership organization with 38 million people. Pete's role involves driving team success through nationwide advocacy, brand building and voter engagement at the national, state and local levels. Focused on financial and health security issues for 50+ Americans, Pete's team this year alone has achieved significant wins, including reducing prescription drug costs for 60 million seniors, lowering taxes for 56 million Social Security beneficiaries, and expanding health and respite benefits for nearly 15 million Veterans and their caregivers.



Known for his strategic leadership and organizational management, Pete served as the first National Director for AARP's Veterans and Military Families (VMF) Initiative which delivers a suite of value-added and award-winning products and services in caregiving, fighting fraud, and employment unmatched in the non-profit Veterans marketplace. As a former Veteran caregiver for his U.S. Army Korean War Combat Father, Pete understands the unique challenges faced by Military Veteran caregivers. During the 2024 election cycle, Pete helped secure the endorsement from the new White House for a \$5,000 federal tax credit for Veteran and other family caregivers.

Before joining AARP, Pete worked in Congressional Leadership under two Speakers of the U.S. House of Representatives and then ran Hill & Knowlton's Public Affairs Practice in Washington, DC. He holds the record as the longest-serving Communications Director for a modern-era U.S. House Speaker. Pete and his wife Kristin, both University of Iowa graduates, live in central Iowa and have two adult children who also are Iowa Hawkeyes.

### ***Sam Shumway***

#### ***State Director, AARP Wyoming***

Sam earned both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Wyoming. He began his career clerking for the Wyoming Supreme Court, then practiced law with two Wyoming firms and served in the Wyoming Attorney General's Office. Since 2016, Sam has been the State Director for AARP Wyoming, leading statewide efforts in issue advocacy, volunteer engagement, and community outreach. Under his leadership, AARP Wyoming has advanced key priorities such as protecting utility ratepayers, strengthening long-term care services, expanding fraud prevention initiatives, and honoring veterans through projects like the Voyage of Valor. Known for building strong partnerships with policymakers, community leaders, and volunteers, Sam works to ensure the voices of Wyoming's older adults are heard in every corner of the state.





## ***Juanita Jimenez-Soto***

### ***National Veterans and Military Families Manager, AARP***

Juanita Jimenez-Soto, a first-generation Mexican American, has a distinguished multimedia career spanning over 30 years. She joined AARP Texas in April 2014 as the Associate State Director of Communications. Her career began as a news anchor for KSPL Radio in San Marcos, Texas, where she created, produced, and anchored a Spanish-language news show while still a junior at Texas State University.

After graduating, Juanita worked as an editor and ENG operator before becoming a reporter/anchor and producer at KGBT-TV in Harlingen, Texas. In 1992, she made a significant leap to KHOU-TV in Houston, a top 10 TV news market. She held several positions while at KHOU including assignments editor, newscast, field, consumer, and digital producer. She was named Employee of the Quarter, served on the diversity board, and managed the station's internship program.



In 2009, Juanita transitioned to Houston Community College (HCC) where she used her digital skills to help inform non-traditional and traditional students, earning a Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from Sam Houston State University along the way. She joined AARP Texas as Associate State Director of Communications in 2014, where she used her innovative media expertise and bilingual skills to advocate for the 50+ multi-cultural community across the state.

In November 2023, Juanita became the first Hispanic woman to lead the National AARP Veterans and Military Families Initiative. This role is significant for her as the wife of a Navy veteran, mother of a West Point honors graduate and Army lieutenant, and aunt to a U.S. Coast Guard member.

Juanita has received numerous local, national, and international awards throughout her career. She has taken advantage of opportunities to serve her community, holding positions on parents' and teacher school boards, organizing volunteers and donations, and providing direct services and communications assets. Currently, Juanita sits on the City of Houston Area Planning Advisory Council, and Texas Food Policy Roundtable.

Juanita attributes her success to the "no fear" attitude and "querer es poder" philosophy she inherited from her parents.



### ***Andrew Tangen***

#### ***President, National Association of County Veteran Service Officers***

Andrew Tangen is the President for the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) and serves as the Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County, Illinois, assisting veterans and their dependents in accessing their benefits. Both of his grandfathers and his great-uncles served during WWII and Korea, and his father served in the Air Force during the Vietnam Era. Andrew served in the US Navy, where he deployed eight times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Global War on Terrorism, including South America, Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander during his service. He is a graduate of The Citadel, with a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Military Affairs; Henley-Putnam University, with a Master of Science degree in National Security Studies; Rutgers University, with a Master's in Business Administration; and, University of Illinois at Chicago School of Law with a Juris Doctor, and is a licensed attorney in the State of Illinois.





FRED S. SGANGA, MPH, FACHE, LNHA

Fred S. Sganga is the Executive Director of the Long Island State Veterans Home at Stony Brook University, a 350-bed Skilled Nursing Facility serving honorably discharged veterans and their families. Board certified in Health Care Management and a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator, Mr. Sganga has worked in a variety of senior level healthcare positions in academic medical centers, community hospitals, long-term care facilities and physician practice management. Mr. Sganga earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Community Health from Hunter College and his Masters of Public Health from Columbia University.

Mr. Sganga serves as an adjunct professor in the Graduate Healthcare Administration Programs at Stony Brook University and Hofstra University. He lectures extensively on the topics of Healthcare Leadership and Long-Term Care Management.

Mr. Sganga is currently the Legislative Officer of the National Association of State Veterans Homes. Mr. Sganga also served as President of this organization in 2011-2012. In his current role as Legislative Officer, Mr. Sganga advocates on behalf on the 161 State Veterans Homes in all 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The State Veterans Home program consists of 30,000 beds and is the largest provider of long term care to our nation's veterans.

He is also a Board Member of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. In addition, Mr. Sganga has served as Regent for the American College of Healthcare Executives representing the Greater New York area and is a member the Association's faculty.

Mr. Sganga has received numerous awards during his career including the 2000 Award of Distinction from the Metropolitan Health Administration Association. In 2008, he received the MHA Program Professor of the Year from Hofstra University. Also in 2012, he received the Secretary's Award from the Veterans Administration for his commitment and dedication to our nation's veterans.

Mr. Sganga resides on Long Island with his wife Marianne, and they have two daughters; Danielle, a pediatric cardiologist at Boston Children's Hospital, and Nicole, a journalist at CBS News in Washington, D.C.



### ***Diane Lynch***

#### ***President, National Association of State Veterans Homes***

Diane Lynch serves as the Division Administrator of Homes for the state of Wisconsin.

A seasoned operations leader with over 20 years of experience and a spouse of a veteran, she is deeply committed to serving veterans and ensuring high-quality person-centered care.

Diane oversees multiple campuses driving transformational change and promoting a strong culture of quality and accountability. Prior to joining WDVA Diane spent 19+ years in the private sector leading senior care campuses - including CCRC's, rehab centers and skilled nursing facilities - across several states, including overseeing and directing several startup skilled care construction projects. She is recognized for her ability to unite teams, strengthen organizational culture, and deliver lasting operational improvements.

Diane holds an MBA from the university of Saint Thomas and a BA in healthcare management.

She is a licensed nursing home administrator in three states.





## TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

3101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22201  
800-959-TAPS ★ 202-588-TAPS (8277) ★ www.taps.org

### BONNIE CARROLL

*TAPS President and Founder*

Bonnie Carroll founded the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) in 1994, at a time when there was no national support network for the families of America's fallen heroes. Through her own loss of her husband, Brig. Gen. Tom Carroll, who perished in an Army plane crash in 1992 along with seven other soldiers, she turned her tragedy into a purposeful effort to create what is today the major national program providing compassionate care for all who are grieving the death of a service member.

Since its launch in 1994, TAPS has cared for the more than 100,000 surviving family members through a national network of peer-based emotional support services; a 24/7 helpline available to those grieving a loss; connections to community-based care throughout the nation; and casework assistance for families navigating all of the resources and benefits available to them.

In addition to founding and serving as the President of TAPS, Carroll also held appointments in the government, including White House Liaison at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under President George W. Bush, Executive Assistant to the President for Cabinet Affairs under President Reagan, and in Baghdad, Iraq, as the Deputy Senior Advisor for Programs in the Ministry of Communications. During her earlier career in Washington, D.C., Ms. Carroll lived and worked on Capitol Hill as a political consultant on Presidential and Congressional campaigns and consultant on national defense issues.

Carroll retired as a Major in the Air Force Reserve, where her career included service as Chief, Casualty Operations, HQ USAF. Prior to joining the USAFR, Maj. Carroll served 16 years in the Air National Guard as a Transportation Officer, Logistics Officer, and Executive Officer.

Carroll has also served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Death Education and Counseling, the Department of Defense Military Family Readiness Council, the VA Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation, Defense Health Board and the Board of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and she is past co-chair of the Department of Defense Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces. She currently serves on the VA Advisory Committee on Families, Caregivers and Survivors. Co-author of *Healing Your Grieving Heart After a Military Death*, she has published numerous articles on grief and trauma following a military death. She has appeared on CNN, FOX, NBC's *The Today Show*, and other national programs speaking about military loss.

In addition to receiving the 2015 Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama, Carroll was featured in *People Magazine* as a *Hero Among Us*; was named a recipient of the Community Heroes Award by the Military Officers Association of America; has been recognized by the Defense Department with the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Award for Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Service, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service; and has received the Army's Outstanding Civilian Service Medal and the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award.

Ms. Carroll holds a degree in Public Administration and Political Science from American University and has completed Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government's Executive Leadership Program on International Conflict Resolution. She is a graduate of several military service schools, including the USAF Logistics Officer Course, Squadron Officers School, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Academy of Military Science and USAF Basic Training (Honor Graduate).





### *Jeff von Waldburg*

#### *President & CEO, Panoramic Software Corp.*

Jeff von Waldburg is the President and CEO of Panoramic Software Corp., developer of **VetPro**, a leading case management and claims support platform used by Veterans Services Offices across the country.

A 1999 graduate of Princeton University, Jeff began his career at Panoramic in customer support and went on to serve as a developer, project manager, and Chief Operating Officer before becoming CEO in 2014. In 2016, he assumed full ownership of the company.

Originally developed in the 1990s through a partnership with California counties and the California Department of Veterans Affairs, VetPro has facilitated over **\$6 billion** in awarded claims to California Veterans. Under Jeff's leadership, Panoramic expanded VetPro into a **nationwide platform**, launched in 2019 to meet the evolving needs of VSOs and the Veterans they serve.

When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted in-person services, Jeff made VetPro freely available to counties nationwide—enabling remote signature capabilities and ensuring uninterrupted claims processing during a critical time. Today, **VetPro processes tens of thousands of claims monthly**, and is relied upon by thousands of VSOs in **hundreds of state and county offices** nationwide.

Jeff continues to lead Panoramic with a strong focus on innovation, modernization, and public-sector collaboration—driven by a mission to empower Veterans Services Offices and improve outcomes for Veterans and their families.

He lives in Southern California with his wife and two daughters.





## ***Modie Lavine***

### ***Senior Outreach Coordinator, Road Home Program***

Modie Lavin is a proud lifelong Chicagoan and a nationally respected advocate for veterans, military families, and mental health awareness. A Gold Star Mother, Modie lost her son, Corporal Conner T. Lowry, in Afghanistan in 2012—an experience that deepened her commitment to supporting those who serve and the families who stand behind them.

Since 2015, Modie has served as the Senior Outreach Coordinator for the Road Home Program: The Center of Excellence for Veterans and Their Families at Rush University Medical Center, where she has played a pivotal role in the program's growth and reach. Through her work, she has connected hundreds of veterans and family members to life-changing, evidence-based treatment for the invisible wounds of war—such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety—while advancing public awareness around suicide prevention and the stigma surrounding mental health.

Widely admired for her passion, authenticity, and relentless dedication, Modie Lavin continues to be a force for healing and hope within the veteran and military community—honoring the fallen by lifting up the living.





### ***Randy Cahow***

#### ***Director of Product Management, Tyler Technologies***

Mr. Randy Cahow, a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) with a Secret security clearance, has over 20 years of experience. Cahow and the whole of Tyler Technologies are dedicated to working for the benefit of our nation's veterans and VSO communities. He excels in managing complex Java/J2EE projects and directs a team to develop strategic software solutions, collaborate with stakeholders, and enhance operational processes, resulting in a significant increase in client base and effective responses to client needs and technical requirements. His initiatives, including leveraging Learning Management Systems for Veterans' Benefits, demonstrate his commitment to innovation and client satisfaction within Tyler Technologies.



**Elizabeth Dole Foundation**

CARING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

**Marianne Delatorre, Community Engagement Manager,****Elizabeth Dole Foundation**

Marianne Delatorre serves as the Community Engagement Manager for the Elizabeth Dole Foundation leading the Hidden Heroes Cities and Counties Program and Hidden Heroes Online Caregiver Community (HHCC). She manages partnerships with cities, counties, and states to promote advocacy campaigns, coalitions, initiatives, and proclamations that support comprehensive caregiver support. Marianne is the

liaison between the Foundation and thousands of military and veteran caregivers in the HHCC online community. Becoming a caregiver to her Navy veteran mother at age 11, Marianne is passionate about driving resources and empowerment to Hidden Heroes and their families. She is proud to oversee the Hidden Heroes Communities programs where she believes wholeheartedly in the power of inclusive communities to uplift caregivers.

Proud to call San Diego home, Marianne remains active as a co-chair of the San Diego Veterans Coalition's Family Life Action Group. In her past role, Marianne supported military community outreach for CA Caregiver Resource Centers. She holds a dual Bachelors of Arts degree in Political Science and Ethnic studies from the University of California, San Diego where her work focused on minority women veterans.



**Elizabeth Dole Foundation**

CARING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

**Meredith Beck, Vice President of Government Affairs and Community Engagement, Elizabeth Dole Foundation**



Having dedicated over 20 years to the veteran, caregiver, and military community, Meredith Beck is the Vice President for Government Affairs and Community Engagement for the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. Previously serving as a strategic, policy, and programmatic consultant for several veteran-serving non-profit organizations, she was honored to recently be appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to a two-year term as a member of the Federal Advisory Committee on

Veterans' Family, Caregivers, and Survivors. She spent over eight years on Capitol Hill working for members of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, followed by a period of time as the National Policy Director for the Wounded Warrior Project. A graduate of Davidson College, she currently resides in Arlington, VA with her husband, two sons, and their dog River.



## ***Hunter Thompson***

### ***Professional Staff Member, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Majority***

Hunter Thompson is a Professional Staff Member for the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee majority team. His portfolio includes issues within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) including workforce, dental, long-term care, homelessness, quality/patient safety, State Veterans Homes, facility oversight and more. Before joining the committee in the spring of 2023, Hunter spent more than four years working for Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) covering issues within the Veterans Affairs, Finance, and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committees. He grew up in the Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW) area before attending the University of Arkansas where he graduated with a degree in Political Science.



## ***Abby Roubal***

### ***Professional Staff Member, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Minority***

Abby Roubal is a Professional Staff Member for the Democratic staff of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, under Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal (D-CT). She has been with the Committee since 2021 and covers a wide range of VA health care-related issues, including long-term care, women's health, military sexual trauma, VA research, pharmaceuticals, dental care, Fourth Mission, LGBTQ+ veterans, and the CHAMPVA program. Abby is originally from Colorado and is a graduate of Santa Clara University.





### **Gary Woodward**

#### ***Democratic Staff Director, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance & Memorial Affairs***

Gary Woodward was born in Washington, D.C. to a military family, and lived the typical Army Brat existence until settling primarily in southern West Virginia, and then later northern Virginia. There he attended high school, and college at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA, where he received his B.S. in Environmental Science. Mr. Woodward then taught Earth Science and Oceanography at Osbourn High School in Manassas, VA before leaving to begin work on Capitol Hill in late 2002.



Mr. Woodward served in various positions for former-Representative Denise Majette of Georgia and Representative Emanuel Cleaver before being named Legislative Director for Representative David Scott of Georgia in January 2006. Mr. Woodward served in this position, principally responsible for agricultural policy and foreign affairs, until March 2014 when he was tapped to serve the Obama Administration as Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs at the Department of Agriculture. While at USDA, Mr. Woodward was responsible for policy oversight of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Grain Inspectors, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

Mr. Woodward served at USDA until July 2016, when he was once again called back to Capitol Hill this time as Chief of Staff, again for Representative David Scott of Georgia, where he served until November 2020. After a brief stint in the private sector Mr. Woodward returned to the House of Representatives to work on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in December 2021. There he serves as the Democratic Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

In his free time Gary enjoys biking, hiking and spending quiet time with his wife Terra, and 5-year-old daughter, Zola.

### **Alexandra Lightfoot**

#### ***Professional Staff Member and Counsel, Subcommittee on Health***

Alexandra Lightfoot is from Kissimmee, Florida. She has worked for the U.S. House and Senate, including the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, the House Committee on Homeland Security, and the Office of U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (MO). She began her career on the Hill as an intern in Representative Scott Rigell's (VA-02) district office. Alexandra's past roles include policy and advocacy work for Concerned Women for America and Family Research Council.



Alexandra was a judicial law clerk for the Supreme Court of Virginia. She graduated from the College of William & Mary in 2014 and from Regent University School of Law in 2017.

Her husband is a U.S. Navy veteran and practices election law. Born at 24 weeks, he was later nominated to the U.S. Naval Academy (Class of 2013) by pro-life Representative Marilyn Musgrave (CO-04). The Lightfoots attend McLean Bible Church in Arlington, Virginia.



## **Hollie Scoma**

### ***President, National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators (NASWVC)***

Hollie Scoma serves as the inaugural State Women Veteran Coordinator for the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs. In this pioneering role, Hollie leads statewide outreach efforts focused on supporting the more than 20,000 women veterans in Arkansas. She provides education, advocacy, and access to vital resources to ensure women veterans are seen, heard, and supported.

In addition to her state role, Hollie is the current President of the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators (NASWVC). Under her leadership, NASWVC has expanded from 14 to 31 state coordinators, now representing and supporting over 1.3 million women veterans across the United States. The association's mission is to advocate for women veterans through strategic partnerships, comprehensive training, and proactive information exchange. It works to identify barriers hindering the successful transition of women veterans and recommend solutions through legislative, programmatic, and outreach activities. In 2024, Hollie was honored to speak at the VA Center for Women Veterans Quadrennial Summit, where she highlighted the importance of equity, access, and representation for women veterans nationwide.



A proud United States Air Force veteran, Hollie served 15 years on active duty as a Public Health Craftsman. She deployed in 2011 to Balad Air Base, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and later to Al Jaber Air Base, Qatar, for Operation New Dawn from 2011 to 2012. Hollie and her husband Justin, an Army veteran, are raising their two children in Arkansas, which they proudly call home. She is especially proud to be the first woman on her mother's side of the family to serve in the military, continuing a legacy of service and paving the way for future generations.



### ***Benjamin Patton***

#### ***Founder and Executive Director, Patton Veterans Project***

Benjamin Patton is the founder and Executive Director of the Patton Veterans Project (PVP), a non-profit which harnesses the power of filmmaking to help veterans coping with posttraumatic stress (PTS) to reduce isolation and build community.

Since 2011, PVP has held more than 75 film workshops helping nearly 1400 veterans US military bases, VA hospitals, and private clinical facilities in the US and abroad craft more than 300 short films about their service-related challenges. In 2022, PVP published a joint-VA clinical study demonstrating that vast majority of unenrolled veterans with diagnosable PTSD made a mental health appointment within two months of completing the film workshop.

Prior to founding the Patton Veterans Project, Ben worked in television and music production in New York City for nearly 20 years. Among other things, he was a producer and development executive at PBS's New York City flagship station, and as a commercial music producer. He also operated Patton Productions, which created private video biographies of veterans and military families.



A descendant of six generations of West Pointers dating back to 1812, including WWII's General George S. Patton, Jr., Ben has spent most of his career supporting military veterans and their families in various ways. He is the author of, *Growing Up Patton* (Berkley Caliber - 2012), a memoir about his father, Major General George S. Patton IV, a highly decorated veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars. Ben has been featured on CBS This Morning, NPR's Weekend Edition, Morning Joe, and Fox and Friends, has written for Smithsonian Magazine, The Huffington Post, and is a columnist for Veterans Life Magazine. He is currently a contributing columnist for Veterans Life Magazine. In 2024, Ben was awarded the Meritorious Public Service Medal, the highest commendation awarded by the United States Army to a civilian.

Ben earned his BA from Georgetown University and MA in Developmental Psychology at Columbia University-Teachers College. He and his wife and two young sons split their time between Manhattan and Garrison, NY.



***Kerry Buck, AIA, LEED AP***

***Senior Principal, SFCS Architects***

With 37 years of experience, Kerry is a project principal with SFCS and has led the architectural design, engineering design, and planning for more than 30 veterans’ facilities and life plan communities across the country, dedicating the past 25 years of his professional career to the design of innovative environments for veterans and seniors that support independence and provide a high quality of life. Kerry has worked on State Veterans Home projects in RI, MI, OK, KS, and WV. Kerry’s work has received recognition, such as from the 2021 Senior Housing News Best Skilled Nursing/Post-Acute Design of 2021, located in Chesterfield, MI.



**EDUCATION:**

Bachelor of Architecture,  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

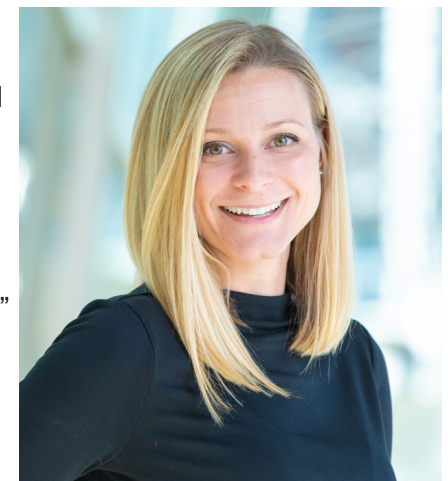
**AFFILIATIONS:**

American Institute of Architects  
Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professional

***Justine Sowers, NCIDQ, CID, ASID***

***Senior Associate, SFCS Architects***

Justine has over 18 years of expertise creating interior environments for veterans, seniors, hospitality, higher education, and healthcare clients and is actively working on new veteran homes in Oklahoma, Kansas, Maryland, and West Virginia. She focuses on achieving a timeless interior environment that is responsive to the needs of her clients, appropriate for their demographic and within budget and schedule. Justine has extensive expertise with space planning, programming, and selecting interior finishes, decorative lighting, furnishings, artwork, and accessories. Her work at the Michigan Veterans Home in Chesterfield, MI earned top honors in the “skilled nursing/post-acute” category of the 2021 Architecture and Design Awards from Senior Housing News (SHN). Additionally, Justine’s work at the Rhode Island Veterans Home in Bristol, RI earned the “Best in Rhode Island” award from The 11th Annual 2018 International Interior Design Association (IIDA) New England Interior Design Awards.



She holds a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Radford University. Justine is a Certified Interior Designer (CID) and is certified by the National Council for Interior Design Qualifications (NCIDQ).

**EDUCATION:**

Bachelor of Science, Interior Design,  
Radford University

**AFFILIATIONS:**

American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)



### Christi Kruse

Senior Vice President, Product, Optum Serve

Christi Kruse has over 25 years of experience in health care, working with some of the industry's most prominent companies. She is the Senior Vice President of Product at Optum Serve, where she leads the team that develops and manages the products and capabilities that serve a broad range of federal customers.

Prior to this role she was SVP, Federal Solutions within OptumServe's growth team where she was responsible for bringing the vast resources of the UnitedHealth Group enterprise to the federal government health market. She also served as vice president of Government Marketing at Optum, where she was responsible for the go-to-market strategies for the federal and state segment marketing teams, government product marketing, market research, and the management of Optum brands in the government market.



Christi also has held other leadership positions in the health care industry, including UnitedHealthcare, where she led member acquisition marketing, clinical communications and member on-boarding materials for the organization's Community & State business. During this period, Christi helped lead the initiative to consolidate and transition the nine local brands from AmeriChoice to the newly establish UnitedHealthcare master brand. Christi also served on the Marketing Brand Leadership Team for UnitedHealthcare during the establishment of that brand strategy, and in product marketing for OptumHealth's Care Solutions organization.

Before joining UnitedHealthcare, Christi was a marketing leader at Kaiser Permanente for eight years, where she held a number of Marketing and Brand Strategy roles, including important contributions to Kaiser Permanente's successful "Thrive" brand campaign. She also enjoyed leadership and creative positions at several integrated marketing agencies in Chicago and Southern California. Christi holds a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design and Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame. She lives in Minnetonka, Minn., with her husband, two children, and a menagerie of pets.



## **Henry L. Huntley, US Army, Retired**

### **Military, Veterans and Youth Advocate**

Birthplace: Atlanta, Georgia

Education: Kentucky State University (BA), Central Michigan University (MA), United States Army War College (MA), University of North Carolina (Kenan-Flagler Executive Leadership Training)

Brigadier General Henry L. Huntley was Commissioned from the University of Kentucky and assigned as an Infantry Officer – serving our Country Honorably for more than 31 years (1983-2014).

Huntley held several command, operational and staff assignments including multiple tours in the Pentagon. He has served Africa, Europe (Germany), Southwest Asia, and the Middle East.

In 2003, he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as the Deputy Chief of Communications and Public Affairs for Coalition Forces Land Component Command and Combined Joint Task Force-7. He deployed again in 2007 and 2009 in support of Multi-National Forces Iraq.

Later in his career, he served as the Director, Public and Congressional Affairs, US Army Materiel Command, shortly thereafter, as the Deputy Commanding General, United States Army's Recruiting Command (USAREC). Huntley's culminating assignment was as the US Army Director for Human Resources Policy Directorate (HRPD) (now Army Resiliency Directorate (ARD), Headquarters, Department of the Army - G1. Following retirement from the US Army, Huntley continued his journey of service with the many Altruistic Advocates and Servant Leaders at the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2015.

At VA, Huntley served America's Veterans, Family members, Caregivers and Survivors, in multiple rewarding assignments, culminating his service [there] as the Executive Director, State, Local and International Engagement, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, on 14 February 2025.

In this assignment, Huntley and team worked diligently [in-step] with VA's Administrations, The White House, Department of State, and other Interagency Partners; all while collaborating and facilitating government-to-government relations opportunities and broadly creating valuable Access and Education of VA's World-Class Benefits, Services, and Programs.

Huntley continues to advocate for the Nation's Military and the myriad Veterans Communities. He "fights like Hell, everyday" on behalf of those who have given so much on behalf of a grateful nation. proud recipient and Member of the Order of Saint Maurice (Centurion), a recognition of honorable service and contributions to the Infantry, our Army and the nation.

He remains an ardent mentor of America's Youth who are the next generation of global leaders — advising them to ALWAYS strive to meet their fullest potential no matter the obstacles. And, as with his fraternity's fundamental purpose: Strive for "Achievement in Every Field of Human Endeavor."

Huntley is greatly passionate about his family and Baseball! He and his wife are Blessed with two wonderful children who have provided the Huntley family with a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law, and four beautiful grandchildren.





### ***Mona Dexter***

#### ***Vice President, Military and Veteran Affairs, Comcast NBCUniversal***

Mona Dexter is the Vice President of Military and Veteran Affairs at Comcast NBCUniversal. She leads initiatives to support military and veteran communities, including promoting digital opportunity and making the company a top military-ready employer. Previously, Mona served as Chief of Staff and Vice President at Hiring Our Heroes, a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation program focused on workforce development and equity.

Mona's extensive community leadership experience includes roles in adult learning and career development, with involvement in AVID and Army Family Programs. She serves on the USO Global Advisory Council and chairs the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education. Mona holds degrees from the University of Maryland and Kansas State University. As a military spouse for over 25 years and proud mother of a U.S. Army soldier, Mona brings a deeply personal commitment to empowering military families.





## OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS

### Michael R. Odle

Director, Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs Collaboration Office



Mr. Michael (Mike) Odle serves as the Director of the Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs Collaboration Office (DVCO). As such, he is the central point of contact within the Office of the Secretary of Defense for the White House, Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal agencies, and stakeholders regarding Service member and Veteran programs. He regularly provides strategic communication, planning, and operational oversight in support of DoD/VA enhanced collaboration, coordination and established interagency goals.

Appointed to the Senior Executive Service in November 2015, Mr. Odle was the Veterans Health Administration's senior communications official responsible for executing the national policy, planning, management and evaluation of communications programs for the largest integrated health care system in the country, serving nearly nine million Veterans annually at over 1,200 health care sites. His office encompassed media engagement, digital media, advertising, internal information, history and nearly 150,000 volunteers serving America's Veterans. He worked to enhance communication with Veterans, Veteran Service Organizations, VA's dedicated volunteers, the news media, and the American public.

He has more than 20 years of accomplished public, legislative, intergovernmental affairs and marketing experience with the government, military, non-profit and private sector. He has held leadership positions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Odle is an Air Force Veteran and currently serves as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, assigned to U.S. Southern Command, Doral, Fla. During his military career, Mr. Odle served as the Assistant Director, Military Compensation Policy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower & Reserve Affairs), Pentagon; Senior Press Officer for the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, Afghanistan; spearheaded the Multinational Public Affairs Office in Bangladesh during a United Nations peacekeeping support operation; and served as a Public Affairs Officer in Louisiana during critical phases of rescue and relief efforts during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Mr. Odle received his bachelor's degree in hospitality and tourism with an emphasis in marketing from Black Hills State University, S.D. and a bachelor's degree in international business from the University of the Potomac, Washington, D.C. He earned a master's in international management from Western Sydney University, Australia. Mr. Odle is a recipient of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, and the State of California Commendation Medal for crisis communications.



**Michael C. Miller**

**Director, Military-Civilian Transition Office**

The Military-Civilian Transition Office (MCTO) is a function within the Defense Human Resource Activity's Defense Support Services Center. MCTO designs, supports, oversees, and evaluates the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program (TAP), SkillBridge Program, Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP), and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon initiatives (BYR). MCTO provides streamlined transition and reintegration services to efficiently deliver resources, training, information, and deployment-cycle support to transitioning service members, members of the National Guard and Reserve, and their families worldwide.

Mike is a retired U.S. Army “Soldier for Life” who completed Chief Human Capital Officer assignments at U.S. Army installation, Division, and Corps; strategic enterprise assignments in Department of the Army, joint, and multi-national headquarters; and operational deployments in Somalia and Afghanistan.



**THOMAS J. HERTHEL  
OF COUNSEL  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM (NVLSP)**

Mr. Tom Herthel serves as *Of Counsel* to the National Veterans Legal Service Program (NVLSP). In that capacity, Tom is responsible for providing counsel to the NVLSP Executive Director on matters relating to strategic partnership development. He also serves as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Richmond Law School, where he teaches Veterans Law, Military Law, and coaches the National Veterans Law Moot Court (2022 national champion) team.



Before joining NVLSP in 2022, Tom served as a Deputy Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services. In that capacity, Tom was responsible for leading the Agency's Benefit Services, Virginia Veteran and Family Support, and Cemeteries service lines. Tom joined the Virginia Department of Veterans Services as the Benefits Director in 2014.

Immediately before joining the Department of Veterans Services, Tom served as the Director of the Air Force General Counsel's office in Europe, where he led a team responsible for providing legal support to the United States Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as for negotiating defense agreements throughout Europe. Tom retired from the military in 2012, having served a total of 26 years as a Navy Corpsman, Army Intelligence Officer and Air Force Judge Advocate (JAG). He is a combat veteran.

Tom attended the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science. He attended Samford University's Cumberland School of Law, graduating with a Juris Doctorate degree. Tom also earned a Masters in Law (LL.M) in Military Law from the Army's Law Center in Charlottesville, Virginia and a Certificate in Military and Veterans Health, Policy and Advocacy from William & Mary Law School. He is admitted to practice law before the Supreme Court of the United States, the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, and the Supreme Court of Alabama.



### ***Dr. Julie Elledge, LMFT, MCC, NBC-HWC, BCC***

#### ***Founder, Mentor Agility***

Dr. Julie Elledge is an entrepreneur and the founder of Mentor Agility, a renowned company specializing in trauma-informed training and education. With over 30 years of experience as a licensed therapist and 20 years as a coach, Dr. Julie is a leading figure in trauma-informed coaching. Mentor Agility, under her leadership, offers over 200 hours of credentialed training approved by the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC). The company has been recognized for its innovative and impactful programs, including the “Veterans Talking To Veterans” initiative. This program trains veterans to coach their peers and family members using trauma-informed techniques, earning the Wyoming Veterans Commission the Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence in Innovation in Suicide Protection award from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.



Mentor Agility has received several accolades, such as the Spirit of Wyoming award from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the best dual-credentialed program award for 2023 from Life Coach Magazine. Dr. Julie holds three coaching credentials, including the Master Certified Coach (MCC) from ICF and the National Board Credentialed Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC). Beyond her work with Mentor Agility, she has developed multimedia curricula for prominent organizations like Apple Education, NOAA, and NASA. Dr. Julie’s dedication to advancing trauma-informed care and her innovative educational approaches continue to set new standards in coaching and therapy, making a profound impact on the communities she serves.

### ***Daniel Shannon***

#### ***Director, Wyoming Department of Corrections***

Director Daniel Shannon brings 40 years of correctional experience to our agency leadership. He has been Wyoming Department of Corrections (WDOC) Director for the past 5 years and has held correction leadership positions within two (2) state agencies. As a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, Director Shannon’s tenure includes positions such as parole agent, correction officer, corporal, unit manager and warden to name a few. He is currently the chairman of the 14 Western State correctional agencies.





## **Steve Murray**

Steve Murray is Communications and External Affairs Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. The retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel provides oversight and direction of the department's public affairs program of community outreach, media relations, social media engagement, branding and employee communications linking Florida's 1.4 million Veterans, their families, and survivors to earned services, benefits and support. He also serves as the department's emergency manager. An Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran, he assumed his current duties in 2006. He serves on the Board of Directors for Honor Flight Tallahassee, the Florida Health Care Association's Public Relations Committee, and the Florida Council of Chapters for the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). He is an associate member of NASDVA, where he is chair of the State Veterans Homes Committee.



## **Mike Kolejka**

As Managing Partner and Senior Living Practice Leader, Mike supports our Nation's Veterans by overseeing the design and construction of over 17 new State Veterans Homes. With nearly 22 years of experience at Grace Design Studios, Mike and his team are currently designing the first new Veteran Adult Day Healthcare program in the country. This unique program will be integrated into the design of the new Florida State Veterans Home in Collier County.



Post Occupancy Evaluation is another area that Mike is passionate about since they help his team continue to enhance and improve their designs. A longtime supporter of NASDVA, Mike has presented several times to the association on a range of topics focused on making great homes for our Nation's heroes. His passion and thoughtful designs are also focused on providing the staff who care for our veterans with a great place to work and amenities to improve quality of care.

## **Tom Payton**

With 39 years of experience designing large scale facilities across the country, Tom is passionate about designing buildings that create more cohesive and functional campuses and foster healthy social communities. With a foundation in regional, sustainable design, his buildings respond to each unique site and environment while enhancing place and exhibiting the craft of construction. Tom has been the project manager on several state veterans homes and has been instrumental in helping those states achieve operational and building area efficiencies through his ability to create innovative solutions.



## **Daily Wright**

As a Partner and Interior Design Studio Leader, Daily consistently celebrates the important role of interior architecture in creating environments that encourage healing and healthy lifestyles. With a passion for beauty, comfort, and engaging spaces, Daily considers herself somewhat of an alchemist--working with materials, light and color to create living spaces that renew the spirit and body. She truly shines when crafting the vision of the interior architecture for these unique amenity spaces as these are the areas where residents flourish.





### ***Nadhal Eadeh***

#### ***Senior Vice President of Federal Relations, WellHive***

Nadhal Eadeh joined WellHive in April 2019 and currently leads the company's marketing, strategy, congressional outreach, and government services portfolio. A key driver of WellHive's mission, he plays a pivotal role in the VA External Provider Scheduling (EPS) program, working closely with state and rural health associations, critical access hospitals, and VA academic affiliates to improve care coordination for Veterans through the EPS platform.

With over a decade of experience in federal service, Nadhal previously held multiple roles at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), serving under several Under Secretaries for Benefits (USB). In his final position, he was a Special Assistant and the Intergovernmental and Veteran Service Organization Liaison, where he built strategic partnerships to advance Veteran benefits and services.

Nadhal holds a Master's degree from Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy and a Bachelor's degree from John Carroll University.





## ***Phyllis J. Wilson***

### ***President, Military Women's Memorial***

Phyllis Wilson served 37 years in the Army as a Military Intelligence (MI) Voice Intercept Operator. She has served around the globe – visiting more than 35 countries – in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and North America. In August 1990, she was mobilized to support OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/OPERATION DESERT STORM and served with XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, NC. In December 2002, she mobilized for OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM as a senior Counter Terrorism Analyst. She deployed for OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM as an Intelligence Analyst with Special Operations.



Chief Warrant Officer Five (CW5) Phyllis J. Wilson served as the 5th Command Chief Warrant Officer for the United States Army Reserve and a key member of the Executive Team managing an organization of more than 200,000 personnel with an annual operating budget of more than \$8 Billion. She was a Senior Military Fellow with the Chief of Staff of the Army's Strategic Studies Group focused on Global issues 2050 and beyond.

Phyllis is a Registered Nurse and holds two Master's degree, two Bachelor of Science degrees, three Associate degrees, and a certificate in Non-Profit Management from Duke University. She attended the Defense Language Institute for both German and Spanish. She is a graduate of the Program in Advanced Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center and School in Garmisch, Germany.

Her military decorations and awards include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary & Service Medals, the Army Parachutist Badge, and the Army Staff Badge. In 2017, she was inducted into the Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame.

She is President of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation – the only major national memorial honoring the 3 Million women who have defended America from the Revolutionary War to today. She is a member of the Board of Directors for Policy Vets; Allied Forces Foundation; the Army Women's Foundation; and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA). She is also a Senior Fellow at AUSA. Phyllis serves as an Army Reserve Ambassador for Maryland which is afforded the rights, privileges and protocol status of a VIP-5, a 2-Star General Officer equivalent.

Phyllis is a member of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Order of the World Wars, Association of the United States Army, Association of the United States Navy, Women Marines Association, Reserve Organization of America, Military Women Across the Nation, Army Women Veterans Association, Military Officers Association of America, Disabled American Veterans, Air Force Association, U.S. Army Warrant Officers Association, the Mayflower Society, the Daughters of the American Revolution, National Defense Industrial Association, and Women In Defense.



### ***Kenneth A. Arnold***

#### ***Acting Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals***

Mr. Arnold joined the Department in February 2019 and currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer responsible for executive oversight of more than 110 Veterans Law Judges, 900 staff attorneys and 200 professional support staff dedicated to resolving veteran appeals regarding claims and eligibility for service-connected disability ratings and benefits, VA healthcare access or services, and VA cemetery or burial benefits. Immediately prior to his current role, Mr. Arnold served for three years at the Department of Justice, where he was responsible for the administrative management and operational functions of the DOJ Asset Forfeiture Program, including review and evaluation of all Asset Forfeiture Program activities and oversight of nearly \$9 billion in asset forfeiture funds. His staff also provided centralized operations of forfeiture-related systems and applications used by roughly 9,000 Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers and prosecutors to account for nearly 1.5 million assets seized from criminal enterprises. Mr. Arnold previously served for four years as the Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs at the Department of Commerce, overseeing three operating units comprising approximately 25% of the Department's personnel.



Mr. Arnold is a retired U.S. Air Force judge advocate, starting his career when he enlisted at the age of 17. His active duty career spanned over 30 years in a wide range of assignments throughout the United States and overseas, to include service in Turkey, Kuwait, and Iraq. After spending a year on Capitol Hill as a National Defense Fellow, Mr. Arnold served four years as an Associate Deputy General Counsel for the Department of Defense before embarking on a variety of senior level positions which allowed him to lead several of the Air Force's largest legal offices during the last 7 years of his military career. His last military assignment was as Chief of the Air Force's General Litigation Division, where he led a team of nearly 90 attorneys and paralegals engaged in federal court litigation and administrative proceedings throughout the United States. He began his SES career in 2011.

Humbled and honored to serve our veterans in his current role, Mr. Arnold views his service at VA like returning home. When he was a toddler, his father became a 100% disabled veteran and their family was completely reliant on VA medical care and associated benefits. Mr. Arnold's wife is also a former VA nurse.



**VA**

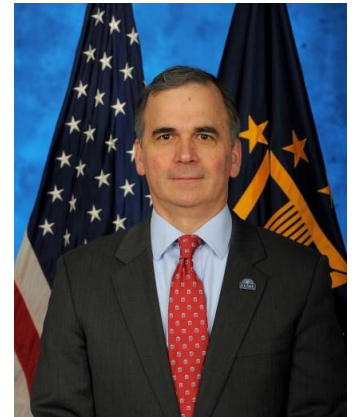


U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

National Cemetery Administration

**Glenn Powers**

**Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations  
National Cemetery Administration (NCA)**



Glenn Powers was appointed as the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs on March 10, 2011. As part of a re-organization in 2016, Mr. Powers was reassigned to be the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations. Since 2011, he has been responsible for leading five district (regional) offices, 135 national cemeteries, and NCA operations including the National Cemetery Scheduling Office and Memorial Products Service processing sites nationwide. Mr. Powers provides leadership for the Headstone, Marker, Niche Cover, Medallion and Presidential Memorial Certificate Program; services to determine eligibility for NCA administered

burial and memorial benefits; and programs to develop and improve VA national cemeteries. NCA annually provides interments for more than 130,000 Veterans and eligible family members and delivers more than 650,000 Presidential Memorial Certificates and 350,000 headstones, markers and niche covers to national cemeteries, state Veterans and tribal cemeteries, private cemeteries and next of kin around the world. Mr. Powers joined NCA in 2006 as the Director of Memorial Service Network IV in Indianapolis where he managed the operations of 27 national cemeteries in nine states. Mr. Powers was a United States Army infantry officer, retiring in the grade of lieutenant colonel in 2006. His military assignments included combat tours in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Just Cause; and various command and staff positions at Fort Ord, Calif.; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY; and Fort Campbell, Ky. His final military assignment was as Professor of Military Science and Battalion Commander for the U.S. Army ROTC unit located at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis.

**CAREER CHRONOLOGY:**

- 2016 – Present Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations, NCA, Washington DC
- 2011 – 2016 Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs, NCA, Washington DC
- 2006 – 2011 Director, Memorial Service Network IV, Indianapolis, IN

**EDUCATION:**

- 2010 Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program
- 2009 Veterans Health Administration Health Care Leadership Institute (ECF Members)
- 2008 Federal Executive Institute - Leadership for a Democratic Society
- 1996 Masters of Arts in Geography, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.
- 1986 Bachelor of Science, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY.



### ***Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D.***

#### ***Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs***

The Honorable Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D., was nominated by President Donald J. Trump to serve as the 11th Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Deputy Secretary Lawrence was confirmed by the United States Senate on March 27, 2025, and sworn in the following day by Secretary Doug Collins.

As VA Deputy Secretary, Dr Lawrence is the Department's second-in-command and Chief Operating Officer directing policy and operations while ensuring coordinated action and compliance with the Secretary's directives.

During President Trump's first term, Deputy Secretary Lawrence served as VA's 7th Under Secretary for Benefits, overseeing the delivery of more than \$100 billion in direct benefits to millions of Veterans and their dependents. Since 2012, Dr Lawrence has been a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. Service to the Citizen recognized him as a Champion of Change with their 2019 Government Executive of the Year Award, and Federal Computer Week has selected Deputy Secretary Lawrence three times as one of their top 100 public service leaders.



Outside of his government service, Dr. Lawrence is a businessman with 35 years of experience solving management problems in large, complex organizations and the author of several books on effective and efficient government. As a private sector executive, he was a consulting partner at two Fortune 500 companies.

Dr. Lawrence served as a Captain in the U.S. Army, graduated from the Army's Airborne School, and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. He earned a Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Economics from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

***Russell Keogler******Vice President of Corporate Operations, HMR Veterans Services***

Russell Keogler is an accomplished leader with 17 years of experience across a diverse range of healthcare sectors, including long-term, acute, and pre-hospital care. He currently serves as the Vice President of Corporate Operations for HMR Veterans Services Inc., where he oversees business operations for the organization and its affiliated companies.

Prior to his current role, Russell served as the Regional Vice President for South Carolina and Maryland, and as the Administrator of Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. He began his work within the State Veterans Home Program within the admissions department at the Long Island State Veterans Home. Before his tenure in State Veterans Homes operations, Russell served as the Assistant Director – Hospitals for Health and Hospital Corporation.

Russell is actively involved in industry associations, currently serving on the budget and legislative committees of the South Carolina Health Care Association. For the past two years, he has also chaired the Networking and Technology Committee for the National Association of State Veterans Homes.

Russell resides in Anderson, South Carolina with his wife Christine and their two children, Knox and Quinn.





### ***Bryan Escobedo***

#### ***Executive Director, Technology & Innovation, Combined Arms***

Bryan is the Product Owner of Combined Arms' technology. He currently leads the organization's Technology & Innovation Department as well as all national expansion efforts, serving as the chief consultant to states seeking to establish a data-driven collaborative model for social impact. Most recently, Bryan became a 2023 Presidential Scholar at the G.W. Bush Presidential Center through the Stand To Veteran Leadership Program.



In 2003, Bryan enlisted into the United States Marine Corps as a Combat Engineer. He completed three tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He attained the rank of Sergeant and was awarded the Purple Heart, Navy Achievement Medal, and Combat Action Ribbon. Bryan returned to his hometown of Houston, Texas to pursue a degree in Communications, with minors in both Philosophy & Psychology, from the University of Houston-Downtown.

In 2010, while in college, Bryan started to apply his military leadership to community leadership. He started five veteran-focused nonprofit programs and delivered lectures centered on developing a positive post-military identity. Bryan specializes in blending software and collaborative community strategy to create large scale networks of veteran-services.



## ***Sunaina Kumar-Giebel***

### ***VISN 19 Network Director, USDVA***

Sunaina Kumar-Giebel was appointed as the Network Director of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 19 on June 4, 2023. She is responsible for the direction and management of all operations, finances, and clinical programs of eight healthcare systems and more than 100 additional sites of care, 20,000 employees, serving nearly 1,000,000 eligible Veterans, and an annual budget of \$5 billion.

She previously served as the VISN 19 Deputy Network Director (DND) and Chief Operating Officer (COO) since July 2014, responsible for the operations, management, planning, budgeting, and service delivery in the provision of health care throughout the five primary states of Colorado, Montana, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming, as well as portions of Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, and Texas.



Prior to her role as DND/COO, she served in the VHA Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (DUSHOM) in Washington, DC, directly impacting VA's mission, organization, programs, and systems.

Mrs. Kumar-Giebel completed the Graduate Healthcare Administrative Training Program (GHATP) and multiple federal leadership programs. She is an active member in the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) and a member of the VHA Regents Advisory Council. She has been serving as the Chair of the GHATP Board since 2014. She is also a graduate of Leadership VA (LVA) in 2015.



### ***Margarita Devlin***

#### ***Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Benefits***

Margarita Devlin serves as the Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Benefits. In this capacity, she leads more than 35,000 Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) employees who deliver a full array of non-medical benefits to Service members, Veterans, their families, and survivors. VBA provides Disability Compensation, Pension and Fiduciary, Home Loan Guaranty, Life Insurance, Education benefits, Outreach, Transition and Economic Development, and Veteran Readiness and Employment. Through a nationwide network of 56 regional offices, special processing centers, and VBA headquarters, she oversees the administration of these programs for more than six million beneficiaries receiving more than \$194 billion in direct benefits each year.



Before assuming her current duties, Ms. Devlin was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations and Management at the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). There, she administered programs to advance employment opportunities, protect workplace rights, and provide transition assistance for hundreds of thousands of Veterans, service members, and military spouses annually.

Ms. Devlin's federal career spans more than 25 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs. She has served as the Veterans Health Administration's Chief Learning Officer—guiding workforce development for the nation's largest integrated health-care system—and as VBA's Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, where she helped administer disability compensation, pension, fiduciary services, education, home-loan guaranty, life insurance, Veteran Readiness and Employment, and military-to-civilian transition programs. She began her public service as a Rehabilitation Counselor, steadily advancing through leadership positions across VBA, the Veterans Health Administration, and VA Central Office.

A Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Ms. Devlin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of South Florida.



## ***Bryan Gray***

### ***CEO & Co-Founder, HereNow Help***

HereNOW Help is a marriage of Bryan Gray's passion for technology that comes as a Carnegie Mellon alumni, and from his 20 years as a family counselor. His passion for helping both active military and veterans comes from his life growing up in a military family, and his first hand experience of the many areas of mental health support needed for our servicemen and women. HereNOW Help is currently being used across the country by various veteran service organizations, states, major healthcare systems, behavioral health centers, schools, universities, hospitals and many more.



HereNOW Help is a 30-in-1 mental wellness platform for veterans, active military and their families (i.e. meditations, daily check-in's, assessments, on-demand counseling, chat rooms, suicide prevention tools, substance abuse recovery, etc). Built on a suite of apps and a web-based desktop platform, HNH's features and tools are designed to help individuals in three phases of their mental wellness journey. 1) Self-Care: Tools to manage one's own mental health. 2) Peer-Care: Connect with others like yourself to find community and peer support. 3) Clinical-Care: 24/7/365 on-demand counseling and crisis intervention.



### ***Michael Fisher***

#### ***Chief Officer, VA Readjustment Counseling Service***

Michael Fisher was appointed as the Chief Readjustment Counseling Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS) in May 2016. He has direct leadership and oversight of the 303 Vet Centers, 84 Mobile Vet Centers, numerous satellite locations, and the 24/7 Vet Center Call Center. Vet Centers have been proudly providing counseling, referral, and community engagement services to Veterans, service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and their families since 1979. Vet Center assets are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. As Chief Officer, Mr. Fisher also advises the Under Secretary for Health in policy issues effecting the readjustment of Veterans and their families and issues surrounding the combat experience.



Mr. Fisher began his career with VA as an outreach specialist at the Baltimore Vet Center, ensuring increased access to care and services for his fellow Veterans. He progressed in responsibility at the local, regional and national level, culminating in his appointment as Chief Officer. Prior to his VA career, he served more than 10 years with the Pennsylvania National Guard and was deployed to Iraq as an infantry non-commissioned officer in 2005. Following this combat deployment, he was medically discharged from the military. He holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) from the Catholic University of America.



## **David “Clay” Ward**

### ***Rural Desk Officer, VA Office of Rural Engagement***

David “Clay” Ward serves as the Rural Desk Officer for VA’s Office of Rural Engagement (ORE), an office within the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. As the Rural Desk Officer, Clay leads the VA in collaboration with the White House Domestic Policy Council, Rural Partners Network (RPN) and the Rural Prosperity Inter-Agency Policy Council. Through the RPN, Federal agencies are renewing their commitment to rural communities by providing targeted staffing, tools, and resources. For VA, the ORE engages with internal and external stakeholders to deliver outreach, communications, and coordination with rural communities so that Veterans can more easily access the health care, benefits, and other resources they have earned.



Clay’s father was a combat Vietnam Veteran and so he brings a special enthusiasm to his work at VA. He shares what he knows from personal family experience and the positive impact VA services and benefits make on the lives of Veterans and their families. Clay has extensive experience working in the Indian Health Service, tribal health programs, urban Indian health programs, and rural communities. He recently served in VA’s Office of Tribal Government Relations as a program analyst and the Designated Federal Officer for the Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs. Clay is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Clay received a Master of Science in Human Resources (Counseling) from East Central University and a Bachelor of Arts from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. In 2022, he completed the Public Health Training Certificate in American Indian Health at the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health.



### ***Diane Cullo***

#### ***Senior Advisor, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs***

Diane Cullo joined the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in June 2025 as Senior Advisor in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, where she leads engagement with state, local, and international partners to strengthen policy coordination and improve delivery of services to veterans nationwide. Her extensive experience in strategic communications, public affairs, and stakeholder engagement equips her to navigate complex governmental landscapes and drive impactful policy outcomes.

Diane is a successful solopreneur where she provided strategic and tactical counsel to raise awareness, enhance image, shape policy, and build market share through high impact, calculated solutions. In that capacity, she supported the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) as a contractor for tactical planning, streamlining processes, new business and proposal development for the purchasing and distribution of healthcare pharmaceuticals, equipment, and services for our nation's veterans.



With a career spanning nonprofit organizations, private consultancy, and federal appointments, she excels in building bridges between governmental entities, delivering results through strategic coordination and leadership.

# External Provider Scheduling

WellHive is proud to be the technology solution for community care scheduling at VHA sites nationwide.



Side-by-side comparison of appointment availability across VHA's trusted network of external providers



Direct scheduling of Veteran referrals with providers



Configurable provider search and filtering to align with VHA's access standards



Real-time and actionable metrics for monitoring and managing Veteran care and network performance

By leveraging the WellHive platform, VHA can offer direct, integrated scheduling access across their external provider networks, furthering their commitment to providing Veterans with the soonest and best care.





# HMR Veterans Services: Where Veterans Continue Their Story

*Serving Veterans and Families with the High Quality  
of Life They Deserve*

## HMR Veterans Services, Inc. is proud to sponsor NASDVA 2025

HMR Veterans Services is the only senior living organization committed exclusively to serving veterans and their families so they can find connection, camaraderie, and purpose. We create homes where veterans are welcomed, celebrated, and served with the high-quality and dedicated care that they deserve.

That's why we are proud to sponsor the **National Association of State Directors of Veteran Affairs 2025 Summer Annual Training Conference.**



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#HMRVSI #VeteranCare #NASDVA



# Dedicated to improving Veteran health across the nation

Part of UnitedHealth Group®, Optum Serve leverages UnitedHealthcare® and Optum® to deliver solutions that meet the broad spectrum of health care needs throughout the federal government.

## Community care services

We ensure that our nation's Veterans have access to the right care, at the right time and in the right setting.

## Health services

From well-being and prevention to care coordination, we're here to simplify how those you serve receive top-quality, reliable care.

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# It's More Than Just Architecture.

It's a veteran's home and it's designed to serve them.

"Nursing Home" is not a term associated with the communities we design. SFCS' mission is for veterans to feel welcomed and comfortable in a space that is built for them and their specific needs. As experts in senior living and veteran home design, our research-backed work rejects the hospital look and feel of traditional senior living facilities and embraces the idea of home.

By providing fully integrated architecture, interior design and engineering services, we can efficiently coordinate innovative solutions. This means better cost control and high-quality construction documents that minimize challenges for your general contractor during building.

Stop by booth #32 to further discuss how we can help your state veterans get home.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO SEE OUR PROJECTS  
OR VISIT [GO.SFCS.COM/NASDVA2025](https://go.sfcs.com/nasdva2025)

# SFCS

architecture | engineering | planning | interiors

## YOUR VETERAN HOME EXPERTS



**Kerry Buck**  
AIA, LEED AP  
**Senior Principal**  
540.525.6699  
kbuck@sfcs.com



**Justine Sowers**  
NCIDQ, CID, ASID  
**Sr. Interior Designer/  
Senior Associate**  
540.915.1148  
jsowers@sfcs.com



**Bud Hart**  
AIA, NCARB  
**Senior Design  
Architect/Associate**  
704.940.6850  
chart@sfcs.com



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- Fully HIPAA compliant and third party certified annually
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- Support clients remotely and contactless
- Batch upload documents and submit files up to 100MB each
- Instant submission confirmation
- Real-time submission status to VBMS
- Notifications and Reminders to track suspense dates and tasks



[info@vetpro.us](mailto:info@vetpro.us)



[www.vetpro.us](http://www.vetpro.us)



# Supporting those who served and still serve.

AARP has a long history of honoring and supporting those who have served in the United States armed forces. We do this by connecting active duty, veterans, and families with free resources to meet their needs.

**Visit [aarp.org/veterans](https://aarp.org/veterans) for helpful resources on benefits, fraud prevention, jobs, caregiving, discounts, and more.**



#AARPSalutesVets



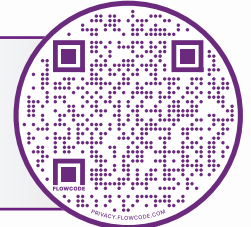


**HEROES**  
WITH HEARING LOSS

# Captions At Your Service

Hearing loss is one of the top service-connected disabilities for veterans. This is where a Hamilton® CapTel® captioned telephone can make a real difference. When you can listen and read every word in a conversation, staying connected with what matters most is no longer a challenge.

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Provided by Hamilton® CapTel®. FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE BUT REGISTERED USERS WITH HEARING LOSS FROM USING INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) CAPTIONED TELEPHONES WITH THE CAPTIONS TURNED ON. Automatic speech recognition software generates captions of what the other party to the call says, and, in certain circumstances, a live communications assistant may be included on the call to make needed corrections and/or add call details. The captions are then sent to the phone. There is a cost for each minute of captions generated, paid from a federally administered fund. To learn more, visit [fcc.gov](https://fcc.gov). Third-party charges may apply: the Hamilton CapTel phone requires high-speed internet access (Wi-Fi capable) and in some cases, may require telephone service. Third-party trademarks mentioned are the property of their respective owners. CapTel is a registered trademark of Ultratec, Inc. Copyright ©2025 Hamilton Relay. Hamilton is a registered trademark of Nedelco, Inc. d/b/a/ Hamilton Telecommunications. 061825

## Connecting Our Nation's Heroes to Health Care

For TriWest, there is no other mission. We've spent nearly 30 years providing access by building and maintaining strong networks of high-performing medical professionals to care for our nation's heroes.



Proud sponsor of the 2025 NASDVA Annual Training Conference



# WICHE

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

We seek to help Western states best serve the behavioral health care needs of their residents and to develop, prepare, and continuously improve the behavioral health care workforce.



SCAN TO VIEW OUR CURRENT PROJECTS OR  
LEARN MORE AT [WICHE.EDU/BEHAVIORAL-HEALTH/](http://WICHE.EDU/BEHAVIORAL-HEALTH/)



[www.nvlsp.org](http://www.nvlsp.org)



Representing Veterans and their families before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC), the Federal Circuit and the Supreme Court



Training and mentoring service officers and other Veterans' advocates



Litigating class action cases in support of the Veteran community



Representing Veterans in discharge upgrade and other personnel proceedings



Offering PACT Act expertise and assistance to Veterans through our Burn Pits Claims Assistance Program



Authoring the preeminent treatise of Veterans law— the *Veterans Benefits Manual* (VBM)



Providing legal expertise to support Veterans' family caregivers



**All at no cost to Veterans, their families,  
or their survivors...EVER!**



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We're proud to offer exclusive benefits for service members, veterans, and military spouses that make staying connected easier and more affordable. It's our way of saying thank you for your service.

Looking to become a confirmed military customer?  
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# Honoring Our Nation's Hidden Heroes



At the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, our mission is to strengthen and empower military and veteran caregivers, their families, and their communities by identifying and addressing their key challenges through innovative, practical, and sustainable solutions. We strive to ensure that every caregiver receives the recognition, support, and respect they deserve.

LEARN MORE AT [WWW.ELIZABETHDOLEFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.ELIZABETHDOLEFOUNDATION.ORG)





# TYLER TECHNOLOGIES VETERANS' BENEFITS

Tyler Technologies' Veterans' Benefits is designed for VSOs to efficiently manage all aspects of assistance to Veterans, from outreach activities and initial referral through claim submission, adjudication tracking, and benefits processing.



To learn more, visit  
[tylertech.com/veteransbenefits](https://tylertech.com/veteransbenefits)



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by Nature.

**FORward**  
by Mission.

Military, Veterans & their families deserve honesty, clarity, and a path to results.

GenVETS, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Veterans Service Organization that either provides, or partners with other nonprofits who provide: *Pro bono* benefits & benefits advocacy, plain-language VA benefits education, mental health advocacy, education & suicide awareness programming.

We promote cross-sector teams including state & federal government, nonprofits, and private partners to fix what isn't working. We debunk myths, explain processes, and help develop practical solutions for Veterans through collaboration.

Genuine advocacy, where Veterans live: Close to home.



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**Cohen Veterans  
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## Therapy for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families

Cohen Clinics provide therapy to post-9/11 veterans, service members, and their families, including those from the National Guard / Reserves.

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Learn more:  
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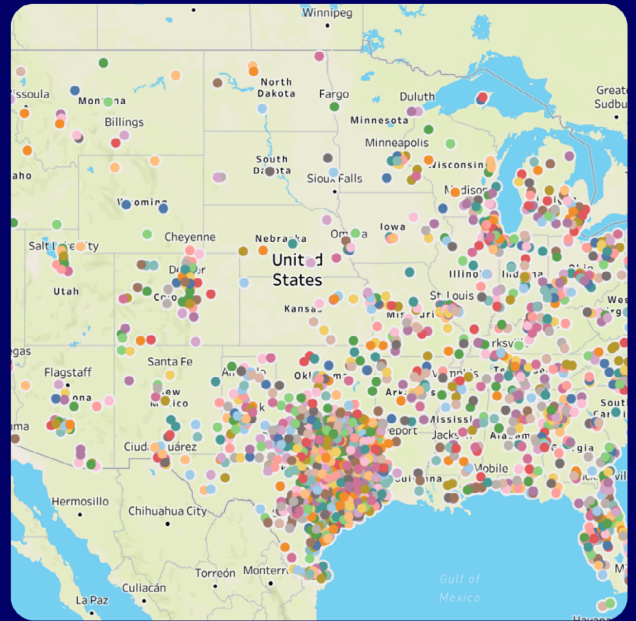
find a  
**Cohen Clinic**  
near you

## Transform Your Veteran Support Services

Combined Arms provides a secure, user-friendly platform that integrates state, federal, and nonprofit services with real-time data insights. Our configurable solution helps you:

- Better serve veteran families
- Make data-driven decisions
- Streamline service delivery

**BOOK YOUR DEMO TODAY**



★ RANGERS LEAD THE WAY ★

Since 1973, the U.S. Army Ranger Association, Inc. (USARA) has been a social membership organization dedicated to supporting active duty and veteran U.S. Army Rangers. It is currently organized as a Georgia nonprofit and recognized by the IRS as a Tax-Exempt Organization under Section 501 (c)(3). Its purpose is to strengthen relationships among all U.S. Army Rangers – past, present, and future; foster camaraderie among those who have earned the title U.S. Army Ranger; and provide an extended community for all US Army Rangers and their families.



## ACTIVITIES

An important component of USARA's mission is to support Ranger programs. It does so by sponsoring its own activities, and providing funding and support for activities of other entities and individuals that support the Ranger community. These activities include

- Annual Ranger Muster / Ranger Rendezvous
- Fundraising events
- Monthly breakfasts
- Regional planned events

## MEMBERSHIP

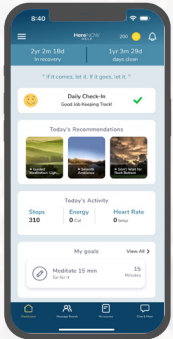
USARA accepts applications for membership from individuals who have been awarded the Ranger Tab or who have served in a combat arms capacity in a U.S. Army Ranger unit for at least one year, or, if less, were awarded the CIB, CAB, or CMB while serving in that unit. USARA also provides affiliate and associate memberships to individuals who support the Ranger community.



As veterans use the mental health app, *our powerful AI engine* analyzes hundreds of data points in real-time to establish a suicide risk score. Individuals that cross a certain threshold are immediately alerted and provided access to real-time intervention.

## 1 Self-Care

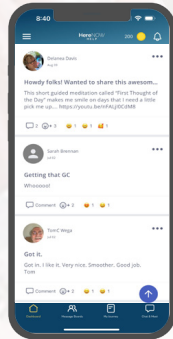
Tools to manage your own mental wellbeing.



- Suicide Prevention
- Addiction Recovery
- Meditations
- Self-Assessments
- Daily Check-In
- Track Progress
- Journal

## 2 Peer-Care

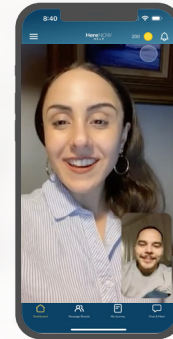
Find community support from others like you.



- Message Boards
- Chat Rooms
- Share Stories
- Find Mentors
- Share w/ Loved Ones
- Support Resources
- Talk, Text, Videos

## 3 Clinical-Care

24/7/365 on-demand counseling (talk, text & video).



- 24/7/365
- 83,000 clinicians
- Talk, Text and Video
- Manage Calendars
- Integrate with EMRs
- Share w/ Loved Ones
- Support Resources

**Hiring Our Heroes**  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

# From Service to Success

Hiring Our Heroes offers free, proven programs to help veterans, transitioning service members, and their spouses thrive in the civilian workforce.

### ★ Program Highlights ★

In-Person & Virtual Hiring Events

Fellowships | Upskilling

Networking | Career Resources

Let's build a stronger future for your veteran families together.

[HiringOurHeroes.org/NASDVA](https://HiringOurHeroes.org/NASDVA)



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# NASWVC Annual Conference Agenda

## 2025 Annual Training Conference September 7 – 10, 2025 Little America Hotel, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Conference Focus: The agenda will include committee meetings, discussions on best practices, opportunities for networking, engagement with sponsors, and updates on bylaws. Additional highlights will feature signing the Memorandum of Agreement between the CWV and NASDVA and updates from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>

**8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.** Registration and Information – *Goose Chase Adventure begins-*  
*Grand Ballroom Hall* The Executive Members of NASWVC will supervise the designated table.

**10:00 – 11:00 a.m.** Executive Committee Meeting  
*TBD* **Hollie Scoma**  
(Coffee and Bagels provided for EXCOM members)

**12:30 – 1:20 p.m.** Women Veterans Coordinators Meeting  
*TBD* (Welcome, Introductions, Conference Agenda, Q&A)  
**Hollie Scoma (AR)**, NASWVC President  
**Veda Brooks (GA)**, NASWVC Senior Vice President  
**Jodi Barnett (WI)**, NASWVC Junior Vice President  
**Laura McKee (IN)**, NASWVC Senior Advisor  
**Kelly McCartney (ID)**, NASWVC Treasurer  
**Amy Demenge (CO)**, NASWVC Secretary  
**Dina Parrott (KY)**, NASWVC Historian

**1:20 – 1:30 p.m.** **Break and Transition to Committee Breakout Session**

**1:30 – 3:00 p.m.** Committee Breakout Sessions: Representatives from NASWVC will be present.  
(Room assignment will be posted.)

- Legislative - Jodi M. Barnett Attending
- Public and Intergovernmental Affairs – Kelly McCartney Attending
- Veterans Benefits/Education (SAA) -
- Memorial Affairs
- Veterans' Health Care and Mental Health
- State Veterans Homes
- Outreach and Homelessness – Veda Brooks Attending
- Veterans Transition and Employment – Amy Demenge Attending
- Women Veterans – Hollie Scoma Attending
- Minority Veterans – Dina Parrott Attending

**3:00 – 4:00 p.m.** **NASWVC Debrief of NASDVA Committee Meetings**  
*Sinclair Room*

**\*\*\*\*This agenda is subject to change based on scheduling and logistical considerations related to the event. We appreciate your understanding and will inform all attendees of any adjustments as they arise. Thank you for being so flexible. \*\*\*\***



# NASWVC Annual Conference Agenda

5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Vendor Social (NASDVA)– **NASWVC Dinner TBA**

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration and Information  
*Grand Ballroom Hall* Conference Committee

6:00 – 7:45 a.m. Breakfast  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Elizabeth Dole Foundation**

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. NASDVA Opening Ceremony – It is recommended that all NASWVC attend.  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **John A. Scocos**, NASDVA Executive Director

NASDVA Welcome  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President

National Anthem & Honor Guard  
**Wyoming National Guard**

Native American Veterans Ceremony  
**Wind River Dancers**

Pledge of Allegiance  
**BG (ret) Les Beavers (KY)**, NASDVA Legislative Director

Invocation  
**Verdie Bowen (AK)**, Past President

Introduction of **Governor Mark Gordon**  
Introduction of **Major General Gregory Porter**, Adjutant General  
**Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. NASWVC – Getting to Know You.  
*Sinclair Room* In three minutes, let's inspire each other by briefly sharing our state programs and roles.

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Heroes With Hearing Loss**

10:45 – 12:00 p.m. NASWVC Committee Updates  
*Sinclair Room*

- Fund Raising Committee – Veda Brooks
- Training Committee – TBA
- Conference Committee - Jodi M. Barnett

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# NASWVC Annual Conference Agenda

- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: AARP – National Veterans and Families Programs**  
**Speaker: Peter Jeffries, Director, Juanita Jimenez-Soto, Manager**
- 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.** NASWVC Women Veteran Coordinators Best Practices  
*Sinclair Room* Applicable states will present Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)  
- Outreach
- 2:30 – 3:15 p.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education**
- 3:15 – 4:00 p.m.** NASWVC – Motivational/Inspirational Speaker  
*Sinclair Room* (TBD)
- 4:30 – 5:20 p.m.** Transportation to Offsite President’s Reception  
**Wyoming Staff**  
**Terry Bison Ranch Train Ride starts at 6:00 p.m. (last train of the day)**
- 5:30 – 9:00 p.m.** President’s Reception  
*Terry Bison Ranch* **Tim Sheppard (WY), NASDVA President**  
Recognize Reception Sponsors and NASDVA Officers  
**John Scocos, NASDVA Executive Director**  
**Sponsors: HMR Veterans Services, Inc., Russell Keogler, VP of Corporate Operations**  
**WellHive, Chris Bickell, CEO**  
**HereNow Help, Bryan Gray, CEO & Co-Founder**
- 9:05 – 9:45 p.m.** Return to Little America Hotel  
**Wyoming Staff**

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH

- 6:00 – 7:45 a.m.** Breakfast  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: VetPro**
- 8:00 – 10:30 a.m.** NASWVC Business Meeting - Members Only  
*Sinclair Room*
- Mission
  - Bylaws (revise/update/vote)
  - Committee Structures
  - Networking Opportunities
  - Association Growth/Participation
- 10:30 – 11:00 a.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Cohen Veterans Network**

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# NASWVC Annual Conference Agenda

- 11:00 – 11:20 a.m.** National Association for State Women Veterans Coordinators Update & MOA signing  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Hollie Scoma**, President, NASWVC
- 11:20 – 11:40 a.m.** Patton Veterans Project, Inc.  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Benjamin Patton**, Executive Director
- 11:40 – 12:00 p.m.** SFCS Architects  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Kerry Buck**, Senior Principal Architect, & **Justine Sowers**, Senior Associate
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: Optum Serve**  
**Speaker: Mark Swofford**  
**Advocate Award - BG Henry Huntley**
- 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.** NASWVC – Military Women’s Memorial Overview & Updates  
*Sinclair Room* - *Phyllis J. Wilson, MPA, BSN, RN*  
*US Army CWO5 (Retired), President, Military Women’s Memorial*
- 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.** NASWVC- Business Meeting Cont.  
*Sinclair Room*
- *Mission*
  - *Bylaws (revise/update/vote)*
  - *Committee Structures*
  - *Networking Opportunities*
  - *Association Growth/Participation*
- 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.** WVC No Host Social and Dinner – **Group Photo**  
*TBD*
- Join us for a special Group Photo and let your spirit shine! Wear your best western-themed attire and show off your unique style. Embrace the camaraderie and creativity of the group, you might just win a prize! Let’s celebrate our togetherness and make memories that will last a lifetime. Embrace the adventure and wear your heart on your sleeve—it’s time to shine!*

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH

- 6:00 – 7:45 a.m.** Breakfast  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: TriWest Healthcare Alliance**
- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.** NASWVC: Motivational Speaker  
*Sinclair Room* *TBA*
- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.** Get To Know Women Veteran Alliance  
*Sinclair Room* *Melissa Washington, Veteran US Navy, Founder, CEO*
- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.** Road Home Program  
*Sinclair Room* *C. Newel, Veteran US Army, Veteran Outreach*

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# NASWVC Annual Conference Agenda

- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* **Sponsor: NVLSP**
- 10:00 – 10:45 a.m.** National Veterans Legal Services Program  
*Sinclair Room* *Tom Herthel, Counsel*
- 10:45 – 12:00 p.m.** Center for Women Veterans  
*Sinclair Room* *TBA*
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch  
*Grand Ballroom ADB* Advocate Awards: **Phyllis Wilson, Fred S. Sganga**  
Iron Mike Award: **Wanda Wright**, Past President  
Keynote Speaker: **Russell Keogler**, VP of Corporate Operations, HMR Veterans Services Inc.
- 1:00 – 1:20 p.m.** Combined Arms  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Bryan Escobedo**, Chief Growth Officer
- 1:20 – 2:00 p.m.** Veterans Health Administration Update  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Dr. John Bartrum**, Under Secretary for Health, USDVA
- 2:00 – 2:45 p.m.** Veterans Benefit Administration Update  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Ms. Margarita Devlin**, Acting Principle Under Secretary for Benefits, USDVA
- 2:45 – 3:15 p.m.** Break – State Directors network with Sponsors and Vendors  
*Grand Ballroom* **Sponsor: GenVETS, Inc.**
- 3:15 – 4:00 p.m.** NASWVC Wrap Up/Survey  
*Sinclair Room* *Hollie Scoma, President, NASWVC*
- 5:00 – 5:10 p.m.** Conference Closing Remarks  
*Wyoming Ballroom* **Tim Sheppard (WY)**, NASDVA President
- 5:30 – 5:50 p.m.** Transportation to Wyoming Governor’s Mansion  
*TBD* **Wyoming Staff**
- 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.** NASDVA Reception at the Governor’s Mansion
- 8:10 – 8:40 p.m.** Return transportation to Little America Hotel  
Wyoming Staff

**\*\*\*\*This agenda is subject to change based on scheduling and logistical considerations related to the event. We appreciate your understanding and will inform all attendees of any adjustments as they arise. Thank you for being so flexible. \*\*\*\***

# *NASDVA at the 2025 National Memorial Day Ceremony and more*

NASDVA President Tim Sheppard and members of the leadership team visited the Nation's capital to represent the association for the laying of the wreaths. They also spent time in DC to testify and meet with other veterans leaders.





**NASDVA**  
EST. 1946

*Serving America's Veterans  
and their Families for over 75 years*

Find us online at  
**[nasdva.us](http://nasdva.us)**

