



Student Veterans of America

Winter '24 Newsletter

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NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Student Veterans of America's (SVA) National President & CEO gave the 2024 State of SVA at our 16th Annual NatCon in Nashville, Tennessee. During this speech Jared Lyon spoke about the organization's achievements during 2023, and the outlook of SVA for 2024. The following is a snippet of Lyon's State of SVA speech.



"As I stand here today, I'm transported back to my first SVA NatCon as a student veteran in 2010. I was a 28-year-old Navy veteran, fresh from Brevard Community College and stepping into a new chapter at Florida State University. Like many of you, I found myself navigating a world that seemed designed for a different age group, where bureaucratic mazes felt more like obstacles than pathways.

Back in 2010, I had just finished my associate's degree and was a transfer junior at Florida State. I couldn't have felt more like a fish out of water. My first few weeks on campus was a time of questioning - was this college journey the right path for me?

These experiences, these challenges we face, they aren't just mine; they're ours. It's this shared journey that forges our bond.

Together, we are committed to creating campuses where every student veteran, every military-connected student, every family member, caregiver, and survivor feels welcomed and like they belong from day one.

Reflecting on our remarkable 16-year journey fills me with immense pride and gratitude. Last year's milestone anniversary for SVA marked the beginning of a discussion about a future we could scarcely have imagined back in 2008.

Today, I am honored to share our path forward into our future. A future that we will shape together, focusing on key themes that define us: student veteran success, chapter engagement, innovation, and inclusivity.

These pillars will guide our conversations and actions, not just in the days to come, but in the years that follow."

- Jared Lyon, National President & CEO

To view the complete State of SVA, please visit: <https://studentveterans.org/news/2024-state-of-student-veterans-of-america/>

The quarterly newsletter is a place to learn about the behind-the-scenes work of SVA Headquarters, review SVA's most recent programming, shine a light on stellar people and chapters in the community, and remain closely informed on the months ahead. As always, SVA is here to see student veterans to, through, and beyond their higher education journey.

NatCon Recap

Earlier this year, Student Veterans of America (SVA) hosted its 16th Annual Nation Conference, which we call “NatCon,” in Nashville, Tennessee. Our NatCon, which is hosted on the first weekend of January each year, was a remarkable gathering that brought together student veterans, military-connected students, their families, caregivers, survivors and other attendees to celebrate the achievements of student veterans, share insights about our community, and strengthen bonds while forming new relationships.

NatCon is a three-day conference which has a plethora of events where attendees can grow their professional network, over one-hundred informative breakouts sessions, and special entertainment opportunities.

During our Welcome General Session, we had the opportunity to hear from our National President & CEO, Jared Lyon, who presented the State of SVA Address. Additionally, the amazing opening keynote speaker, Col. Merryl Tengesdal (ret.), captivated the audience. The Welcome General Session not only served as the kick-off to our 16th Annual NatCon but also set the stage for an amazing three-day experience.



On day two of NatCon, we commenced the morning with our General Session on Government Affairs featuring speakers such as Secretary of Veterans Affairs, The Hon. Denis McDonough; Assistant Secretary at the Department of Education, Roberto Rodriguez, Ryan Gallucci, Daniel Seehafer, and Michael Rodriguez.

Later on day two, Jamie Gray Hyder emceed our SVA Honors Luncheon, where we celebrated all the finalists nominated for awards and announced the winners in each category. We would like to congratulate our inspirational winners: 2023 Student Veterans of the Year, Angelina Trillo; 2023 Chapter of the Year, Marshall University Student Veterans Association; 2023 Chapter Advisor of the Year, Denny Cosmo!

On the final day of NatCon, we began the morning with a remembrance run, acknowledging with reverence our fallen friends, family, and loved ones. Later on day three, we had our Closing General Session featuring musical artists including Jay Clementi, Erin Enderlin, James House, and Danny Myrick of Songwriting With: Soldiers. The songs, written by veterans, served as a tribute to all service members and their families.

Finally, we concluded our 16th Annual NatCon with the 3rd Annual National Student Veterans Ball! The Ball serves as a unique celebration of our student veteran community and is a great way to conclude the weekend, starting the year engaged, energized, and ready to put plans into action.





Presidential Volunteer Service Award



Student Veterans of America (SVA) would like to recognize student veteran Christian Smith of Fordham University for achieving The President's Volunteer Service Award. Over the past year, Smith has dedicated many service hours to his community both on- and off-campus, leading by example to show that veterans remain service minded post-military.

SVA empowers its members to make a meaningful impact through volunteering. As a proud participant in the Presidential Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) program, SVA provides numerous opportunities for student veterans to give back. Whether it's engaging in Days of Service, contributing to SVA programs, or collaborating with local chapters for community initiatives, there are ample chances to make a difference.

SVA is now a proud presenter of the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. Chapter members can easily be recognized by logging their volunteer hours through the MySVA portal. Join SVA in the spirit of service and be recognized for your dedication with the prestigious Presidential Volunteer Service Award. Interested in learning more? Be sure to check out the PVSA website.

Student Veteran of the Year



ANGELINA TRILLO

Chapter President of Oregon State University SVA

Angelina Trillo is a first-generation student at Oregon State University and a medic in the Oregon Army National Guard. Angelina was the vice president and president of her SVA Chapter and worked for her University as the Veterans and Nontraditional Student Advocacy Coordinator. She played a key role in bringing a free mental health provider exclusively for military-connected students on campus.

Angelina has worked to educate faculty on the unique needs of military students, improve administrative relations, and engage her chapter with the National SVA. For these efforts, Angelina was made the 2023 Student Veteran of the Year. Angelina is now transitioning into graduate school to pursue a master's in public health policy and administration with the intention of making a career improving Veterans' healthcare.

"Angelina Trillo is a force multiplier beyond any that I have met in my ten years of military service and beyond. Without error, she single-handedly has been vital to the entire OSU community's veteran affairs while distinguishing herself as an Army Reserve Medic for her unit, where she remains a key member of staff even as a full-time student. Angelina is, in my heart, the definition of a veteran who continues to serve in all aspects, regardless of whether or not she is wearing a uniform."

Chapter of the Year



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

Student Veterans Association

As a proud chapter of Student Veterans of America (SVA), MU-SVA fosters and ensures a welcoming community for all student-veterans and military-connected students attending Marshall University. They serve to support their professional growth and academic success both on and off campus.

With the unmatched support of Student Veterans of America, they provide advocacy of their needs through proactive involvement with our local, state, and federal governments, while establishing resources and support systems within our campus and community.



“Marshall’s SVA chapter fosters and ensures a welcoming community for all student-veterans and military-connected students attending Marshall University. We serve to support their professional growth and academic success both on, and outside of the campus. Additionally, MU SVA goes above and beyond the realm of military students and passionately serves as an active support system for veterans and military-connected members of the community in general.”

Chapter Advisor of the Year



DENNY COSMO

SVA Chapter at Bristol Community College

Denny Cosmo enlisted in the Army after high school and was on an M249 range on 9/11. While in the Army, he held two MOSs – the first was an 81mm mortar gunner with the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment during the initial invasion of Iraq and the second was a Human Intelligence Collection Sergeant with 75th Ranger Regiment for second tour in Iraq.

He is a 2007 Graduate of the Defense Language Institute for Modern Standard Arabic. After separation, he was an Honors Program Graduate from Community College of Rhode Island with an associate degree in Business Management followed by a bachelor's degree in Entrepreneurship with minor in Communication from Bryant University, where he established the SVA chapter there in 2017. He later earned a master's degree in Labor Relations and Human Resources from the University of Rhode Island. As a former SVA chapter leader, Denny is an alumnus of the 2017 and 2018 SVA Leadership Institutes.



“Denny’s vast knowledge of resources and benefits available to student veterans is unparalleled, rivaling even that of professionals working within the VA itself. He goes above and beyond to ensure that every student veteran is aware of and can access the assistance they deserve.”

Board Spotlight

Lisa McCoy

Chief Human Resources Officer Boeing Defense, Space & Security

As the Chief Human Resources Officer for Boeing Defense, Space & Security, Lisa McCoy spearheads the implementation of HR initiatives to optimize business performance and cultivate an inclusive workplace for 35,000 employees.

McCoy recently served as the Executive Director of Strategy and Operations supporting the Boeing Chief Human Resources Officer. Prior to this role, she served as the Senior Director of Human Resources for Boeing Global Services supporting all three profit and loss channels including Commercial, Government and International Services. She has also had multiple roles in Corporate leading HR for the Chief Communications Officer and Executive Vice President of Government Operations.

McCoy began her career at Boeing as an intern and has held a series of human resources positions with increasing responsibilities including in areas of learning, training and development, talent management and strategy, and across Corporate, Boeing Defense, Space & Security and Boeing Global Services. Her priorities were centered around developing and executing HR strategies, bringing transformational change and aligning people with long-term business goals.

She is committed to cultivating and driving a culture of diversity, inclusion, and innovation by serving on the board for Student Veterans of America, strengthening the Boeing Employee Pride Alliance (BEPA), partnering closely with non-profits that invest in our communities and providing opportunities for the future such as Jobs for American Graduates (JAG), and defining the aerospace and defense industry as a member of the Aerospace Industries Association on the Talent Leadership Council.

McCoy holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from University of Missouri-St. Louis and a Master of Business Administration from Saint Louis University. She also has her Senior Human Resources Professional Certification from the Society for Human Resources Professionals.



DEI Spotlight

Dr. Christine Quemuel, Ph.D

Student Veterans of America welcomed Dr. Christine Quemuel, Ph.D., a first generation and military connected college student, to the team in 2022. As the Senior Fellow for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, she is responsible for the strategic development of DEI initiatives throughout SVA programs, research, and services.

In this role, Dr. Quemuel participates and facilitates national DEI discussions on behalf of SVA and assists in supporting student veterans through our Visibility Exchanges and Regional Summits. Also, she convened the SVA Racial Justice Task Force.

The SVA Racial Justice Task Force has been convened as part of our ongoing commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Racial Justice Task Force provides educational support and content development for SVA leadership and campus chapters. This includes contributing to the development of educational and informational materials for SVA outreach, trainings, and curriculum.

At our 16th Annual NatCon Dr. Quemuel presented "The Impact of Anti-DEI Legislation on Veteran Inclusion in Higher Education," which addresses a pressing concern at the intersection of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and the experiences of veterans in academia.



Partner Spotlight Awards

Student Veterans of America® (SVA) and our student-veteran-led chapters have convened a diverse network of corporations, foundations, and nonprofits that support our shared mission to act as a catalyst for student veteran success by providing resources, network support and advocacy to, through, and beyond higher education. This collaborative effort has enabled our chapter leaders to build inclusive communities on their college campuses that empower student veterans to achieve their greatest potential. We thank our partners for their many years of dedication in support of student veterans, military-affiliated students, their families, and allies.

Daniel J. Edelman Corporate
Champion of the Year:



William Pearson Tolley Champion for
Veterans in Higher Education Award

**Texas A&M University
System**

Senator Bob Dole
Continued Service Award
**Veterans History
Project**



Partner Spotlight Awards

Partners in Excellence



Scholarships

General Eligibility Requirements:

- Honorable Discharge (including honorable under general conditions)
- Minimum 3.0 GPA (proof of transcript required)
- Planned enrollment at a 4-year University for the full 2024/2025 academic year)
- Have already completed at least 1 full year of college/university (unofficial transcript required)



John Edelman Scholarship – Accepting Applications on MySVA until March 15, 2024

John Edelman is dedicated to promoting enhanced mental health among veterans and service-members through education. As part of the John Edelman Scholars program, he has generously committed to offering two \$10,000 scholarships. These scholarships aim to support outstanding student veterans who are pursuing degrees or careers in mental health counseling. By recognizing their achievements and fostering continued study, the program encourages their commitment to this vital field.



RTX SPY-6 Scholarship – Accepting Applications on MySVA until March 29, 2024

The RTX SPY-6 Scholarship, named for the U.S. Navy's SPY-6 Family of Radars, provides returning sailors an opportunity to achieve educational goals and position themselves for success in civilian professions. Two \$10,000 scholarships will be awarded to sailors who pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited university and demonstrate leadership in their local community.



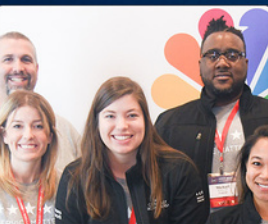
RTX Patriot Scholarship – Accepting Applications on MySVA until March 29, 2024

Student Veterans of America and RTX have partnered to provide two (2) \$10,000 scholarships to student veterans demonstrating a commitment to and passion for their chosen field of study, as well as demonstrated leadership and engagement within their community. The Patriot Scholarship is offered exclusively to U.S. Army veterans, and is named after RTX's Patriot Air and Missile Defense System.



Google-SVA Scholarship -Accepting Applications on MySVA from March 26, 2024 – April 23, 2024

As part of Google's commitment to military veterans, the company partners with SVA each year to fund scholarships. The scholarship provides assistance to student veterans who are pursuing university degrees in the field of computer science in the U.S. Selected students will receive \$10,000 for the upcoming school year.



Comcast NBCUniversal-SVA Scholarship -Accepting Applications on MySVA until April 12, 2024

The Comcast NBCUniversal-SVA Scholarship will support two student veterans in any major with an interest in the entertainment industry with a \$12,000 scholarship each.

Apply for open scholarships from SVA's Partners. These are distributed to top student veterans in a manner that doesn't interfere with the G.I. Bill or other financial aid and total over \$100,000 annually.

<https://studentveterans.org/programs-events/scholarships/>

Chapter Spotlight

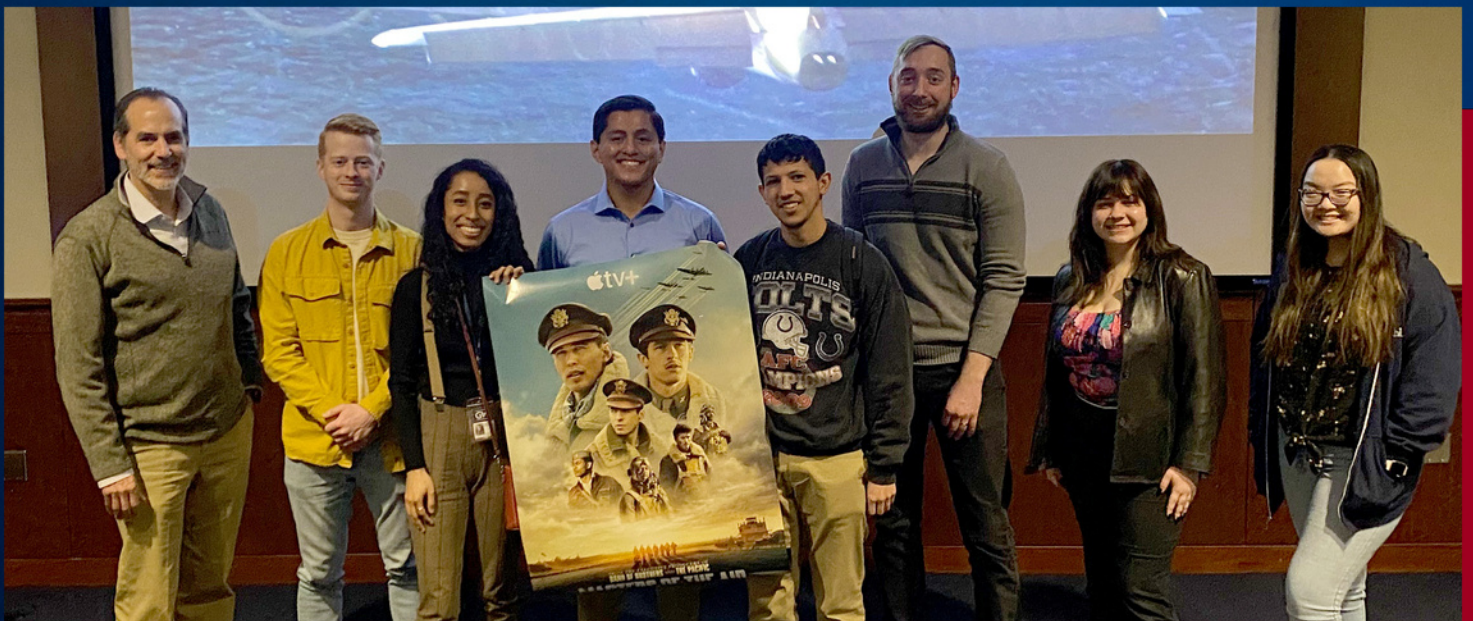
During the Welcome General Session at Student Veterans of America (SVA) 16th Annual NatCon we screened an exclusive preview of Masters of the Air to our attendees, and since then, many student veterans have been enamored with the series.

Several SVA chapters at universities such as Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Kennesaw State University, George Washington University, and California State University-San Bernardino also hosted exclusive screenings on-campus for student veterans and the surrounding local community.

Masters of the Air is a new multi-part series on the World War II (WWII) air campaign over the Axis Forces territory. This new series is a continuation of WWII storytelling from the co-producers of the series Band of Brothers and The Pacific, Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks.

These student veteran led events were more than the ordinary series premiere screening, they also served as community building and engagement events.

On the night of the screening at CSU San Bernardino, the student veteran organization was presented with a Certificate of Recognition from San Bernardino County Fifth District Supervisor, Joe Baca Jr. This award was presented to recognize the efforts of the SVA chapter to honor veterans on-campus and within the local community.





Through a network of nearly 1,600 on-campus chapters, Student Veterans of America® ensures that student veterans and military-connected students achieve their greatest potential.

Student Veterans of America

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