



17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL  
**NATCON**

# PROGRAM BOOK

JANUARY 2-4, 2025





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- See who's viewed your profile



# WELCOME TO NATCON!

## HOTEL

The Broadmoor Resort and  
Convention Center  
1 Lake Avenue  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

## CONFERENCE WEBSITE

[natcon.studentveterans.org](http://natcon.studentveterans.org)

## HASHTAGS

#NATCON2025  
#WEARESVA  
#SVALEADS  
#STUDENTVETERANS

## NATCON APP

Scan the QR code  
to download the  
SVA NatCon  
mobile app.



## MYSVA PORTAL

[studentveterans.org/mysva](http://studentveterans.org/mysva)

## SVA WEBSITE

[studentveterans.org](http://studentveterans.org)



@studentvets



Student Veterans  
of America



@studentvets



Student Veterans  
of America

A man with a full beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie, is speaking at a podium. He is gesturing with his right hand. The background is dark with a blue vertical light strip on the right.

# WELCOME

Greetings and welcome to the 17th Annual SVA National Conference (NatCon) in Colorado Springs, a city known for the United States Air Force Academy, the Olympic and Paralympic Training Centers, and a commitment to the ideals of service and excellence. It's a fitting place for us to gather as we explore new horizons and continue inspiring tomorrow's leaders.

Our vision at Student Veterans of America – empowering student veterans to lead and live their best lives – guides every aspect of NatCon. As you immerse yourself in these sessions, remember that your experiences here will carry back to your campuses and communities. Take advantage of every opportunity to connect, collaborate, and contribute so that the lessons you learn are shared far and wide. In short: keep swimming. Keep pushing forward, even when challenged by unfamiliar waters.

This year's conference is designed to engage the diverse community of chapter leaders, student veterans, sponsors, researchers, government officials, and nonprofit champions who've come together under one roof.



Our mission – to act as a catalyst for student veteran success by providing resources, network support and advocacy to, through, and beyond higher education – will be on full display. You’ll see it in breakout sessions that spark dialogue, mainstage addresses that foster bold thinking, and interactive exhibits that offer game-changing insights.

Colorado Springs is more than a picturesque backdrop; it’s a place that reminds us what resilience and teamwork can achieve. Embrace that spirit by getting comfortable with being uncomfortable. Introduce yourself to new people, exchange contact information, and commit to following up long after NatCon ends. By tapping into this incredible network, we strengthen our collective capacity to serve student veterans nationwide.

To our cherished sponsors, partners, and everyone who has helped make this gathering possible –thank you. Our deepest gratitude to LinkedIn for continuing to invest in the potential of student veterans, particularly during NatCon. Thank you also to The Walt Disney Company and RTX for dedicated investments in technologies that power the SVA Success Hub on display on the SVA Campus. The contributions of all our sponsors drive innovation and create lasting opportunities for those who wear – and who have worn – the uniform.

Finally, I encourage you to leave NatCon with a renewed sense of purpose. Let curiosity be your compass. Ask questions. Share knowledge. Challenge yourself to grow in ways you never thought possible. And above all, carry the spirit of gratitude and respect with every interaction.

When the conference concludes, our journey continues. Reflect on your experiences, maintain the connections you form, and use what you learn here to amplify the success of student veterans everywhere. Together, we are charting a course for a brighter future – one where each of us keeps striving toward our shared goal of empowering the next generation of leaders.

Welcome to NatCon, and thank you for being part of this mission. Let’s make every moment count.

Sincerely,



**Jared S. Lyon,**  
National President & CEO  
Student Veterans of America



**17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL**  
**NATCON**





THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 2, 2025

I send my warmest greetings to all those gathered for the Student Veterans of America National Conference.

Each one of our Nation's veterans is a link in a chain of honor that stretches back to our founding days—bound by a sacred oath to support and defend the United States of America. Every one of you has upheld that oath by selflessly serving our country in and out of uniform, and Student Veterans of America continues to push our Nation ever forward by striving to empower student veterans and improve their experiences. You truly represent the best of who we are.

I have often said that, as a Nation, we have many obligations, but we only have one truly sacred obligation: to prepare and equip those we send into harm's way and to care for them and their loved ones when they return home. As Commander in Chief, I have worked to make good on our sacred promise, signing nearly 40 bipartisan laws to support our veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors. This was made possible in part by the work of veteran service organizations, like Student Veterans of America, across the country.

To all those gathered for the Student Veterans of America National Conference: Thank you for your service and commitment to our country. May God bless you, and may He protect our troops.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Biden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".



# Supporting veterans and families who have served

We support a wide range of programs to help veterans identify career opportunities, keep military families connected, and inspire their children through STEM education. We are proud to support the Student Veterans of America in their efforts to serve veterans.

Join us at [careers.rtx.com](https://careers.rtx.com)





# NATCON

# GENERAL POLICIES

**All registrants are required to read and agree to the 2025 General Policies. Failure to abide by these policies will affect your eligibility to participate in the Student Veterans of America (SVA) National Conference (NatCon) and other programming this year or in future years.**

## CONFERENCE BADGES

Each NatCon attendee must wear the conference badge issued by SVA and keep their conference badges visible at all times. SVA, its contractors, and The Broadmoor Resort and Convention Center have the right to deny access to NatCon events including breakout sessions and the SVA Campus to any attendee not wearing a conference badge.

Attendees may not exchange, give, trade or sell conference badges. SVA makes all final decisions on who has access to the Conference and what badges are issued for the Conference. SVA, its contractors, and The Broadmoor Resort and Convention Center may remove any person from the Conference that, in SVA's opinion, is violating or threatening to violate any of these rules or whose conduct is objectionable, disorderly, or disruptive. There may be a \$25.00 replacement charge for lost badges.

## STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Electronic devices must be turned off or set to silent mode during educational sessions. Disruptive or objectionable conduct, activities and related materials (megaphones, signage, etc.) as determined by SVA, are strictly prohibited in every area of the Conference unless specifically approved by SVA in writing. No weapons of any kind are allowed at The Broadmoor Resort and Convention Center or any of the Conference facilities. Explosives, fuel, combustible, or hazardous materials are strictly prohibited.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is SVA policy that guests, staff members, partners, and the general public are entitled to an environment free of sexual harassment at any SVA event. No one, regardless of identity, should be subjected verbally or physically to unsolicited and unwelcomed sexual overtures or conduct. This behavior is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale and, therefore, creates an unsafe environment. Behavior that amounts to sexual harassment may result in disciplinary action. If you experience or witness sexual harassment at any SVA event, report it immediately to any SVA staff member. All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly investigated. To the extent possible, your confidentiality and that of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome of that investigation.



# NATCON

## GENERAL POLICIES

### DRESS FOR THE OCCASION



#### CASUAL

This style is acceptable and prevalent within many office settings and most events outside of work. While your business may allow for informal dress, make sure to avoid casual wear for the interview process.

**Acceptable: T-shirts, sweaters, jeans, shorts, sneakers, or sandals.**



#### BUSINESS CASUAL

If you aren't positive what attire is needed for an event or an interview, your best bet is business casual, which incorporates elements of formal wear with elements of casual wear.

**Acceptable: Button-down shirts, khakis, blazers, pencil skirts, blouses, loafers, boots, heels, or closed-toed shoes.**



#### BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

Use this style for conservative work settings. As opposed to the loose-fitting nature of casual attire, business professional should be tailored according to your measurements.

**Acceptable: Full suit, tie, knee-length dresses or skirts, button-down shirts, blouses, dress shoes, heels, or closed-toed shoes.**

#### Additional Note:

Business casual attire is requested for general sessions, breakout sessions, and the SVA Campus. Business professional attire is requested for the SVA Honors Luncheon. Semi-formal attire is requested for the National Student Veteran Ball.



# NATCON

# GENERAL POLICIES

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is SVA policy not to discriminate or screen guests on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status as an attendance requirement to any event. SVA is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment at all SVA events. As an extension of SVA policy, SVA requires all guests to treat each other with dignity and respect. Any guest failing to adhere to this standard will be subject to disciplinary action.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to accomplish our mission, it is necessary to both ensure the safety of all of our guests during SVA activities, and to protect the brand and good standing of SVA in the eyes of the community. SVA trusts its members to hold themselves to a higher standard of morals and ethics, and to uphold these standards at all times. As policy, the following guidelines direct conduct for all SVA participants at any officially sponsored SVA event. Illegal or irresponsible conduct does more than simply tarnish the offender. It puts innocent people at risk, sullies the reputation of SVA, and undermines the ability of SVA to fulfill its mission of empowering veterans. While any criminal activity is clearly outside the scope of permissible conduct, the standards of conduct during officially sanctioned SVA events is considerably higher.

SVA expects its guests to at a minimum:

- Abide by all policies in this agreement, and comply with all federal, state, and local laws
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner that promotes safety and furthers the SVA mission
- Treat others with dignity and respect, and abide by the shared values of respect, honor, integrity, and excellence
- Refrain from using language that is profane, boisterous, sexually offensive, explicit, or of a derogatory racial or ethnic nature
- Attend every sanctioned SVA meeting/event without being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and be prepared to fully participate, contribute, and meet training objectives
- At sanctioned social events, refrain from overindulging in alcoholic beverages
- Adhere to any guidance given by an SVA staff member, or duly appointed guest serving in a supervisory role



# NATCON

# GENERAL POLICIES

## ACCESSIBILITY

SVA may provide, upon request, alternative formats, auxiliary aids, and services necessary for all individuals to participate in all programs and services provided by our organization. Requests for accommodations should be given at the time of registration or submitted at least three weeks in advance of the conference.

## MEDIA RELEASE

The registrant gives SVA permission to photograph and video/audio record the registrant and to use the same in SVA's publications, promotions, and other media. The registrant understands that SVA has exclusive rights to these visual and audio recordings.

## CHILDREN

Children under the age of 18 are not allowed in the SVA Campus during exhibitor load-in, load-out, and all other hours of operation. While children under the age of 18 are not permitted at NatCon, we fully support nursing mothers and will provide a private room during conference hours if needed. The content of the conference programming may not be suitable for children.

## NO SUITCASING

Please note that while all meeting attendees are invited to the exhibition, any attendee who is observed to be soliciting business in the aisles or in other public spaces, in another company's booth, or in violation of the IAEE Exhibition Policy will be asked to leave immediately. Additional penalties may be applied. Please report any violations you may observe to conference management.

## COVID-19

SVA is committed to hosting a safe National Conference for all attendees. Do not attend NatCon 2025 if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or if you have been in close contact with someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 symptoms.





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# SCHEDULE

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## THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 2025

- 07:00 AM-08:00 PM Registration Open (*Broadmoor Foyer*)
- 07:30 AM - 01:00 PM Service Project with The Mission Continues (*Offsite Location*)
- 10:00 AM - 03:00 PM VA 1-on-1: Veterans Assistance Expo - Claims Clinic (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 12:30 PM - 03:00 PM Hiring our Heroes Employer Summit (*Colorado B*)
- 02:15 PM - 03:15 PM Pre-Conference Networking (*Broadmoor Foyer*)
- 02:15 PM - 03:15 PM Networking Opportunities (*Colorado A, D, E*)
- 03:30 PM - 05:00 PM Welcome General Session Presented by Disney (*Broadmoor Hall*)
- 05:00 PM - 06:45 PM SVA Campus Networking and Dinner Presented by RSM (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 07:00 PM - 08:00 PM Breakout Sessions

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 2025

- 07:00 AM-08:00 AM Morning Yoga with Veterans Yoga Project (*West Ballroom*)
- 07:00 AM - 05:00 PM Registration Open (*Broadmoor Foyer*)
- 07:30 AM - 03:00 PM VA 1-on-1: Veterans Assistance Expo - Claims Clinic (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 08:00 AM-09:00 AM Breakfast - SVA Campus (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 08:00 AM-06:00 PM SVA Campus Networking (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 09:00 AM- 10:15 AM General Session Presented by RTX (*Broadmoor Hall*)
- 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Breakout Sessions
- 11:45 AM - 01:00 PM SVA Honors Luncheon (*Broadmoor Hall*)
- 01:00 PM - 02:00 PM Networking Refreshments (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 02:00 PM - 04:15 PM Breakout Sessions
- 04:45 PM - 05:30 PM Remembrance Run (*Broadmoor Main*)
- 06:00 PM - 08:30 PM Dinner at Broadmoor Resort
- 07:00 PM - 10:00 PM SVA Chair's Reception - *Invite Only* (*Cheyenne Lodge*)

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 2025

- 07:00 AM-08:00 AM Morning Yoga with Veterans Yoga Project (*West Ballroom*)
- 07:30 AM - 09:00 AM Breakfast - SVA Campus (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 07:30 AM - 03:00 PM SVA Campus Networking (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 07:30 AM - 12:00 PM VA 1-on-1: Veterans Assistance Expo - Claims Clinic (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 08:00 AM- 11:30 AM Breakout Sessions
- 11:30 AM - 01:30 PM Lunch - SVA Campus (*Bartolin Hall*)
- 11:45 PM - 03:00 PM Breakout Sessions
- 12:30 PM - 01:30PM VFW-SVA Fellows Lunch - *Invite Only*
- 03:15 PM - 04:45 PM Closing General Session (*Broadmoor Hall*)
- 06:30 PM - 10:00 PM 4th Annual National Student Veteran Ball (*Broadmoor Hall*)



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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**Joseph Sautter, BS**  
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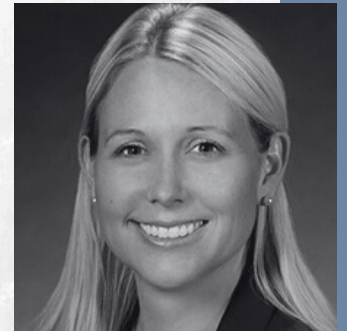
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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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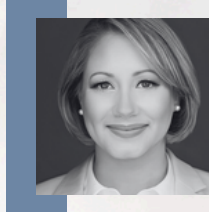




# MEET OUR TEAM



**Dr. Abby Kinch**  
VP OF RESEARCH



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CHAPTER  
SUCCESS COACH



**Chad McFarlane**  
ALUMNI  
ENGAGEMENT  
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**Chelsea Schroeder**  
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FOR HIGHER ED.



**Dave Bradt**  
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TO PRESIDENT &  
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**DeVauté Ogden**  
EA TO THE  
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**Faisal Sulman**  
LEGAL FELLOW



**Jace Achiu**  
CHAPTER  
SUCCESS COACH



**Jared S. Lyon**  
NATIONAL  
PRESIDENT & CEO



**Jay Alton**  
CHAPTER  
SUCCESS COACH



**John Morris**  
CHAPTER  
SUCCESS COACH



**Kameron Smith**  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT  
COORDINATOR



**Kassi Ward**  
DIRECTOR OF  
CHAPTER  
SUCCESS



**Kristy Stevens**  
DEVELOPMENT  
ASSOCIATE



**Leslie Deslis**  
VP OF  
DEVELOPMENT



**Mackenzie Marion**  
PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR



**Marina Nassif**  
VP OF FINANCE  
& OPERATIONS



**Dr. Mark Wooten**  
RESEARCH  
FELLOW



**Olivia Brinsfield**  
CHAPTER  
SUCCESS COACH



**Sydney Hall**  
CHAPTER  
SUCCESS COACH



**Tammy Barlet**  
VP OF  
GOVERNMENT  
AFFAIRS



**Tasha Latimer**  
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COMMUNICATIONS



**Vanessa Ryan**  
VP OF CHAPTER &  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT





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**Johnson & Johnson**



# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS

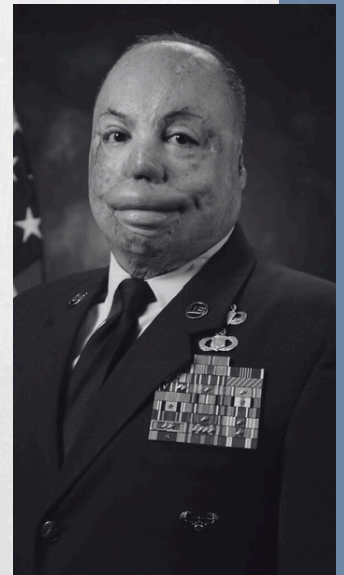


## Jared Lyon SVA NATIONAL PRESIDENT & CEO

Jared Lyon was appointed National President & CEO of Student Veterans of America (SVA) in 2016. He leads the organization's efforts to empower student veterans using the transformative power of higher education. Since he took office, Lyon has overseen SVA's growth to a network of more than 1,600 chapters on campuses in all 50 states and three countries representing over 750,000 student veterans. In 2017 Lyon led SVA's commitment to pass the "Forever GI Bill," the largest expansion of college aid for military veterans in a decade with an economic impact of \$3.4 Billion. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, he served as a submariner and diver, taking part in multiple deployments in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

## Israel Del Toro UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SMSGT (RET.)

Senior, Master Sergeant Israel "DT" Del Toro's fight to survive began on the side of a mountain near Qalat, Afghanistan, after his Humvee detonated a concealed landmine. He suffered third-degree burns over 80 percent of his body, as well as losing fingers on both hands from the blast. His comrades kept him conscious until DT could be airlifted out by reminding him of the promise he'd made that he would not leave his three year-old son without a father. That promise, along with the love and support of his family - his wife, his son, and his Air Force comrades - made possible a story of overcoming the greatest of odds. A recipient of the Pat Tillman Award at the 2017 ESPYs, DT now shares his story of triumph with audiences across the country, inspiring those that hear it to push themselves further if they know what they're fighting for.





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS

## Kristina Keenan

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE, AT VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW)

Kristina Keenan is the Deputy Director for the National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, focusing on legislation related to economic opportunities and education benefits. Since 2018, she has played a key role in passing major veteran legislation, including the Honoring Our PACT Act, earning recognition as a top lobbyist in 2022 by NILE and The Hill. A Minnesota native, Kristina served as a counterintelligence agent in the Minnesota Army National Guard, deploying twice to Bosnia before finishing her service as a sergeant in 2005. She holds degrees from the American University of Paris and Sciences Po and has worked in intelligence analysis at NATO and in leadership roles within the VFW's European community.



## Jay Bowen

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION COMMISSION CHAIRMAN, AMERICAN LEGION

Jay enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1971, serving 20 years in Air Defense Missile systems, including deployments to Germany and Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield. Rising to Chief Warrant Officer (CWO3), he retired after the Gulf War. Since 2005, Jay has been active in The American Legion, holding leadership roles at local, state, and national levels. He currently serves as National Chairman for Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and is set to become National Commander in 2026. Jay holds degrees in Industrial Technologies and Procurement Management. Married to Jackie for over 50 years, they have two sons and four grandchildren.





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS



## **Kali Brewster**

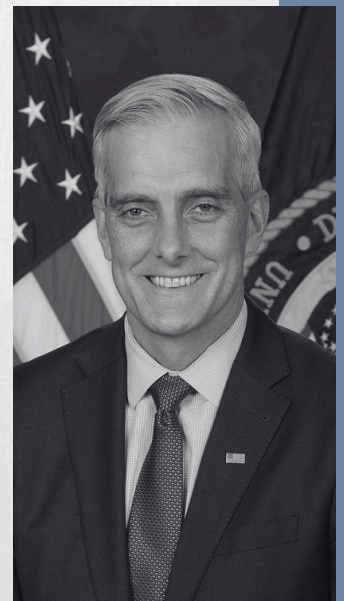
SENIOR FACILITATOR, PLAYFAIR INC.

Kaliswa Brewster is a Senior Facilitator at Playfair Inc., where she has been energizing groups at conferences, campuses, and corporations across the country for 13 years. An actress and producer based in New York, Kaliswa serves as President of the Board of Molière in the Park, Brooklyn's only free Off-Broadway theater. As an actress, her screen credits include recurring roles on *Billions* and *Time After Time*, as well as appearances on *Law & Order*, *Blue Bloods*, *Daredevil*, and more. She has performed on stages across the U.S., and her voice can be heard on some of your favorite audiobooks and video games. No matter the medium, Kaliswa's work is fueled by a passion for building community and catalyzing connection through laughter, play, and the arts. Kaliswa's superpower? Turning a room of strangers into a group of friends in 90 minutes or less. Let the fun begin!

## **Hon. Denis McDonough**

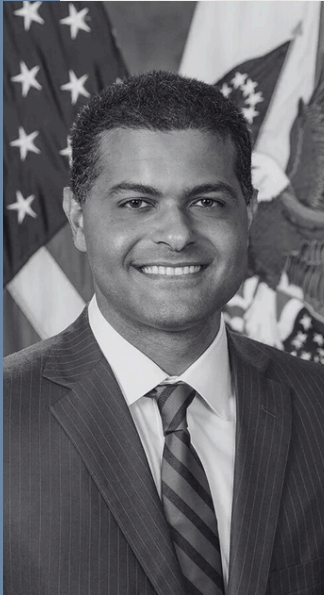
U.S. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Honorable Denis Richard McDonough was nominated by President Biden to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McDonough's nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate on February 8th, 2021, and he was sworn in the following day as the 11th Secretary of Veterans Affairs. On January 27, 2021, during his confirmation hearing, Secretary McDonough testified to Congress, "I will work tirelessly to build and restore VA's trust as the premier agency for ensuring the well-being of America's Veterans. After all, there is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our Veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago." Secretary McDonough served in the Obama Administration as the 26th White House Chief of Staff from February 2013 to January 2017.





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS



## Hon. Shereef Elnahal

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH, U.S.  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Dr. Shereef Elnahal is the Under Secretary for Health at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), overseeing a \$102.2 billion budget and care for over 9 million Veterans. Previously, he led University Hospital in Newark, NJ, through the COVID-19 pandemic as CEO and served as New Jersey's Health Commissioner, advancing health data sharing, maternal health, and opioid crisis solutions. A former VA Assistant Deputy Under Secretary, he co-founded the VHA Innovation Ecosystem. Dr. Elnahal holds an M.D. and M.B.A. from Harvard and has a distinguished record in healthcare leadership and innovation.

## Hon. James D. Rodriguez

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT  
AND TRAINING SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

James D. Rodriguez serves as the U.S. Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), overseeing programs that assist veterans, service members, and their spouses in securing meaningful careers. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran with over 30 years of experience in government and the corporate sector, Rodriguez has held leadership roles at Deloitte LLP and BAE Systems, Inc., and served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Office of Warrior Care Policy. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Maryland and a Master of Arts in International Commerce and Policy from George Mason University. Additionally, Rodriguez is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Government and Political Science at the University of Maryland Global Campus.





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS



## Hon. Joshua Jacobs

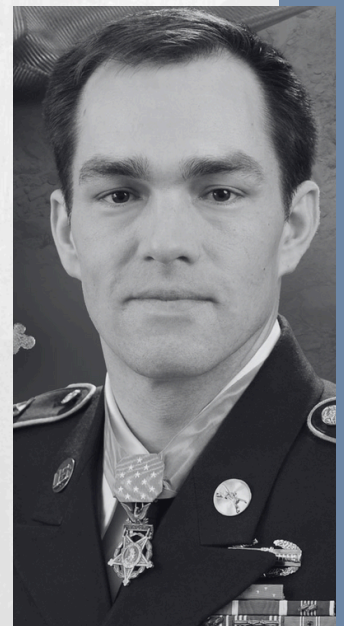
UNDER SECRETARY FOR BENEFITS, U.S.  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Joshua Jacobs is the Under Secretary for Benefits, leading over 32,000 Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) employees in delivering non-medical benefits to millions of Veterans and their families. VBA oversees \$189 billion in direct benefits annually, including disability compensation for 6 million Veterans and pension benefits for nearly 300,000 survivors. Previously, Josh served as Senior Advisor for Policy in the Office of the Secretary, establishing governance and interagency policy processes. He has also worked with Booz Allen Hamilton and served nine years in the U.S. Senate, including as Deputy Staff Director for the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. A University of Washington graduate, Josh and his wife, Julia, have three children.

## Clinton L. Romesha

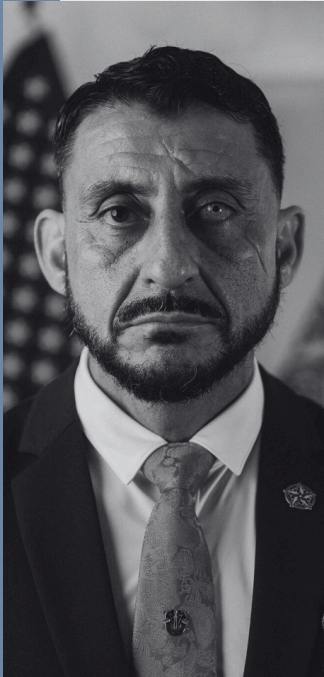
FORMER ARMY STAFF SERGEANT  
AND MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

Staff Sergeant Clinton L. Romesha, born in Lake City, California, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1999 as an M1 armor crewman. He served in Germany, Korea, and completed multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, demonstrating exceptional leadership and bravery throughout his military career. On October 3, 2009, during the Battle of Kamdesh at Combat Outpost Keating in Afghanistan, Romesha led a counterattack against an overwhelming enemy force of over 300 insurgents. Despite being wounded, he directed air support, rallied his troops, and rescued fellow soldiers, actions that earned him the Medal of Honor. After retiring from the Army in 2011, Romesha moved to Minot, North Dakota, with his wife, Tamara, and their three children. He transitioned to a civilian career as a field safety specialist in the oil industry and remains a prominent figure in advocating for veterans and honoring those who served.





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS



## **Michael "Rod" Rodriguez** PRESIDENT AND CEO GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Michael "Rod" Rodriguez is the President and CEO of the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation. Rod joined the U.S. Army in 1992 and attended the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course to become a Green Beret in 1997. In 2013, he was medically retired due to numerous combat injuries. His last assignment as a Green Beret came as a Sniper Instructor assigned to the JFK Special Warfare Center (Range 37) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He has deployed ten times in service to our nation. Rod's involvement with the GWOT Memorial Foundation began in 2016 when he joined the organization as a board member in support of the Foundation's sole mission to construct a Memorial on the National Mall that appropriately honors the profound service and sacrifices of all who served in America's longest war.

## **Jamie Gray Hyder** ACTRESS AND MODEL

Jamie Gray Hyder is thrilled to return for her 7th SVA Honors Banquet. She recently starred as Katriona "Kat" Azar Tamin on NBC's critically acclaimed series "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit." Born and raised near Washington, D.C., Hyder studied acting at the University of Georgia, Athens where she received her B.A. in Theater and Film Studies. A classically trained singer and actress, her television work has included such shows as USA's "Graceland," HBO's "True Blood," "The Last Ship," "Rizzoli & Isles" and "Chicago Med." In video games, Hyder was best known for her ground-breaking role as Call of Duty's first female lead, Lt Nora Salter in Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare. She has also starred in Killzone: Shadow Fall and Need for Speed Heat. Hyder is a dedicated supporter of veterans and the armed forces,





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS



## Lacy Gunnoe

### CAMP SOUTHERN GROUND

Lacy joined as Veterans Programs Director of Wellbeing in spring 2023. A transitioning Air Force officer with over 22 years of service, he most recently served as Inspector General for the 117 ARW in Birmingham, AL. Lacy's roles have included AFROTC instructor, operations leader, and command pilot with over 4,200 flight hours, including combat missions in multiple operations. He first connected with Camp Southern Ground as Warrior Week cadre in 2018 and is excited to serve its mission alongside his wife, Kaleigh, and their son, Rowan.

## Brent Taylor

### CAMP SOUTHERN GROUND

Brent joined Camp Southern Ground in 2019 as a program coordinator after attending the pilot program for Warrior Week.

After leaving the Marine Corps in 2010 he found a successful career at Remington Defense's Advanced Armament Corps and later BPI Outdoors. Currently, he is serving as the Veteran Outreach Manager at Camp Southern Ground. He also serves as a facilitator on our program team where his passion is helping people understand their value. He says, "Through sharing my experiences with others I began to learn more about my value and how to elevate others."





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS



## **Brandon Healy**

### CAMP SOUTHERN GROUND

Brandon joined Camp Southern Ground in 2024 as the Warrior Well-Being Manager, bringing deep experience within the Veteran Service Organization (VSO) space and managing multiple programs that support the veteran community in various crises. A former U.S. Army service member, Brandon was medically retired in 2015 after over six years of service. He initially pursued a career in Information Technology before transitioning to veteran advocacy in 2020, driven by a passion for reconnecting with the veteran community. Brandon is a Young Leaders Council Alumni and has served on the Tennessee Department of Veteran Services' Homeless and Food Insecurity committee. Outside of work, he enjoys hiking and playing hockey.

## **Matty Cook**

### CAMP SOUTHERN GROUND

Matthew joined Camp Southern Ground in fall 2022 to lead the Summer Camp program, designing impactful weeks of adventure, self-discovery, and belonging while ensuring the safety of all programs year-round. With over 30 years of experience, he has developed innovative programs for veterans, children with medical challenges, and young adults, drawing on roles at renowned camps and organizations nationwide. Passionate about fostering connection and contribution, Matthew helps others discover their worth and build community. He, his wife Marcia, and their three teens recently relocated from Seattle, WA, and love exploring the outdoors.





# MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS

## Bonnie Carroll

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS (TAPS)

Bonnie Carroll founded the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) in 1994 after the tragic death of her husband, Brigadier General Tom Carroll, in a 1992 Army plane crash. TAPS has since become the nation's leading organization providing grief support to military families, offering peer-based emotional assistance, a 24/7 helpline, and guidance on navigating benefits. A retired Air Force Reserve major, Bonnie's military career included roles in casualty operations and logistics, along with service at the Pentagon post-9/11. She has held key government positions, including White House Liaison to the Department of Veterans Affairs and senior advisor to TAPS Ukraine. Bonnie received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015 and holds numerous awards for her advocacy and leadership.



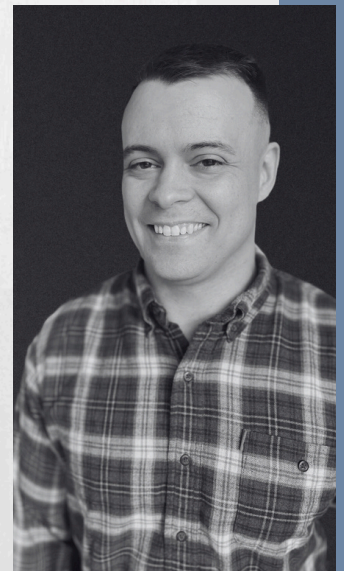
## 1LT Austin von Letkemann

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER AND SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATOR

Austin von Letkemann, a Portland, Oregon native, earned his Bachelor of Science from the American Public University System and commissioned as a Military Intelligence Officer after serving as an enlisted 35F All-Source Intelligence Analyst.

During his service, he held key roles, including battalion and brigade S2 NCOIC, brigade AS2, and AS3 during a 2022 rotation in Poland with the 303d IEW BN. Known for his comedic takes on military life, leadership, and mental health, Austin has gained nearly 3 million followers and a monthly audience of 25 million.

A proud father of four daughters, he was featured on the TODAY Show for his viral "girl dad" content.





# HONORS LUNCHEON

**JOIN US FOR SVA HONORS AWARDS ON  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 11:45 AM**

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SVA Honors is an annual event hosted during NatCon to honor the legacy of student veterans and their supporters. SVA Honors celebrates student veterans reaching their greatest potential through the transformative power of higher education, and showcases outstanding contributions by those who have supported our community. This year's recipients will be announced at the SVA Honors Luncheon. Please welcome and congratulate this year's finalists.

## **STUDENT VETERAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

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**Annsleigh Anderson** - University of California, Los Angeles

**Amanda Khoury** - Florida International University

**Dani Bermudez** - Arizona State University

**Desaree Edwards** - Wesleyan University

**Eric M. Sowers** - The Ohio State University

**Jake Slocum** - Chapman University

**Kaily White** - University of Washington Tacoma

**Michael James Richardson** - University of Central Florida

**Paola S. Rodriguez -Valiente** - University of Kentucky

**Ralph Figueroa** - California State University, San Bernardino



# HONORS LUNCHEON

## CHAPTER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

**Veterans of Baylor**, Baylor University

**Student Veterans of America at Bristol Community College**,  
Bristol Community College

**Veterans Association at Cornell University (CUVA)**, Cornell  
University

**Saddleback Veterans Club (SVC)**, Saddleback College

**Student Veterans Organization at UW Tacoma**, University of  
Washington Tacoma

## CHAPTER ADVISOR OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

**Agatha Funes** - COVA-CUNY Office of Veterans Affairs, The  
City University of New York System

**John Pratt** - Wolf Pack Vets, University of Nevada, Reno

**Jon Segars** - Student Veterans Association at UGA, University  
of Georgia

**Mary M. Fisk** - Veterans Association at Cornell University  
(CUVA), Cornell University

**Tami Thacker** - Student Veteran Organization, University of  
California, Riverside



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# MAP OF BROADMOOR



## RESTAURANTS

1. PLAY Bowling Alley at The Broadmoor
2. Ristorante del Lago & Bar
3. Natural Epicurean
4. The Lake Terrace Pool Café
5. Summit
6. Golden Bee
7. The Grille
8. Hotel Bar
9. Lake Terrace Dining Room
10. Café Julie's
11. La Taverne
12. Restaurant 1858

## SHOPS & GALLERIES

- A. Peter Millar Shop
- B. The Broadmoor Jewelry a La Mode
- C. The Broadmoor Jewelry Company
- D. The Great Republic
- E. The Boutique at The Broadmoor
- F. Yarid's Shoes
- G. The Broadmoor Western and Wildlife Gallery
- H. Signature Shop
- I. Strata
- J. Gibson's Mineral Gallery
- K. The Broadmoor Traditional Gallery
- L. Rutledge's
- M. Base Camp
- N. Fitness Shop
- O. The Broadmoor Golf Shop
- P. Salon Shop
- Q. The Broadmoor Racquet Shop
- R. The Broadmoor Shop

## CONFERENCE ROOMS

1. Broadmoor Main
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3. Broadmoor South
4. Broadmoor West
5. Cheyenne Lodge/Mountain Clubhouse
6. Broadmoor Hall
7. International Center
8. Colorado Hall
9. The Fish House
10. The Broadmoor Estate House
11. Bartolin Hall

For more information and current hours, please dial Ext. 3999 or visit [broadmoor.com](http://broadmoor.com)







# NATCON

# EXHIBITORS

- 101 The Walt Disney Company
- 131 Library of Congress Veterans History Project
- 133 Deloitte
- 165 Abilene Christian University
- 167 Beneath the Service
- 169 The Mission Continues
- 171 VA Center for Women Veterans
- 206 Fiserv
- 207 RTX
- 213 Northrop Grumman
- 219 TikTok
- 221 Hiring Our Heroes
- 224 Los Alamos National Laboratory
- 226 Spectrum
- 230 Lowe's
- 232 Union Pacific Railroad
- 236 Lockheed Martin
- 237 Sandia National Labs
- 243 The American Legion
- 261 America's Vetdogs
- 262 Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation
- 263 Sherman College of Chiropractic
- 264 Travis Manion Foundation
- 265 USDA/NRCS
- 266 Military Women's Memorial Foundation
- 270 Disabled American Veterans
- 272 wear blue: run to remember
- 273 Colorado Division of Military and Veteran Affairs
- 301 LinkedIn
- 313 RSM
- 315 Wells Fargo
- 331 Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- 333 Veterans of Foreign Wars
- 337 Guidehouse
- 338 Builders FirstSource
- 342 Andersen
- 351 Center for Workforce Development
- 360 National Headache Foundation
- 361 Veterans for All Voters
- 362 Peace Corps
- 363 NYC Department of Veterans Services
- 364 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
- 366 Veterans Benefits Administration
- 367 Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- 368 Veterans Studies Association
- 369 Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
- 370 Institute of International Education
- 372 Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program
- 373 National Credit Union Administration
- 401 Rutgers University
- 403 Oregon Institute of Technology
- 405 Valor Vets
- 407 Blue Star Families
- 409 Fulbright U.S. Student Program
- 413 Thomas Edison State University
- 413 MyCareerCloset
- 415 Navy Mutual Aid Association
- 417 UD School of Law
- 419 Invets
- 421 Focus Marines Foundation
- 423 SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society
- 424 Societe Generale
- 425 Pat Tillman Foundation
- 427 Avalon Action Alliance
- 429 Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University
- 431 AVECO



# NATCON EXHIBITORS

435	U.S Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Suicide Prevention	255	Reserved for Art
437	VetsinTech	257	Reserved for Art
439	FourBlock	354	Reserved for Art
441	Hillvets	356	Reserved for Art
443	National Veteran Business Development Council	218	KBR
449	U.S National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Operation Center	220	KBR
451	Brown University	318	Ernst and Young
453	Common Defense	320	Ernst and Young
457	Pepperdine University	319	General Dynamics Bath Iron Works
459	Wounded Warrior Project	321	General Dynamics Bath Iron Works
460	Concerned Veterans for America	325	Rocket Companies
461	Warrior-Scholar Project	327	Rocket Companies
462	The Ohio State University College of Social Work	249	Reserved for Art
465	Claremont Lincoln University	251	Reserved for Art
466	Claremont Graduate University	348	Reserved for Art
467	Green and Gold Congressional Aide Program	350	Reserved for Art
469	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation		
470	Department of Veterans Affairs Food Security Office		
471	Department of Veterans Affairs, Outreach, Transition, and Economic Development		
473	Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guarantee Office		
475	Department of Veterans Affairs, Education		
477	Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Readiness and Employment		
479			

*Exhibitors are located on the SVA Campus*

## VA 1-ON-1: VETERANS ASSISTANCE EXPO (CLAIMS CLINIC) HOURS

**Thursday, January 2, 2025  
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Friday, January 3, 2025  
7:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Saturday, January 4, 2025  
7:30 AM - 12:00 PM**



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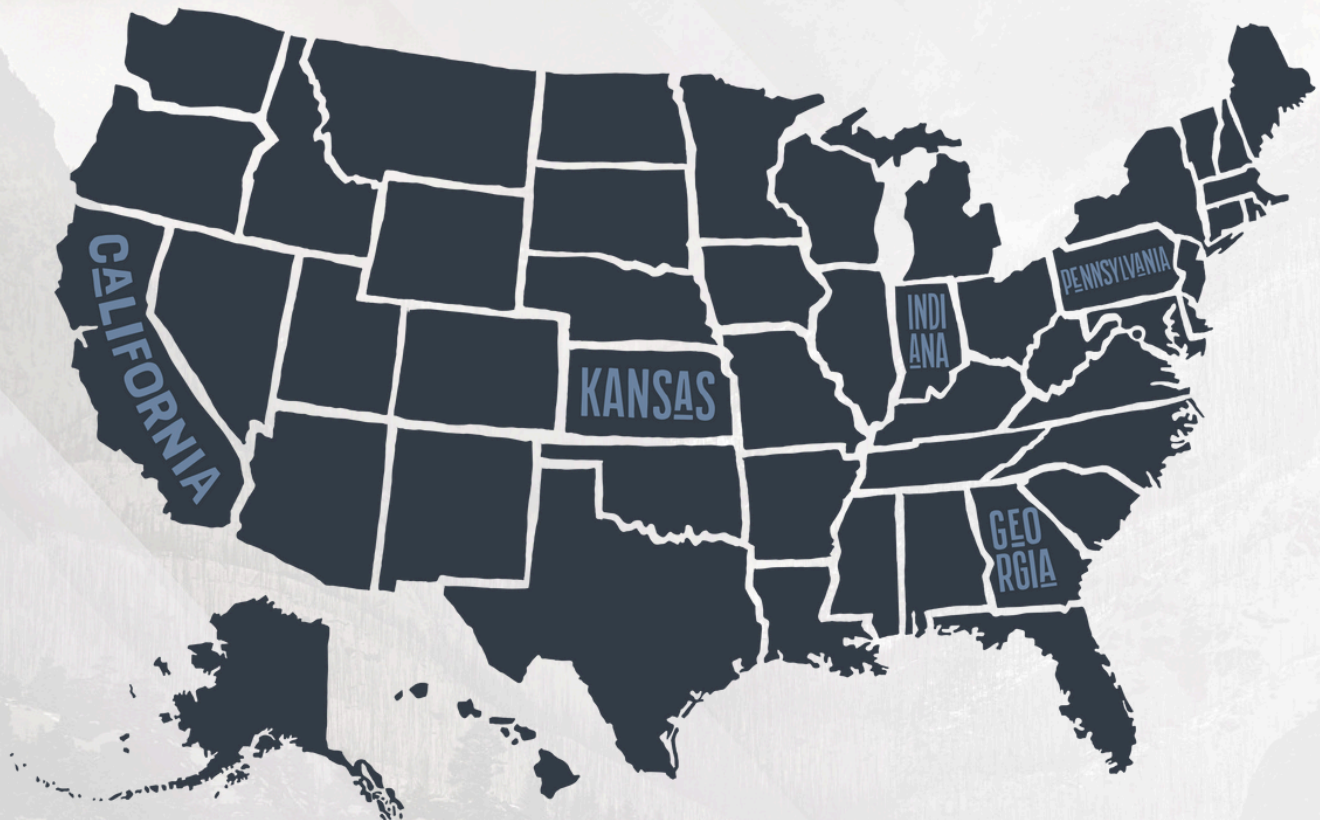
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