



UMA Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter for USPTO Veterans and Families
March 2013, Volume 1, Number 1



So What is the UMA?

At the UMA, or **USPTO Military Association**, we do the following:

- ◆ Support and promote the diversity goals of the USPTO
- ◆ Serve as a resource for hiring and retaining Veterans
- ◆ Help educate the USPTO community about the valuable service Veterans have rendered to the United States and how Veterans contribute to the USPTO workplace and community
- ◆ Support USPTO employees and their families during times of recall to active duty
- ◆ Cultivate a network of people and resources devoted to Veterans issues and concerns, and in all endeavors, exert appropriate proactive initiatives that strive to provide well-being support and guidance to Veterans and their families.

THIS ISSUE

HR and Veteran's Benefits Corner
Did you know ?
Current Events
UMA Fitness
Deployments
UMA Classifieds
Veteran Profiles of 2012

UMA POC

President Joe Hirl

Vice President Brent Howard

Treasurer Aretha Grayson

Secretary April Blair

Representatives at Large:

Eric Atkisson

Stuart Snyder

Asghar Bilgrami

Kacy Verdi

Sieg Chencinski

Kat Wyrozebski

Anhthuan Nguyen

HR Veterans Benefits Corner

Military Service: Is it Creditable Towards Civilian Retirement?

by Anthony Henderson

Do you have prior military service? Have you considered combining your active military service time with your civilian service retirement benefit? In some cases your active military service may count towards your civilian retirement computation. For example, employees covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) may receive credit for post-1956 military service only if they deposit with the employing agency a sum equal to 3 percent of the military basic pay they earned during their period of military service, plus interest.

New civilian employees with active-duty service have three years to buy back their time without interest. However, an important decision needs to be made between the following two retirement options:

1. Combine military and civilian careers into one civilian retirement and forfeit military retirement. This decision also requires making a military service credit deposit of 3 percent of military base pay (Federal Employees Retirement System) or 7 percent of military base pay (Civil Service Retirement System) plus interest on military service credit deposits.

2. Retire from CSRS or FERS using only civilian federal service and continue receiving a separate military retirement benefit.

The decision to combine careers into one retirement also would not alter other military retirement benefits such as health care and commissary privileges. Additionally, a decision to use military service toward a civilian retirement would not affect Social Security retirement benefits.

Generally, an employee must waive military retired pay in order to receive credit for military service in the computation of the CSRS or FERS annuity, unless he or she is:

1. Retired from civilian service after Sept. 30, 1982, and has military service that was not used in the computation of military retired pay -- for example, four years at one of the service academies such as West Point or the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

2. Receiving military retired pay awarded:

- On account of a service-connected disability incurred in combat with an enemy of the United States;

- On account of a service-connected disability caused by an instrumentality of war and incurred in the line of duty during a

period of war; or

- Under provisions of 10 U.S.C. 12731-12739 (retired pay under Chapter 1223 for members of the reserves).

If you have prior military service and would like more information regarding combining your military service time with your civilian service for retirement, please contact the Compensation and Benefits Division at 571-272-6209 to schedule an appointment with our retirement counselor.

Current Events

Wounded Warrior Events

The UMA is in the process of organizing small volunteer pizza parties and events for wounded soldiers who are currently located at Fort Belvoir and Bethesda military hospitals. If you are interested in participating in one of these future events, please notify Brent Howard of your desire to join this team at UMA@uspto.gov. Dates of events will be TBD until the teams are formed.

Career Q&A for Veterans and their families at USPTO

This will be a lunch time event, a Q&A session during which USPTO Veterans (especially those new in their federal careers) and Veteran spouses can ask more experienced Veterans and drilling reservists how they became successful at the USPTO. Think of it as professional Development. Date: April 9, from 11:30 until 1 pm, 1st floor Conference Center, Jefferson BLDG.

Fundraisers

The UMA is always looking for ways to raise our funding. If you have any ideas or would like to help, please contact us at UMA@uspto.gov.



HR Point of Contact

HR Representative for UMA and all USPTO Veterans:

Anthony Henderson 571-272-6160

Anthony.henderson@uspto.gov

HR Compensation and Benefits Division 571-272-6209

Classifieds

Photo contest: Please submit any photos you have of you and your family with a military theme. Top 3 winners will be included in the next issue of the newsletter. If you would like to post classifieds, please write

Editors

Editor-in-Chief, Kat Wyrozebski
Asst Editor, Eric Atkisson
Asst Editor, Brent Howard

Looking for contributors. If you would like to consider writing for the UMA Newsletter, please email us at UMA@uspto.gov.

For more details, please contact Kat at 571-272-1127 or Katarzyna.wyrozebski@uspto.gov

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

UMA members volunteer with ESGR in organizing H2H Events that teach current Veterans how to write effective resumes and how to gain proper interview skills. For more information, please contact Kat Wyrozebski or Lawana Hixon.



Family Group POC

April Blair 571-270-1014
april.blair@uspto.gov

Margaret Squalls
Margaret.Squalls@uspto.gov

DID YOU KNOW?

The USPTO Military Association (UMA) has formed a new Military Family Group.

If you are a spouse, parent, child or family member of a service member, you are invited and encouraged to join. The group's focus is supporting and mentoring military family members, especially during the deployment of a loved one, and members are committed to promoting friendship through social activities.

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

UMA members can support the Wounded Warrior project by participating with Fitness Group and Tough Mudder run (please see UMA Fitness). To date Tough Mudder participants have raised approximately \$3 million to support thousands of warriors returning from battlefield. Money raised provides combat stress recovery programs, adaptive sports programs, counseling and employment services. A team of Wounded Warriors is hosted by every Tough Mudder event just to remind everyone about our heroes. For every participant that raises \$150 or more, Tough Mudder will donate \$25 to the Wounded Warrior Project. For more information, visit <http://toughmudder.com/wounded-warrior-project/>.

VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

Military One Source 1-800-342-9647

Offers non-medical counseling for returning warriors and their family members in areas such as health, wellness, and financial solutions. It also provides information and resources to help deal with unique challenges of military life.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides support as well. Please visit <http://www.hhs.gov/children/supportmilitaryfamilies.html>.

Deployments

Seenam Agbetiafan will be deploying to Afghanistan on Mar. 4, 2013.

UMA sponsored a Pizza lunch for examiner Agbetiafan for Feb. 19, 2013.

Stay safe, Seenam!

UMA Fitness

We stay fit. If you would like to join us, here is a good starting point:

Scuba Diving — POC Albert Gagliardi

Gym Workouts, Basketball/pick up games — POC Marta Dulko and Margaret Squalls

Tough Mudder run — POC Marta Dulko and Kat Wyrozebski

Sky Diving and other exhilarating special events — POC Brent Howard

Game/sports watching events — Basketball, Soccer, College Football, and Monday Night NFL football if anyone is interested.

Fitness challenge — Gym workout team challenges you to attend total body conditioning class with Drew on Mondays at 4 p.m. It is a good preparation for Tough Mudder. Can you outlast Kat and Marta?

Veteran Profiles of 2012—A look back

Katarzyna “Kat” Wyrozebski, a supervisory patent examiner in art unit 1746, is a native of Poland ...left the country in 1986 to ... start a new life in the United States.

She studied chemistry then joined the U.S. Navy in 1989 as an aviation machinist’s mate, working on A-6 Intruder attack airplanes.

“Initially I worked in the trainer’s squadron,” said Kat, “but then the Navy changed its policy to allow women to serve at sea, so off I went.”

She served a combat tour in the Persian Gulf in 1991, and ...(later) transferred to the Navy Reserve and completed her bachelor’s degree in chemistry.

She joined the USPTO as a patent examiner in 1999, and received her commission as a “mustang”—a sailor who achieved the rank of chief before becoming an officer—in 2000. She served in the Persian Gulf again in 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and in places like Bosnia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates throughout her Navy career.

Today, she is an engineering duty officer, acquisition professional in the Navy Reserve, & lieutenant commander.



Katarzyna “Kat” Wyrozebski



Scott Chmielecki

Scott Chmielecki is a patent examiner in Art Unit 1729, but before he joined the USPTO he was in a very different kind of unit: the Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron.

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, he enlisted as a Marine in 1997, assigned to the unit in 1999, and received an honorable discharge from active duty in 2003.

The unit’s primary mission was to provide aerial refueling, general logistical transport, aerial delivery of personnel and cargo, communications relay, and other mission-critical operations as needed.

Deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom in 2002 and to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, Sgt. Chmielecki’s accrued nearly 2,000 hours of flight time on the KC-130 Hercules aircraft that included flight plans, weather briefs, in flight course and schedule, ...and ordering aerial delivery release of personnel and cargo.

After his service, he used the G.I. Bill to attend Cleveland State, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering in 2008.

“I miss the friends I made in the service and the ever-changing view from the cockpit of a KC-130,” said Chmielecki, “but I don’t miss living in the barracks or eating MREs (Meals Ready to Eat).”

Veteran Profiles

What was your experience in the military?

We’d love to hear your story. Please reach out to us at UMA@uspto.gov.

Sieg Chencinski, a patent examiner in Technology Center 3600, business methods (finance, insurance, and advertising), arrived in Queens, N.Y., as a child when his German-speaking family fled Transylvania, Romania, after World War II.

In March 1962 he received his commission as a second lieutenant through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at Brooklyn College in New York City, with a degree in mathematics and minors in engineering and military science.

Chencinski served as a global air-transport navigator on C-124, C-141 and VC-135 aircraft based at James Connolly, Hunter, Dover Rhein Main, and Andrews Air Force Bases. Missions involved carrying high-priority cargo and personnel and medical evacuation flights in support of the DOD, State Department, and humanitarian missions around the world. Chencinski moved newly printed Vietnamese currency from England to Saigon. Delivering the Army’s 42nd Infantry “Rainbow” Division between Honolulu to South Vietnam, Chencinski recalls some chilling moments, at times avoiding electronic countermeasures from the enemy. He flew wounded service members to special hospitals in Japan and the United States, transported refugees from Panama to Savannah, and supported NATO operations from Cold War Berlin activities to getting the Turkish NATO troops out of Seoul, Korea in 1966.



Sieg Chencinski

UMA Newsletter

Inaugural Edition - Special Addendum

Veteran Profiles of 2012—A look back

Brent Howard, now a Management and Program Analyst in the Office of Information Management Services, joined the U.S. Air Force in the early 90s.

He started as a Programmer at Langley supporting the establishment of engineering process optimization, enabling the organization to reach Carnegie Mellon Software Engineering Institute (SEI)'s Capability Maturity Model Level 3 in its second year.... Then cross-trained and joined a special unit of the Air Combat Command's - 1st Fighter Wing... 1st Special Operating Forces.

Howard, graduated (top of class) from the Air Ground Operations School at Hurlburt Field, FL (USAF Special Operations Command), ..."jumped out of perfectly good airplanes" ...excelled in survival and evasion, building take-down, extraction maneuvers...counter-terrorism, anti-terrorism, and close quarters battle.

His team was similar in some respects to '80's Navy SEAL Red Cell, and in fact they trained at some of the same facilities. After conducting missions through Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia, Howard— call sign "Pappy," after WWII fighter ace Pappy Boyington— distinguished himself in the line of duty, receiving an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with Campaign Star, U.S. Air Force Meritorious Achievement Medal and a position as Team Chief.

The newspaper photo below shows "Pappy" preparing for an operation, with a mask to protect his identity.

"While my team chief position was similar to Dick Marcinko's," said Howard jokingly, referring to the famous commander of SEAL Team Six and Red Cell, "I wouldn't imply we ever got into trouble like they did."



Brent Howard

James Stroud, was born in Illinois to a military family—his mother was a Navy air traffic controller, uncle a Navy pilot and commander, & cousin a Navy Seabees Commander,. "My grandfather was in the Army during World War II," he said, "but we forgive him for not going Navy."



Stroud decided to follow in his family's footsteps, and enlisted in the Navy in 2001. "I enlisted when I was 17 and had to have my parents sign me away to the government, which took a lot of negotiation," he said. "My parents are very tough negotiators." He volunteered to work aboard submarines because it was the most advanced job he could get into and still work with his hands.

But instead of seeing the world, as he had hoped, he spent his six years of Navy service based in Georgia, when he wasn't "making holes in the Atlantic Ocean." Life beneath the waves presented its share of challenges, "highly stressful," and (constantly) dealt with preparedness drills, normal watch standing, and being away from home."

After leaving the Navy in 2006 and bouncing around in the job market, Stroud received bachelor degrees in Electronic Engineering Technologies and Game and Simulation Programming.

William Goodchild is a patent examiner in Art Unit 2433 (Information Security, Cryptography) and a new member of the USPTO Military Association (UMA).

After graduating from high school in Long Beach, N.Y., he attended the State University of New York - Farmingdale, receiving an associate degree in aviation technology and becoming a private pilot. He then enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving on a fast-attack submarine and spent several years repairing submarines as a Navy quality assurance supervisor. During that time he also received his bachelor's degree.

Following his military service, Goodchild decided to pursue a master's in electrical engineering at Florida International University. After graduation, he worked as a consultant and project manager for Computer Associates and then joined the USPTO in 2006.



William Goodchild

Veteran Profiles

What was your experience in the military?

We'd love to hear your story. Please reach out to us at UMA@uspto.gov.

Daniel Elliott grew up in a military family. His father was a non-commissioned officer, and Dan went to a high school outside of Fort Polk, La. After that he served eight years of active duty in the U.S. Army as a calibration and repair specialist, helping maintain and repair a wide variety of Army equipment. He spent the majority of his Army career stationed in Germany, with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2006 he went to work for the Army as a civilian software developer at Tobyhanna Army Depot while studying information systems and technology at Penn State in the evenings, using the G.I. Bill.

When Elliott graduated from college in May 2011, he was interested in continuing his service in the federal government. A friend told him about the USPTO, and now he's a student in the USPTO academy. Upon graduation, he'll join art unit 2191.



Daniel Elliott