



U.S. PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE MILITARY ASSOCIATION



SCUTTLEBUTT

Fall 2025

Farewell Flight: Celebrating Elizabeth “Liz” Caraway’s UMA Journey

By Angela Jenkins, Scuttlebutt editor

If UMA had a Hall of Fame for multitaskers, Liz Caraway would already be inducted—with a gold pen in one hand and a social media dashboard in the other.

After two years of dedicated service on the UMA board as secretary and a standout tenure as Senior Military Advisor, it’s time to bid a fond (and very grateful) farewell to Elizabeth “Liz” Caraway—Air Force veteran, communications ace, and all-around powerhouse.

Liz brought her signature blend of precision, creativity, and heart to every corner of UMA. Whether she was steering Scuttlebutt with editorial flair, keeping our social media fresh and engaging, or

making sure the website updates landed smoothly, Liz’s fingerprints are everywhere—and we’re better for it.

Her military career spans nine impressive years, with six in active duty and three in the reserves as a public affairs officer. She even taught English at the Air Force Academy (yes, she can diagram a sentence and command a press briefing—simultaneously). Beyond the uniform, Liz co-owned a defense small business and served as editor for HQ Army Retirement Services publications, proving she’s just as comfortable behind the scenes as she is in the spotlight.



Clockwise from left: USPTO colleagues attend the farewell event. Bottom left: Liz Caraway and Acting Deputy Director Will Covey, (Photos by Charles Rones/USPTO).

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Employee Assistance Program
Through [WorkLife4You](#), you can find resources to help you with personal and work-related issues. check out the website [<https://www.foh4you.com/>] or call 1-800-222-0364.

Join our weekly virtual chat!
The weekly UMA Coffee Break is a virtual social gathering for UMA members on Tuesdays at 9:30 am and 2 pm ET. Contact uma@uspto.gov if you are a member who is not receiving the invites.

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“Caraway’s Farewell” continued from previous page

At home in Sterling, VA, Liz shares life with her husband—a fellow Air Force veteran and software engineer—and their two daughters, who no doubt inherited their mom’s sharp wit and can-do spirit.

Though Liz is stepping away from her UMA roles, her legacy of thoughtful leadership and joyful professionalism will stick around like a well-placed hashtag. We’ll miss her steady hand, her editorial eye, and her ability to make even the driest updates sparkle.

From all of us at UMA: Thank you, Liz, for your service, your stories, and your sparkle. We wish you blue skies, smooth landings, and plenty of time to enjoy the next chapter—with coffee in hand and Scuttlebutt in her inbox. Here’s to Liz—whose words lifted us, whose edits sharpened us, and whose presence made UMA feel like home. We’ll miss you more than spellcheck misses typos.”

Fly high, Liz. You’ve earned it.

Top right: UMA Executive Advisor Gregory Dodson, Angela Jenkins, Dennis Jolliffe and Liz; Center photo Robin Hylton and Liz and attendees of the farewell (Photos by Charles Rones/USPTO).



Who We Are

The USPTO Military Association (UMA) is a USPTO voluntary employee organization and 501(c)(3) non-profit charity with a mission to provide fellowship, mentorship, and support for military veterans working at the USPTO and to help educate others on the important contributions that veterans have made—and continue to make—to the workforce and our nation. Membership is open to everyone and prior military service is not required. Contact the UMA for more information or to join (it only takes one short form) at uma@uspto.gov.

Scuttlebutt Editorial Staff

Executive Co-Advisors: Troy Tyler and Greg Dodson
UMA President: Robin Hylton
Editor-in-Chief: Angela Jenkins
Copy Editing: Robin Hylton

The Scuttlebutt is produced through volunteer hours and may include stories, links, and references not directly connected to the USPTO Military Association, but which may be of interest to our veteran community. If you have questions or comments about any of the newsletter content, please contact us at uma@uspto.gov. We appreciate feedback as we strive to offer the best possible content to

A Week of Welcomes and Wins: USPTO's In-Person Orientation and Award Celebration

by Angela Jenkins, Scuttlebutt editor



August 25, 2025 – September 22, 2025 marked a joyful turning point at the United States Patent Trademark Office, as the agency welcomed its first phase of classes of new patent examiner hires in a post-pandemic world. For the first time in years, orientation was held in person, bringing fresh energy and connection to the halls of headquarters. These new employees didn't just receive their badges—they took the official oath of office, met their teams face-to-face, and stepped into a mission-driven community that champions American innovation.



The orientation wasn't just about logistics and onboarding—it was a celebration of beginnings. New hires engaged in team-building activities, met with supervisors and business unit leaders, and got a firsthand look at how their work will contribute to the USPTO's mission. The atmosphere was one of excitement, curiosity, and camaraderie. For many, it was a chance to finally experience the culture and spirit of the agency in person, rather than through a screen.



Acting Director Coke reflected on the week in a heartfelt message to staff, noting the power of gathering together. She described the week as "productive," filled with meetings, informal gatherings, and meaningful conversations. Employees from across the agency came together to connect, collaborate, and learn more about how USPTO can continue to deliver high-quality intellectual property protections while providing exceptional service to its customers.

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Top: Photo of sign outside of the Clara Barton welcoming New Employees. Middle: Acting USPTO Director Coke Morgan Stewart delivers remarks at the New Employees Orientation. Bottom Acting USPTO Director Coke Morgan Stewart swears in New Employees. (Photos by Charles Rones/USPTO).



“Welcome & Wins” continued from previous page

Throughout the week, business units hosted on-site activities that added a layer of fun and engagement to the experience. Whether it was a casual coffee chat or a lively team-building exercise, these moments reminded everyone of the value of connection. As Acting Director Coke emphasized, the USPTO performs at its best when employees communicate, collaborate, and support one another.

Looking ahead, the agency is gearing up for another exciting event: the inaugural USPTO Day, scheduled for Wednesday, October 1, in Dulany Gardens in Alexandria, Virginia. It promises to be a day of celebration, community, and reflection—a chance to honor the work we do and the people who make it possible.

This week was more than just a return to in-person events. It was a powerful reminder of what makes USPTO special: its people. From new hires taking their first steps to seasoned professionals being honored for decades of service, the spirit of innovation and dedication was on full display. And as we move forward, that spirit will continue to guide us—one patent, one trademark, and one connection at a time.



Top left: PTOS Representatives, Middle photo: Ombudsman Representatives, Bottom left: UMA Representatives Robin Hylton and Angela Jenkins. Bottom right: New Employees of USPTO. (Photos by Charles Rones/USPTO).

The History of Military Drones

By Ephraim Blair, UMA Youth Communications Apprentice

The annals of military history reveal a consistent pattern: as the reach and range of weaponry increase, direct human involvement decreases. In antiquity, warfare was melee, fought with hands and fists. Then humanity progressed to swords and spears, slingshots and longbows, catapults and chariots, guns and bombs, planes and tanks.

Each advancement gave the soldier the ability to achieve their objectives more easily, without having to get too close to the enemy, allowing armies to avoid high casualties. At the same time, some have used these new technologies and tactics to release never-before-seen havoc and destruction.

Like many of its predecessors, the modern military drone gives armies unprecedented reach for relatively low cost. However, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are not new. In fact, the first such attack occurred on August 22, 1849, when Austria released “a fleet of some 200 pilotless balloons,” carrying 33 pounds of explosives each, over Venice.¹

During the 1848 Revolutions in Europe, Venice had declared itself as the independent Republic of San Marco, free from the Austrian Empire. Soon, the Austrians laid siege to the Republic of San Marco to retake it. However, they found themselves unable to force the city to surrender. Thus, “a young Austrian artillery lieutenant named Franz von Uchatius” came up with the unorthodox balloon-bomb plan.² Previously, manned hot air balloons were used for reconnaissance, but no one had ever conceived of flying unmanned aircraft with timed bombs.

The balloons were not effective or reliable. Some of the bombs exploded too early. Others exploded too late. A few even were pushed back by the wind, exploding over the Austrian lines. The balloons, which exploded properly over Venice, lacked the power to cause significant damage. Nevertheless, the attack psychologically devastated the beleaguered Venetians, who, exhausted from the siege, ultimately surrendered.

Across the pond, during the Civil War, “the Union and Confederate armies both used balloons for spying.”³ During this time, a certain New York inventor, Charles Perley, took inspiration from the Austrian attack over a decade earlier. On February 24, 1863, he received a patent for a new and improved timed balloon-bomb. Perley wrote that his balloon could “pass over any object” and carry “any-sized bomb or missile of destruction.”⁴ Nonetheless, the Army demurred, and Perley’s patent was never used in combat.

In the coming decades, humanity, especially Americans, turned to the skies. The Wright Brothers completed the first airplane flight in 1903. Although the flight initially only lasted a few seconds, it forever changed technology: never before had anyone flown a device heavier than air. The new technology progressed quickly. And, despite attempts to outlaw aerial combat ordinances, countries began to develop warplanes.



World War One was the first widespread use of planes, with guns attached, for warfare. Both the Allies and the Central Powers utilized aerial warfare, with the dogfighting German flying ace Manfred von Richthofen, better known as the “Red Baron,” becoming the face of the destruction that warplanes were capable of.

In late 1917, the United States, after declaring war on Germany, expanded its aerial capacity. American inventor Charles Kettering designed an unmanned biplane with an “onboard computer [which] counted engine revolutions (to gauge distance)” before it dropped its payload over the designated target.⁵ The Kettering Bug was tested in 1918 and found to have a 75-mile range, but it was never used in warfare.

During the interwar period, multiple countries continued to experiment with UAVs. However, these efforts drastically expanded during the Second

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“History of Military Drones” continued from previous page

World War. Like planes during the First World War, both sides experimentally used UAVs. Axis Japan launched thousands of incendiary balloons to attack the Continental US. Six people picnicking were killed in Oregon. However, the Japanese scrapped future balloon development because it was inaccurate and cost-ineffective.

At the same time, the United States Navy and the Army Air Force (the Air Force used to be part of the Army) were experimenting with using B-17s as drones. Pilots would fly them towards enemy targets, then parachute out, ultimately guiding the B-17 with radio controls. The project was code-named Operation Aphrodite by the Army Air Force, while the Navy called it Operation Anvil. Before either could do much in combat, Operations Aphrodite and Anvil were failures, leading to the deaths of multiple crewmembers, including a 29-year-old Lieutenant Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., the older brother of future President John F. Kennedy. On the other hand, the Nazis made significant progress building early guided missiles, including the V-1 flying bomb, which was designed to kill civilians.

After World War Two, during the Cold War, the development of guided missiles and UAVs kicked into high gear. Initially, UAVs were used mainly for intelligence gathering, but America and the Soviet Union (USSR) realized that they could use them for

combat. America built UAVs, including the 1951 Ryan Firebee and the anti-submarine QH-50 Dash, while the Soviets most notably built the Tupolev class, which are still used in some places in the world. Yet, during this time, America and the USSR spent most of their money and resources on building advanced rockets and large missile munitions to reach space and ensure mutually assured destruction.

At the same time, many smaller countries began experimenting with smaller, cheaper UAVs they could use to overwhelm or trick their enemies. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Israelis launched “Northrop Chukar unmanned craft” towards the Golan Heights, tricking the Syrian military into expending their surface-to-air missiles, which Israel used to its advantage, launching real attacks on the vulnerable Syrian position.⁶



Happy 78th Birthday to the United States Air Force!

September 18, 2025, marked the 78th anniversary of the United States Air Force, a branch that has soared to legendary status since its founding in 1947. Born from the National Security Act signed by President Harry Truman, the Air Force became an independent military service, breaking away from the Army Air Forces to chart its own high-flying course.

A U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor aircraft flies in formation with a U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft and two Northrop F-5 aircraft during Heritage Flight Training Course at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, March 1, 2025. U.S. Air Force (photo by Senior Airman William Finn).



"History of Military Drones" continued from previous page

The United States caught on and began using high-tech drones, such as the RQ-1 Predator and RQ-4 Global Hawk, during the 1990s. Reliable precision strike drones were used to take out high-level terrorist targets during the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq. For example, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Head Qasem Soleimani and Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri were taken out in American drone strikes in 2020 and 2022, respectively.⁷

American drones are among the most advanced in the world. Yet, in current conflicts, there has been a shift from large, expensive drones to cheap ones, to overwhelm the enemy with quantity over quality. During the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2020, "Azerbaijan used low-cost unmanned aircraft and artificial-intelligence-enabled attack drones" to take out key Armenian equipment.⁸

Earlier this year, in the Middle East, Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad, "smuggled drone parts" to facilitate their June attack on Iran. Small Houthi drones have caused the United States to lose hundreds of millions of dollars in equipment, while disrupting potentially trillions in global trade. At the same time, the Iranians have been sending their attack drones to aid the Russian war effort in Ukraine. The Ukrainians have also started to use drones, expending "less than \$150,000 in weaponized drones to inflict a loss of up to \$7 billion in Russian strategic bombers" during Operation Spiderweb.⁹

There are numerous other examples, all of which show that warfare is bound to be changed forever. Although drones and UAVs are not enough to win a war, they are the future. Increasingly, for better or worse, it seems that the future conflicts will not simply be won by conventional means or by which countries produce the best equipment. In years past, America's military focus was on building the most expensive arms and vehicles. Yet, to confront the new reality of warfare, "announced a 'joint interagency task force' in July" to develop and build smaller, cheaper American drones to win the battles and wars of the future. Because, no longer, it seems, will having the best equipment suffice.¹⁰

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UMA Youth Communications Apprentice Ephraim Blair, son of April and Jeffrey Blair, is a high school junior in Bethesda, Md. Ephraim was born in Walter Reed Military Hospital and his father was a Navy active duty medical officer. He is interested in history, politics, and economics. He loves activities such as reading, writing, debating, and playing golf. He is planning on pursuing a career in law and politics.



Civil War color guard of the Texas Department of the Sons Union Veterans



John Schneider and his two sons John Jr. and Michael. The photos were taken during the 144th National Encampment of the SUVCW August 8-10, 2025 in Houston, Texas. The event was attended by over 200 members of the SUVCW from all across America. John was chair of the host committee that put on the event. John is the Past Department Commander of the SUVCW for the States of Texas and Louisiana. (Courtesy photo from John Schneider/USPTO).

Trivia Time

Can you answer these questions? (Hint: The answers are all in this issue of Scuttlebutt!)

1. How old is the Air Force?
2. What are UAVs?
3. When did the United States expand its aerial capacity?
4. What is the name of the Army's retiree newsletter?

UMA Scholarship Opens Doors for Students in 2025-2026

The United States Patent and Trademark Office's United Military Association (USPTO UMA) is proud to announce its annual scholarship opportunity for the 2025-2026 academic year. With a \$500 award available, this scholarship supports the educational goals of students who demonstrate academic promise, community involvement, and a strong sense of purpose.

Key Details:

Award Amount: \$500

Number of Scholarships: Up to 4 (four) awardees

Deadline: Applications must be postmarked by November 15, 2025

Mailing Address: USPTO UMA, P.O. Box 821 Alexandria,
VA 22313

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered, and applicants will not be notified of disqualification—so attention to detail is key.

Who Can Apply?

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be a current high school senior, college, university, or vocational/technical school student
- Be a child or dependent of a current USPTO UMA member in good standing
- Have a minimum 2.5 GPA
- Demonstrate community service
- Submit a 500-word essay on future plans and goals
- Provide one reference letter from a non-family member
- Include school transcript(s)



How Recipients Are Chosen

The UMA Scholarship Committee evaluates applicants based on:

- Academic achievement
- Community involvement
- Participation in extracurricular activities (e.g., church groups, JROTC, Scouts)

What Happens Next?

Recipients will be notified in December 15, 2025, and may be invited to a formal award presentation. The scholarship funds will be paid directly to the student's educational institution and must be used for tuition and fees only.

Important Notes:

- The scholarship is not renewable
- If a recipient fails to enroll or drops out, the award must be returned
- UMA reserves the right to revoke the award for misconduct or other reasons

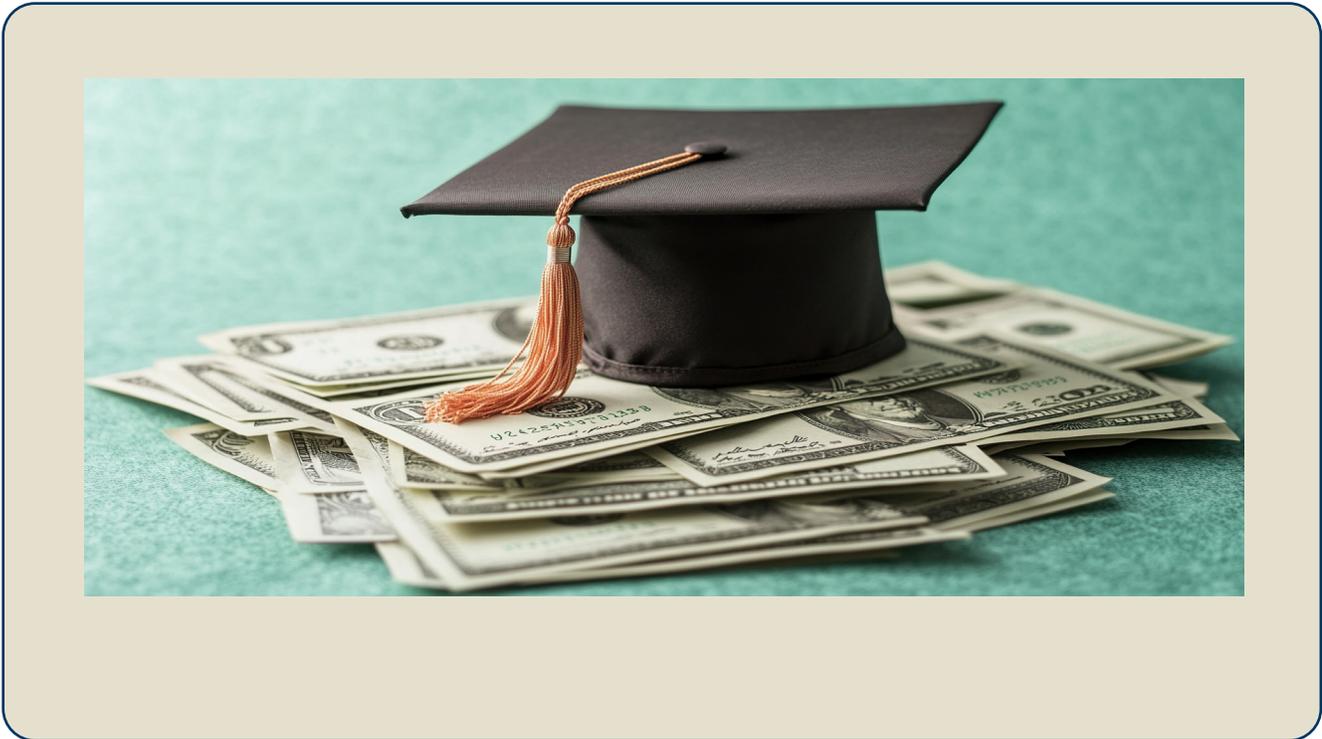


"Scholarships" continued from previous page



This scholarship is a meaningful way for UMA to invest in the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and changemakers. Students are encouraged to apply early, follow all instructions carefully, and showcase their unique contributions to their communities.

For more information or to request an application, contact your UMA representative or visit the USPTO UMA office.



Jamie Holcombe: CIO, Code Whisperer, and All-Around Legend Logs Off

By Angela Jenkins, Scuttlebutt editor

After years of leading the USPTO's tech frontier with the precision of a West Point grad and the flair of a Silicon Valley disruptor, Jamie Holcombe is officially powering down his CIO console. But let's be real—he's probably already beta-testing his next adventure.

Jamie's career has been a masterclass in multitasking: commanding Army signal battalions, steering cybersecurity startups, and managing networks that support everything from air traffic to maritime comms. If it had a signal, Jamie made it stronger. If it had a system, he made it smarter. If it had a bug—well, it didn't for long.



Top photo: Jamie Holcombe and Acting Deputy Director Will Covey. Bottom photo USPTO colleagues attend farewell. (Photos by Charles Rones/USPTO).

He's held more executive titles than most people have browser tabs open, and somehow still found time to finish first in his class in computer science at West Point. (We suspect he also coded his own graduation speech.)

At USPTO, Jamie didn't just advise on IT—he transformed it. He made systems hum, teams thrive, and acronyms almost fun. His leadership was equal parts strategy, swagger, and “did he just fix that with a spreadsheet and a joke?”



Looking for physical locations of veteran resources or information about state-specific benefits for areas like taxes, education, health insurance, and more? Check the benefit library tab at either <https://www.myairforcebenefits.us.af.mil> or <https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>.



"Jamie Holcombe's Farewell" continued from previous page

As Jamie rides off into the digital sunset—possibly on a drone he programmed himself—we salute the man who made tech human, leadership inspiring, and farewell articles a little harder to write.

May your next chapter be filled with fast processors, zero latency, and coffee that refills itself. Thanks for everything, Jamie.

You've left a legacy that even the cloud can't contain.



Top photo: Jamie Holcombe, UMA Executive Advisor Troy Tyler, and Gabriela Craciun, (Photos by Charles Rones/USPTO).

Wreaths across America



This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, December 13, 2025. Join the more than two million volunteers and supporters who will gather to Remember, Honor and Teach at more than 5,200 participating locations in all 50 states, at sea and abroad.



Photos from Wreath of America website.



Military Retiree Newsletters



[Army Echoes](#)



[Air Force Afterburner](#)



[Coast Guard The Long Blue](#)



[Navy Shift Colors](#)

[Marine Corps New web-link](#)



[DFAS newsletter](#)



SAVE THE DATE

October 1 - USPTO Day @ 12:30 pm - 3:00 pm

October 22 - Breast Cancer Awareness Seminar @ 11:00 am

November 6 - UMA Veterans Day Program (Tentative time) @ 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

December 9 - UMA Holiday Celebration and Awards Dinner @ 5:30 pm - 9:00 pm

October - November - UMA Executive Board Nominations and Elections (details coming soon)

Other Upcoming Events

October 13 - U.S. Navy Birthday

October 26 - Day of the Deployed

November - National Military Family Month

November 10 - U.S. Marine Corps Birthday

November 11 - Veterans Day

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 20 - Space Force Birthday



Headline highlights: A look at news affecting veterans

[H.R.1815 - VA Home Loan Program Reform Act](#) This bill authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to take certain actions in cases of default on home loans under the VA home loan program and establishes a partial claim program. First, the bill authorizes the VA to pay the holder of a loan guaranteed by the VA an amount necessary to avoid the foreclosure of the loan, provided that the holder of the loan and the veteran obligated on the loan execute documents to ensure the VA obtains a secured interest in the property covered by the loan.

[5 reasons federal cuts are hitting veterans especially hard](#) The department known as the VA manages and directly provides comprehensive services for veterans. Those services include health care, short- and long-term housing options, life insurance, pensions, education stipends, and assistance in jails and courts. The VA also engages in pathbreaking public health research. One-quarter of the VA's 482,000 employees are veterans.

[GI Bill Benefits 2025: What Veterans Need to Know](#) Suicidal thoughts can be experienced by anyone and are a serious mental health concern. Whether you're a service member, veteran, family member, or retiree, it's important to remember that mental health is just as crucial as physical health. Taking proactive steps to care for your mental well-being can make a significant difference. Call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](#)

[Veterans Keepsake Project](#) There are more than 20 million veterans in the United States, including 1.2 million currently serving on active duty and another 800,000 in the reserves. Many millions more have served in uniform since the birth of our nation, in peacetime and war. Behind every one of them is a story - of struggle, perseverance, camaraderie, triumph, and sometimes even tragedy. The purpose of this project is to take something so large and important - like our nation's military veterans - and find the individual stories within. The end results are personal and emotional accounts that foster a reverence for service and sacrifice. The portraits highlights veterans through personal keepsakes of their military service or of a loved one who served - and explains, in the words of the USPTO employees holding the keepsakes, what these items mean to them.

Veteran resources and contacts

USPTO Veteran Hiring Program Manager: HireVets@uspto.gov

USPTO OHR Military Service Time Buy Back Contact: HumanResources_USPTO@uspto.gov

Benefits questions for current Reservists: BenefitsTeam@uspto.gov

Pay questions for current Reservists: OHR-CB@uspto.gov

[Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Information](#)

[GI Bill](#)

[Defense Finance and Accounting Service](#)

[TRICARE](#)

[Combat-Related Special Compensation](#)

[Veterans Service Records](#)

[Suicide and Crisis Line](#): Call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](#)