



U.S. PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE MILITARY ASSOCIATION



SCUTTLEBUTT

Winter 2025-2026

How Thoughtful Questions Transformed Our Veterans Day Panels Into Powerful Conversations

By Angela Jenkins, *UMA Editor*

Great panel discussions don't happen by accident — they're built through intentional design, meaningful prompts, and a commitment to elevating every voice in the room. For last year's USPTO Military Association Veterans Day event, we set out to create panels that did more than inform. We wanted conversations that connected, challenged assumptions, and invited the audience to see military service, transition, leadership, and resilience through a personal lens.

Robin Hylton opened the event with her signature usher style charm, guiding people to "please have a seat somewhere," before grounding the room with a brief history of Veterans Day and honoring all veterans for their continued service "not only here at the USPTO, but in your communities as well." Director John Squires followed with heartfelt remarks about his family's military roots and celebrated the USPTO's recognition as a top veteran friendly agency, even sprinkling in aviation trivia about Orville Wright's historic military test flight ending right here in Alexandria.



CONTINUING TO SERVE

Photos provided by Charles Rones



“Panel Discussions” continued from previous page

The Patenteers energized the room with their “Tribute to the Armed Forces,” prompting a spontaneous sing along — and a few forgotten lyrics that Robin gleefully called out. The first panel, Women Veterans Leading Change, featured Alicia Glover, Ann Kozak, Renee Murdock, and Angela Jenkins in a candid conversation about leadership, resilience, and navigating federal spaces. Angela reflected on how military training shaped her confidence and competence, Renee described the Army’s “breakdown, buildup” approach that taught her decisiveness and curiosity, Alicia emphasized leading with empathy and clarity, and Ann highlighted adaptability and the importance of investing in oneself — especially for military spouses who often put their own dreams on hold.

The second panel, moderated by Sergeant Major Angela Jenkins, brought together Troy Tyler, James (John) Kemp, Keith Delahoussaye, and Chris Baker for a lively and refreshingly honest discussion on collaboration and veteran transition in the workplace. Troy set the tone early with a clear and powerful reminder that having a seat at the table isn’t enough — you should also have a voice at the table. He emphasized the importance of creating environments where veterans feel empowered to contribute, not just be present. James Kemp expanded on this by stressing that collaboration must be “vertical and horizontal,” reminding the room that veterans bring a wealth of experience agencies should actively tap into. Chris Baker underscored the value of sponsorship, sharing how veterans often need someone to “pull them into the room” and help them navigate federal culture. Their favorite military phrases — from Troy’s “Make it make sense,” to Chris’s classic “Roger that,” to Kemp’s “OODA loop” which means - observe, orient, decide, and act” — kept the room laughing and nodding in recognition.



"Panel Discussions" continued from previous page

The final panel, Stories of Service, featured heartfelt reflections from Corrinne Callins, Greg Dodson, and Danny (Roman) Gray. Corrinne spoke about trademark customers, Greg shared how being shot at changed his perspective ("You can't scare summed up Marine reducing barriers surviving being his entire outlook me"), and Danny Gray perspective with, "It's a good day if you're not getting shot at." Their imagined movie titles — "Keep Moving Forward, I'm Not Afraid of Anything", and "Not Black, Not White, Just Gray". Their movie titles were instantly resonated with audience and perfectly captured the spirit of their journeys.

Robin with gratitude for every participant, volunteer, and attendee, reminding the room that UMA's mission continues year round through service projects, community engagement, and veteran support. The event wasn't just a ceremony — it was a celebration of identity, connection, and the shared commitment to honoring those who serve. It left the room inspired, energized, and proud to be part of a community that uplifts veterans with sincerity, humor, and heart.



Photos by Charles Rones

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



Empowering Awareness: UMA Hosts Hands On Breast Cancer Education Seminar

On Wednesday, October 22, 2025, the Jefferson Conference Center transformed into a space of learning, empowerment, and community as employees gathered for a special Breast Cancer Awareness seminar. Led by Miriam Birmiel, APRN, Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, the session offered practical knowledge, myth busting insights, and hands on tools to help attendees take charge of their breast health.

What made this seminar stand out was its inclusive, approachable tone. Breast cancer affects people of all genders, and the presentation emphasized that early detection is everyone’s responsibility. Miriam guided the audience through the proper steps of a breast self examination, explaining what to look for, what feels normal, and when to seek medical advice. Her clear, compassionate teaching style made the topic accessible, even for those who had never performed a self exam before.

One of the most memorable parts of the seminar came at the end, when attendees were invited to practice what they learned using breast self exam models. These models featured a variety of simulated lumps, allowing participants to feel the difference between typical breast tissue and potential warning signs.

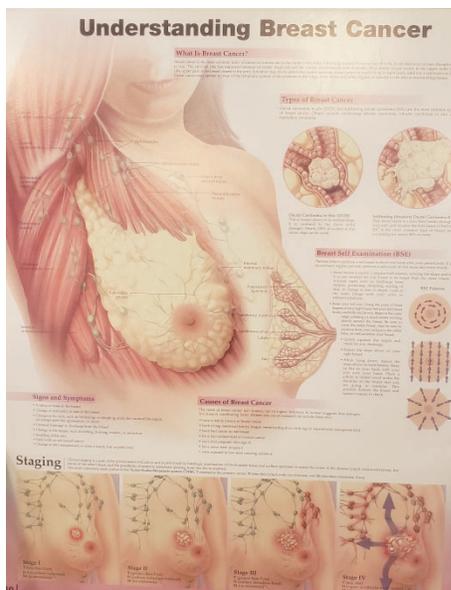
The room buzzed with curiosity and conversation as people explored the models, asked questions, and

compared experiences. For many, it was the first time they had the opportunity to practice in such a supportive environment. The hands on activity turned abstract information into real world skill — the kind that can save lives.

Miriam also addressed a topic that often goes unspoken: men can get breast cancer, too. By normalizing self exams for all genders, the seminar helped break down stigma and encouraged everyone to be proactive about their health. Attendees appreciated the inclusive approach, noting how rare it is to see breast cancer education framed for the entire community.

By the end of the session, participants walked away not only with new knowledge, but with confidence — confidence in their ability to perform a self exam, to recognize changes, and to advocate for their own health. The seminar served as a powerful reminder that awareness is more than a month on the calendar; it’s a lifelong practice of paying attention, asking questions, and supporting one another.

Thanks to Miriam Birmiel’s expertise and the USPTO’s commitment to wellness education, this year’s Breast Cancer Awareness seminar was more than informative. It was engaging, empowering, and deeply human.





Photos provided by: Britiany Riggins, Robin Hylton, and Angela Jenkins



Honoring Lincoln's Legacy

By John Schneider, PTAB Judge

During the second week of February 2026, John Schneider, along with his wife Jill, participated in one of Washington, D.C.'s most enduring traditions: the 104th Annual Lincoln Birthday Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial. The event, steeped in history and reverence, brought together military leaders, patriotic organizations, and citizens honoring the legacy of the 16th President of the United States.

The ceremony began with the presentation of the Presidential Wreath, placed on behalf of the President by Major General Gant, Commander of the Military District of Washington. As the wreath was set at the base of the towering statue, the words carved above — "THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN IS ENSHRINED FOREVER" — echoed the solemnity of the moment.

Following the Presidential tribute, more than a dozen patriotic and Lincoln related organizations stepped forward to present their own wreaths, each one a symbol of gratitude, remembrance, and national unity. Among them was a wreath presented on behalf of the U.S. Colored Troops, a powerful reminder of the diverse service members whose sacrifices shaped the nation.

The atmosphere at the memorial was one of quiet dignity. Signs around the site reminded visitors to "help preserve the atmosphere of calm, tranquility and reverence," and the ceremony lived up to that request. The United States Army

Brass Quintet, part of "Pershing's Own," provided musical honors, filling the memorial with stirring notes that carried across the marble columns.

The program also included a reading from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address — a passage that begins, "As to myself..." — grounding the ceremony in Lincoln's own words and the enduring relevance of his leadership during the nation's most divided era.

The event concluded with Taps, played in memory of those who gave, as the document states, "the last full measure of devotion."

This year's ceremony was a reminder that Lincoln's legacy is not just carved in stone; it lives on in the people who gather each year to honor his leadership, his sacrifice, and his vision for a united nation.

UMA's mission — "Continuing to Serve" — extends beyond the workplace. Participation in events like the Lincoln Birthday Ceremony reflects our commitment to honoring history, recognizing service, and staying connected to the traditions that shape our national identity.

Photos by John Schneider





Photos by John Schneider



General Larry Spencer
Airforce



General Larry Spence
Army



Captain Bobby Wilks
Army

Just a few pictures of our "Honored Heroes"

Photos provided by Arlene Jones



UMA Coffee Break Travels Through time with Arlene Jones for Black History Month

By Angela Jenkins, Editor

The February 24, 2026 UMA Coffee Break was transformed into an energetic and enlightening historical journey thanks to a dynamic presentation by Arlene Jones titled “Black Men Who Made U.S. Military History.”

From the moment the session began, Arlene captivated attendees with stories of extraordinary veterans whose courage, leadership, and resilience helped shape the U.S. Armed Forces across generations. She opened with a powerful reminder from the slides: “Black veterans have defended a democracy that too often denied them full citizenship,” a theme that framed the entire presentation.

Arlene introduced Air Force trailblazers such as General Larry Spencer, who rose from enlisted Airman to Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force; Lt. General Benjamin Davis Jr., the first Black general officer in the Air Force and commander of the Tuskegee Airmen; and General Daniel “Chappie” James Jr., who became the first African American four star general in the U.S. Armed Forces. Their stories illustrated how determination and excellence can reshape institutions from within.

Arlene then guided the group through the achievements of Army pioneers including Sgt. William Carney, the first African American Medal of Honor recipient; Major Martin Delany, the first Black field grade officer and a key recruiter for the United States Colored Troops; Major General Frederic Davison, the first African American division commander; and General Benjamin Davis Sr., whose career helped lay the foundation for desegregation in the armed forces.

The presentation continued with Coast Guard heroes such as Captain Richard Etheridge, the first African American to command a U.S. Life Saving Service station;

Captain Bobby Wilks, the first Black Coast Guard aviator and air station commander; and Master Chief Petty Officer Vince Patton, the first African American to serve as the Coast Guard’s senior enlisted leader.

Arlene also highlighted Marine Corps icons including General Michael Langely, the first Black four star general in Marine Corps history, PFC James Anderson Jr., the first African American Marine Medal of Honor recipient in Vietnam; and Lt. General Frank Petersen Jr., the first black Marine aviator and general.

She concluded with Navy legends such as Seaman Doris “Dorie” Miller, whose heroism at Pearl Harbor earned him the Navy Cross; Master Chief Carl Brashear, the first Black U.S. Navy Master Diver and inspiration behind “Men of Honor”; and Lt. Commander Wesley Brown, the first Black graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Arlene delivered each story with warmth, humor, and enthusiasm, turning the Coffee Break into a celebration of resilience, excellence, and the enduring contributions of Black service members. She closed with a quote from the slides—“I’m fearless and comfortable in my own skin. I’ve got flaws, but I’m still confident!”—a message that perfectly captured the spirit of the presentation. By the end of the session, UMA members left feeling inspired, educated, and uplifted, grateful for a Coffee Break that honored Black History Month with both heart and energy.

This wasn’t just a presentation. It was a celebration, a history lesson, and a reminder of the extraordinary legacy of Black service members who shaped our military and our nation. And yes — it was also a very good Coffee Break.





Child of Revolution: William Henry Harrison and the Ordeal of Liberty

By Ephraim Blair, *UMA Youth Communications Apprentice*

The Child of the Revolution: William Henry Harrison and the Ordeal of Liberty Americans celebrate the Founding Fathers, but they seldom pause to consider the travails of their children, who were shaped by the Revolutionary War. One such child was William Henry Harrison, who, before becoming the Hero of Tippecanoe, grew up in the shadow of his illustrious family. Later in life, Harrison wrote that he was “a child of the Revolution,” whose “attachment to liberty was imbibed in my earliest youth.” Born in 1773, Harrison was the last president to be born as a British subject, standing between the world his father helped overthrow and the republic he would later serve. The trauma and turmoil of his boyhood taught Harrison the cost of liberty, developing the resilience, discipline, and sense of duty he carried throughout his public life.

By the time of his birth, Harrison’s family was already well-established. His earliest ancestors “came to America from England in 1630.” The Harrisons held high positions in colonial government and bought several tobacco plantations, establishing their homestead, Harrison’s Landing, at Berkeley Plantation “on the James River.” Berkeley retained the customs of the Old World, and, “under the laws and customs of the day,” his eldest brother would inherit the family estate, while his sisters would marry well. This left Harrison, the youngest of seven children, at a significant “disadvantage.” Furthermore, his parents’ attention was directed elsewhere. His mother, Elizabeth, called the “good old lady” of Berkeley, was loving but exhausted from raising six children and managing her vast household. This, paired with her husband’s chronic absence, made her become increasingly reclusive. Without strong parental guidance, young Harrison would have to forge his own path.

As “the child of my father’s old age,” Harrison later reflected that his father, Benjamin Harrison V, was a legendary, not personable, figure to him. Yet, Harrison inherited many of his father’s political instincts, namely, suspicion of heavy-handed government. He heard stories of his father’s service and “close friends,” such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. When his son was born, Benjamin Harrison V, who had been involved in Virginia politics for over 20 years, was focused on the brewing tension between Great Britain and the Thirteen Colonies. Tax disputes with the Mother Country were not new to America or Benjamin V. As a freshman burgess on the Committee of Propositions and Grievances in 1752, he and his colleagues vociferously opposed an increased land patent tax, deriding it as “a betrayal of the rights and privileges of the people.” He similarly opposed

the Stamp Act of 1765. In spite of that, he did not support the methods of “civil disobedience” proposed by his friend Patrick Henry, hoping the conflict with Great Britain would be resolved with a compromise like previous disputes.

After repealing the Stamp Act in 1766, Parliament declared that it could “make laws and statutes” over its colonies “in all cases whatsoever.” As Parliament passed higher taxes and stricter regulations, Benjamin Harrison V came to doubt that a peaceful resolution with Great Britain was possible, especially after Royal Governor Dunmore disbanded the House of Burgesses in 1774. Nevertheless, he continued to sue for peace when he was elected as a delegate to the First Continental Congress. However, after Lexington, any hope of reconciliation largely disappeared when militiamen took up arms “to fight for liberty.”

During the Second Continental Congress, Benjamin Harrison V placed greater emphasis on his role as a Founding Father than on his role as a father to his youngest son. He was on the committee tasked with equipping the Continental Army and chaired debates over independence. A “pensive and awful silence” hovered over the Pennsylvania State House as he and the other delegates signed the Declaration of Independence. Britain had already “plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people,” and by signing, they pledged “to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” The Harrisons paid dearly for this pledge.

In January 1781, Benjamin Harrison V was “hastily dispatched” to Philadelphia “to plead with Congress to come to the rescue of Virginia.” At the same time, after burning much of Richmond, General Benedict Arnold was sailing a force of 1,600 British troops down the James River, targeting towns and plantations along the way. As a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Harrison V knew his family was a chief target for Benedict Arnold, while Patriot militiamen were ruefully unprepared, lacking “arms of any kind, what they have are mostly unfit for service”.

With his father gone, William Henry Harrison had to flee Berkeley with his mother and sister. Frustrated to find that the Harrisons had left, Arnold ordered his troops to ransack the plantation, using “subtlety in his cruelty which would touch Harrison” deeply in later years. The soldiers burned the family’s furniture, portraits, correspondence, and books

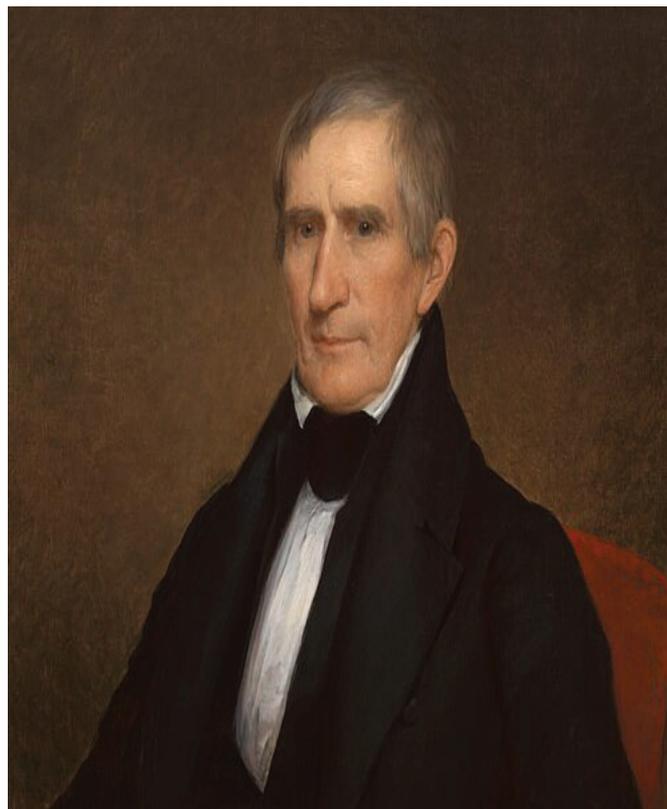
on their front lawn. They destroyed the Harrisons' crops and killed their livestock, using their cattle as "practice target[s]." This permanently traumatized seven-year-old William Henry Harrison and further debilitated the family's poor finances, keenly reminding him about the dangers of tyranny.

However, the Revolutionary War was also profoundly inspiring for Harrison. Though his father had intended for him to become a physician, he wished to become a military officer after seeing Washington's courageous Continental Army. Six months after most of his possessions were burned, Harrison "hailed the passing Continental troops, stared in awe at the great man leading them, thrilled at the news of the siege of Yorktown, and celebrated when word came of the British surrender."

Despite being deprived of the formal education his brothers received, Harrison was a voracious reader who found respite in reading about classical military history. One of his favorite books was Charles Rollin's magisterial *Ancient History*, which he read "three times before I was seventeen years old." Reading about Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar further convinced Harrison to pursue a military career. Throughout his life, he frequently alluded to Roman history and its lessons for the young republic he would one day serve. Years later, after his father died in 1791, Harrison left medical school in Philadelphia and leveraged his connection with President Washington to receive a commission as an ensign in the western army. Harrison rose quickly, serving as a territorial delegate in Congress and as the first governor of Indiana. He won national fame as a general for winning the battles of Tippecanoe and the Thames, going on to become a congressman, a senator, an ambassador to Colombia, and ultimately the ninth U.S. president in 1841.

Throughout his life, he never forgot the revolutionary principles he learned through his grueling experiences as a child. Three weeks after giving the longest inaugural speech in American history, William Henry Harrison fell ill and became the first president to die in office. As he lay

dying, unable to think of anything but the welfare of his country, he uttered his last words to his attending physician, "Sir, I wish you to understand the true principles of the Government. I wish them carried out. I ask nothing more."



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.



Meet your 2026 USPTO Military Association Board members

President: Robin Hylton

Robin Hylton is a Special Program Examiner in International Patent Legal Administration (IPLA), a division of the Office of International Patent Cooperation (OIPC), and a former primary patent examiner. She has served as UMA secretary for three different administrations. An active member of several USPTO Voluntary Employee organizations (VEOs) and non-profit organizations, Robin has honed her communication and leadership skills.



Additionally, Robin has participated in the USPTO Enterprise mentoring program and served details in the Office of the Commissioner for Patents as a writer/editor and the Eastern Regional Outreach Office as an assistant outreach coordinator.

Although she did not actively serve in the U.S. military, Robin is married (30 years) to a U.S. Navy veteran. A proud alumna of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, she earned a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and worked in industry prior to coming to the USPTO. She lives the University's motto - *Ut Prosim* (That I may serve).

Vice President: Keith G. Delahoussaye Jr.

Keith Delahoussaye is a Retired Master Sergeant from the United States Air Force Reserve (1998-2018). He served 12 of his 20 years of service as an Air Reserve Technician. During this time, he was able to serve in various roles of leadership and management. While serving, Keith earned a Master's degree of Science in Advanced Materials Engineering and a Master's degree of Science in Management of Technology from the University of Texas at San Antonio, in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Currently, Keith is a Primary Patent Examiner in Art Unit 2875 (optical illumination, January 2016-present) and was also a member of the Research and Development Art Unit (RD00, March 2023-February 2025). Some of the roles of RD00 were to find ways to improve the customer experience of applicants and improve the work experience for patent examiners.



Secretary: Aaron Ho

Aaron Ho has been a patent examiner in the electrical arts (AU2139 computer memory) since 2016, joining the first class at the Dallas office. While with the office, he has been a member of multiple affinity groups, namely APANET, PTOS, UMA, and the TXRO Work Life Organization (now renamed



as the Southwest Work-Life Organization).

He has served as treasurer for the Southwest Work Life Org. since its beginning, helping to organize events and take care of financial bookkeeping.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading, listening to podcasts, being part of his church community, and as of last year, trying new recipes to cook and bake with his wife.

Treasurer: Angela Jenkins

Angela has been with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) PTAB 2015 and currently work as a Legal Administrative Specialist. Angela retired from United States Army Reserve with 35 years of honorable as a Sergeant Major. Angela's has extensive experience and training as a Leader. Angela background as a Paralegal, and Human Resource Technician, and Legal Secretary has afforded her the opportunity to work in many different companies and roles. Angela is outgoing, poised, lively, and an incisive communicator. Angela has two children Breona and Bryson and enjoys reading, Zumba, and dancing. Angela is committed to serving our community.



Representatives-at-Large:

Christopher Baker

Chris was born in Monroe, NC and grew up with a strong work ethic and a deep respect for community values. He has a degree in political science from Troy University.

He served honorably in the Air Force for 24 years, including service as a Gulf War veteran in support of Desert Shield/Storm and Iraqi/Enduring Freedom conflicts. Chris has been selected to work in special positions at the White House under the Bush and Obama administrations.



Chris currently serves on numerous neighborhood, industry, and community councils. He is an active member of the River East Emerging Leaders, Toastmaster's and Bank of America's Advisory Panel. He is a volunteer driver for Meals on Wheels.

Chris is a dad, veteran, coach, author, podcaster, and avid sports fan whose hobbies include fantasy sports, poker, and golf.

Chris is a dad, veteran, coach, author, podcaster, and avid sports fan whose hobbies include fantasy sports, poker, and golf.

April Blair

April Blair was one of the founding Board Directors of UMA. She has served as a Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE) at TC 2100 for over a decade. While her husband was an active-duty Navy Medical officer, she and her family traveled throughout the country. She witnessed men and women in uniform who dedicated their lives to the service of our nation. She fully comprehends the significance of the phrase "freedom is not free". In her spare time, she enjoys reading, cooking, music, watching NBA games, running, volunteering, and spending quality time with family and friends. She is passionate about transforming people's perspective on and implementing healing and connection through narrative and storytelling.



Corrinne Callins

Corrinne's professional background includes four years of service as an Air Force weather forecaster, as well as experience in customer service, teaching, and in all facets of business writing and communication planning.

She is currently a technical writer in the Trademark office. She has served as Board Member at Large on the Alumni Board of Directors for the University of Maryland, Global Campus and is completing a term as UMA Board Member at Large for the last few months of FY2025.



Eduardo Carballo II

In his new role as a Marketing & Communications Specialist, Ed works as the Veteran Recruitment Lead for USPTO in OHRS under OCAO. His job is to work with all like-minded stakeholders, to identify and recruit transitioning service-members, veterans and military spouses into jobs at USPTO.

Ed also played a critical role in the Unleashing American Innovators Act of 2022 (UAIA) selection committee, advising the USPTO Director on optimal locations for the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and the Northern New England Community Outreach Office (NNECOO), based on congressional mandates, to open new USPTO offices around the country.

Ed expanded USPTO's military outreach by partnering with the Military Influencer Conference (MIC) to engage 3,700+



veterans, active-duty, guard, reserve, and military spouses. This led to dozens of new military contacts, training, and outreach events, including a fireside chat with USPTO Director and LTC Robert Schaefer, a retired Green Beret and founding member of Horse Soldier Bourbon.

Ed identified and secured Haley McClain Hill, CEO & Founder of TORCH Warrior-wear, as a panelist for USPTO breakout session at MIC. Three months later, Haley appeared on "Shark Tank" and received a deal from a "Shark". McClain Hill is a US Air Force veteran and former NFL cheerleader.

Christian M. Laureano-DeJesus

Christian is a Service-Connected Marine Corps Veteran, and was an O311/Infantry and was last stationed at MCB Twentynine Palms, assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion as a Scout Infantryman.



He currently serves as an EEO Specialist with the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity at USPTO. Most of his professional experience involves working in Civil Rights/Employment Law as an Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist or Investigator.

Christian previously served as the UMA Treasurer during 2024, and has also served as Alumni Board of Director Treasurer/Board Member, from April 2014 through April 2018, for the Fiver Children's Foundation in New York City.

Faridha Salama

Faridha Salama started with USPTO's Office of Patent Workforce Management in August of 2023.

She has over 20 years of experience in strategic planning, interagency coordination, policy development, regulatory compliance, performance improvement, human capital planning, training, and employee engagement programs.

Faridha began her federal service in 2007 at DHS/TSA as a Program Manager and subject matter expert providing regulatory guidance and compliance training to industry stakeholders both in-person and virtually within domestic and international settings.





Jesse Samluk

Jesse Samluk is a patent examiner in Art Unit 2411 in the Multiplex Area. Jesse joined USPTO in January 2023. Before USPTO, Jesse was at the NSA and served in space systems cybersecurity and also reviewed patents for secrecy orders under 35. U.S.C. § 181.



Jesse has a PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Delaware, a Juris Doctor from Widener University Delaware Law School, and is barred in MD, PA, and NY.

He also holds 10 cybersecurity certifications. He is also a volunteer firefighter and EMT, and holds multiple fire service credentials.

As is related to UMA, Jesse is currently the only U.S. Public Health Service Ready Reservist in the USPTO. In that capacity, he is a Lieutenant and serves as an Engineer Officer. Jesse also served in the Army Reserve previously as an officer in Transportation.

In addition to his assigned duties as a Reservist, Jesse continually advocates for his fellow Reservists for parity within their own service and the sister services.

Karen Wright

An empathetic and customer service driven, proven leader who drives for constant improvement by removing impediments. With over 25 years of federal service experience, I have developed a skill set for garnering change amongst teams and fostering cohesiveness.



Currently serves as a Management Program Analyst for OPA's Organizational Operations Division where I seek ways to consistently build meaningful work flows while bridging gaps.

As a federal employee, I am eternally grateful for our Service Members and am honored to support in any capacity I can.

Jeri Youngbloodt

Jeri has been with the USPTO PTAB since 2023 and currently work as a Legal Administrative Specialist. Prior to her arrival at the USPTO, she worked as an analyst with the Army Review Boards Agency. Jeri retired from United States Army with 20 years of honorable service as a Master Sergeant.



Jeri has extensive experience and training as a Leader and instructor. Jeri's background as a Paralegal has afforded her the opportunity to work in many different roles and thrive in numerous positions.

Jeri believes in cultivating environments where team members feel valued and respected through active listening and inclusion.

Jeri has two children, Emani and Israel, and one granddaughter, Eila.

She enjoys traveling, reading, volunteer work, and fitness classes.



UMA Photos 2025 - 2026



Photos by Charles Rones



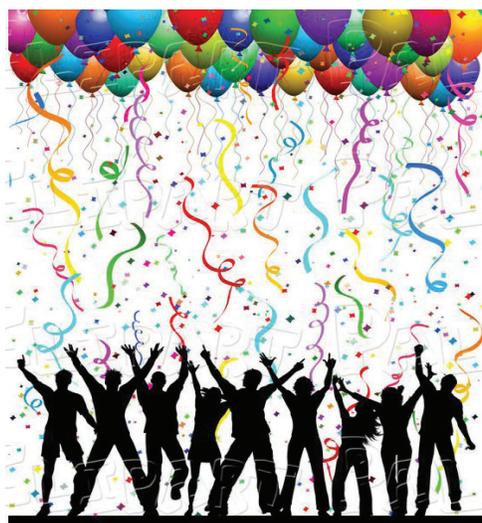


UMA Year-End Recognition & Celebration

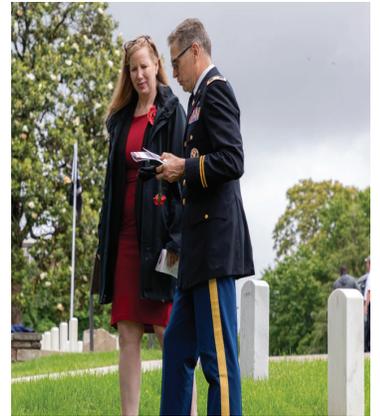
The UMA closed out 2025 with a warm, spirited, and deeply meaningful Year-End Recognition & Celebration on December 9th, bringing together UMA members, supporters, and agency leaders for an evening that perfectly captured the heart of the organization. The event opened with a reflection on UMA's mission "to provide fellowship, mentorship, and support for military veterans working at the USPTO," a reminder of the purpose that guided every program, meeting, and initiative throughout the year. Attendees recognized the steadfast support of USPTO executives including Under Secretary John Squires, Deputy Under Secretary Coke Morgan Stewart, and Director of OEEOD Bismarck Myrick, whose leadership and advocacy continue to strengthen UMA's presence across the agency. A particularly heartfelt moment came during the farewell tribute to Executive Sponsor Fred Steckler, whose years of guidance and partnership were honored through photos, memories, and warm expressions of gratitude that highlighted the lasting impact of his service.

The celebration also showcased the remarkable breadth of UMA's 2025 programming. Members reflected on a year filled with weekly Virtual Coffee Breaks, quarterly meetings, happy hours, and major commemorative events such as the Memorial Day Program and Walk of Remembrance, the Army and Air Force Birthday celebrations, Constitution Day, Veterans Day, and the Breast Cancer Awareness Seminar. UMA's communications footprint expanded as well, with updates to the website, contributions to agency social media, the Scuttlebutt newsletter, and the continued success of the UMA Youth Communications Apprentice Program.

The evening honored the 2025 Board Members—President Robin Hylton, Vice President Keith Delahoussaye, Secretary April Blair, and Treasurer Angela Jenkins—along with Board Members at Large and regional representatives whose dedication kept UMA's mission thriving. A special Volunteer Recognition Ceremony acknowledged individuals whose "tireless volunteer efforts" advanced UMA's work and strengthened the veteran community at USPTO. The night concluded with the induction of the 2026 Board, led by Immediate Past President Alford Kindred, marking a new chapter of leadership and momentum. As members shared stories, enjoyed refreshments, and celebrated their collective accomplishments, the event reaffirmed UMA's identity as a community that continues to serve with pride, purpose, and camaraderie.



UMA Photos 2025 - 2026 Continued



Photos by John Rones



Headline highlights: A look at news affecting veterans

[Artificial Intelligence in VA](#) The Department of Veterans Affairs has outlined a comprehensive AI strategy focused on improving speed, accuracy, and Veteran experience across the enterprise. From AI-powered virtual assistants to faster claims processing and clinical documentation support the, VA views AI as a mission enabling tool rather than a replacement for people. The strategy emphasizes early experimentation, strong governance, and transparency to ensure veteran trust while scaling what works. When deployed responsibly, these tools are expected to reduce administrative burdens and help VA staff focus on complex, high impact Veteran needs.

[Veterans Budget 2026](#) Congress is moving forward with the VA budget 2026, and the numbers are massive. We are looking at a proposed \$435 billion plan for the Department of Veterans Affairs. This is not just another government budget; it is a statement about our commitment to veterans and their families.

[Elevating the Veteran Voice in 2025 Mid-term Election 2026](#) As the 2026 midterm election approaches, decisions made in Washington will shape the future of veterans' healthcare, benefits, and support systems for years to come. Those decisions should be informed by the voices of veterans themselves.

[Veterans' 2026 Priorities Put Health Care, Suicide Prevention to Congress](#) As Congress returns for 2026, veterans' advocates are pressing lawmakers to focus less on slogans and more on execution. That argument sits at the center of the non-partisan nonprofit, "Mission Roll Call", which says it "amplifies the voices of veterans and their families" by using digital polling to capture what people actually need, including those who do not belong to traditional veterans' organizations.

Military Retiree Newsletters



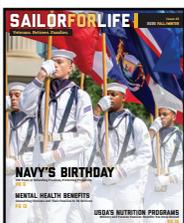
[Army Echoes Newsletter](#)



[Air Force Afterburner](#)



[Coast Guard The Long Blue](#)



[Navy Shist Colors 2](#)

[Marine Corps New web-link](#)



[DFAS newsletter](#)

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

Save the Date

March 10 - UMA Quarterly Membership meeting

May 14 - USPTO Day

May 21 - Memorial Day program

June TBD - Quarterly Membership meeting

Other Upcoming Events

March 13- K-9 Veterans Day

March 25 - Medal of Honor Day

March 29 - Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

March 29 - Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day

April - Month of the Military Child

April 5 - Gold Star Spouses Day

Apr. 14 - Air Force Reserve Birthday

Apr. 23 - Army Reserve Birthday

May - National Military Appreciation Month & Month of the Military Caregiver

May - Letter Writing Campaign

May 1 - Silver Star Service Banner Day (honoring America's wounded, injured and ill service members)

May 1 - National Day of Prayer

May 8 - Military Spouse Appreciation Day (Friday before Mother's Day)

May 16 - Armed Forces Day (active duty)

May 21 - USPTO Memorial Day Event**