



# U.S. PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE MILITARY ASSOCIATION



Winter 2023 - 2024

## Messages from leadership

Reflecting on my term as president of UMA, I am filled with gratitude for the chance to lead this remarkable organization. The foundation laid by previous presidents has been invaluable, and I appreciate their collective work and expertise.

My sincere thanks go to the board, members, especially our vice president, Michael Arguello, and our executive advisor, Fred Steckler, for entrusting me with the leadership of UMA. This experience came at a pivotal moment in my life when I questioned my ability to lead. Under Fred Steckler's guidance, this organization has restored my confidence and faith in uniting diverse individuals to affect positive change.

I am profoundly grateful for the contributions of everyone I had the privilege to engage with, including the social media and communications talents of Elizabeth Caraway and the mentoring program led by Dorene Matheis. I eagerly anticipate witnessing the dynamic and innovative approaches that the new president, Robin Hylton, and vice president, Michael Arguello, along with these dedicated individuals, will bring to further UMA's growth and prosperity in the new year.

It is an honor to be the next president of the USPTO Military Association. I realize the gravity of leading an organization of those who have served both on foreign and local shores carries great responsibility. Those who have served in this role have laid a path for others to follow. There will be times in which I follow the path. At other times, I will deviate to create a new path which I anticipate will lead to greater success for the organization.

As a leader, I believe it is my responsibility to provide opportunities for others to allow their leadership skills to shine. With this group, that should not be hard.

In addition to reinstating/reinvigorating programs such as the Veteran's Keepsake Project and visiting the veteran's retirement home in Washington, D.C., UMA will continue to celebrate the contributions of veterans via Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances. Additionally, we will be expanding accessibility to coffee breaks for our colleagues in other time zones and working to engage with more USPTO colleagues across the nation.

Of course programs cannot be successful without the participation of members. Together, let's continue to make UMA the preeminent volunteer employee organization at the USPTO. I look forward to hearing from and working with you in 2024.



*Alford Kindred,  
2023 UMA President*



*Robin Hylton,  
2024 UMA President*

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CONTINUING TO SERVE



## “Hispanics in the Military” panel highlights USPTO veterans

By Elizabeth Caraway, UMA Secretary

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month with an inaugural “Hispanics in the Military” panel discussion in the National Inventors Hall of Fame, Sep. 19, 2023. Hosted by the USPTO Military Association (UMA), the USPTO Diversity Office, and the USPTO Hispanic Heritage Month planning committee, the virtual and in-person event was moderated by Glorimar “Glo” Maldonado, USPTO Diversity Officer, a military spouse whose father is an Air Force veteran from Puerto Rico and New York.

The panel featured four USPTO team members who are Hispanic veterans:

**Britainy Riggins**, Management & Program Analyst; Army veteran with roots in Puerto Rico and New York

**Diego Gutierrez**, Director of Technology Center 2600; Air Force veteran with roots in Ecuador

**Michael Argüello**, International Program Specialist; Army veteran with roots in Ecuador

**Sintia Angarita**, Lead IT Specialist (Trademarks); Air Force veteran with roots in Puerto Rico

Glo began by highlighting some of the significant Hispanic units that have served in various conflicts, including:

- > 158th Infantry (Bushmasters) who served in WWII, a group that General MacArthur gave the accolade, “No greater fighting combat team has ever deployed for battle”
- > 200th Coast Artillery Regiment who were at the Bataan Death March
- > 65th Infantry Regiment (“The Borinqueneers”) during the Korean War

During the course of the event, panelists shared experiences from their Hispanic upbringing, their military service, and their civil service.



From left: Diego Gutierrez, Michael Argüello, Glo Maldonado, Sintia Angarita, and Britainy Riggins (All photos in article courtesy of Alford Kinford, UMA)

### Hispanic heritage

The discussion celebrated Hispanic culture, with panelists sharing their love of cultural traditions in food, music, and dance.

Sintia discussed the importance of passing one’s culture to the next generation, saying, “It is so important to keep traditions alive.” She shared how she Facetimed with her daughter for an hour and a half the first time she cooked a particular dish.

Diego, who moved from the warm climes of Ecuador to serve in the Air Force in Nebraska, shared the story of an alpaca blanket that his family sent him which has now become a family treasure, passed to the next generation.

### Military service

Military service builds community through shared experiences and mission, and the panelists’ reflections showed that connection.

“The military is its own culture, a melting pot that includes

*The Scuttlebutt is produced with 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](mailto:uma@uspto.gov). We appreciate feedback as we strive to offer the best possible product to our members.*

### Editorial Staff

Executive Sponsor: Fred Steckler  
UMA President: Robin Hylton  
Editor-in-Chief: Elizabeth Caraway  
Copy Editing: Robin Hylton



people from all over. For military not being family, it's the closest thing to family outside of family that I've seen," said Michael, adding, "The military was the ultimate inclusive environment."

Britany was thankful to find an accepting environment: "I was fortunate to encounter leaders who said, '[...] We're not going to tolerate racism. We're all Army; we all bleed green.'" She described cooking "early and in bulk" for her "battle buddies."

Both Diego and Sintia shared skills that the military fostered.

Diego said, "You bring attention to detail going to civil service from the military. Everything has its place."

Sintia agreed, stating, "I learned a lot about efficiency. There is a 'fast' way and an 'efficient' way. I also learned the importance of communications."

### Civil service

All panelists admitted that there are dramatic differences in

post-military employment, and some of those changes can be jarring.

"It's difficult because you transition from [military senior leaders] looking out for you to being alone in the corporate world," said Sintia.

Michael admitted that he was "ready for civilian life," but he found that he "had outgrown many civilian friends because of the experiences I'd had."

Diego expressed his satisfaction with the stability of working for the federal government and discussed some of the changes he's seen in his 35 years at the USPTO, including the headquarters moving to its present-day Alexandria location.

Britany explained one of the benefits of civil service at the USPTO: "The USPTO sees veterans as highly skilled. I'm working for leaders who are interested in growing me. The agency is promoting change, promoting diversity, and we have leaders saying, 'I'm not going to hold you back.'"



## Meet a Teammate: Kenneth Norman

By Elizabeth Caraway, *UMA Secretary*

Kenneth decided in college that he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps. A Vietnam veteran and former CIA employee, his father didn't talk about his service but told Kenneth from an early age, "Do your part to ensure that flag never falls."

Kenneth smiles as he recalls that he originally understood his father literally, looking at the American flag in the house. "As I grew older, I started to understand exactly what he meant. He wanted me to always commit to my country and contribute in any way I could," he says.

While attending Niagara University, New York, Kenneth joined the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), balancing the responsibilities of military officer preparation with his studies in political science and criminal justice. When the time came to select his military occupational speciality (MOS) in the Army, he chose to become an armor officer (a tank platoon leader), although he was only ever in a tank in a training capacity. Instead, he was designated a cavalry officer, focused in forward reconnaissance and surveillance on the battlefield.

Kenneth was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom twice and served 15-month deployments each time. He held numerous positions during his deployments--scout platoon leader, executive officer, human resource officer, and civil affairs officer. After his second deployment, Kenneth changed to a logistics role.

"I wanted to broaden my skillset in the military and [the logistics role] was my first opportunity in the military to work side by side with women, because when I served, combat arms units were only open to males," he explains.

Kenneth is quick to highlight the many Army experiences that influenced his professional path, saying, "The Army was instrumental in my development and who I am today. It embedded in me that taking care of people is paramount and dedication to mission is critical."

He also appreciated the growth mindset: "Learning in an environment where you can make mistakes and learn from them is critical to personal progression and the military afforded me that."

As he advanced and took on more leadership, Kenneth says he had to deliver unbiased decisions, explaining that "the best thing I can do for leaders and employees is to give them

my objective opinion and lay out how it's going to help them solve their challenges," a trait that serves him well in all his roles to this day.

Parenthood encouraged Kenneth to make a difficult decision.

"When I had my first child, it changed my perspective on a host of things," he says. "I wanted stability for my family and I wanted roots in Virginia, so I decided to leave the military service I loved."

Kenneth accepted a position as an operations manager and continuous improvement engineer at a commercial refrigeration and freezer system manufacturer. This new job helped him develop skills he would later leverage at the USPTO.

"After four years of manufacturing, I wanted the opportunity to serve my country again and I started looking for opportunities within the federal government," he said, adding that he was attracted to the USPTO for three reasons—the role itself, the agency's mission, and the campus.

First, the job opening in the Office of Process Improvement appealed to Kenneth's experience as an operations manager and continuous improvement engineer, allowing him to leverage his passion for helping others solve their business problems. He explains that he finds immense satisfaction in helping create better structured and aligned organizations, which allows for more efficiency and overall better value for the customer.

Second, the agency mission was also appealing.

"One of the United States' competitive advantages over the rest of the world is the innovative spirit that enables us to develop new products and continue to lead the world in scientific discovery and technological innovation. The USPTO acts as the mechanism to protect those new ideas and ensures the system grows to be more diverse and inclusive. I wanted to be a part of an organization with such a critical mission."

Lastly, the USPTO campus is "so beautiful, it sealed the deal," he says, adding, "I knew I had to be a part of the USPTO community."



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Kennith quickly found success as a Senior Business Process Analyst at the USPTO, helping business units and offices with problem-solving using strategic management and Lean Six Sigma methodologies, leading to increased customer experience, productivity and employee experience. In his first seven years with the agency, he led more than 80 business improvement projects.

“I have added value to the organization during my time here, but I have learned so much more,” Kennith is quick to assert. “The organization allowed to me showcase my skills and help solve business challenges and allowed me to learn, grow, and develop professionally throughout my tenure.”

One of the ways that he has grown is taking a balanced approach to life and work, transitioning from “working as hard as you can and as long as you can” to a work-life balance that “improves performance and productivity, and reduces burnout. Working [at] the USPTO allows me the flexibility to commit necessary time to various portions of my life as needed and allows me to be as productive as possible.”

Kennith says what has kept him at the USPTO for almost eight years is the people.

“I’ve built some long-lasting relationships here and worked with some extremely smart and dedicated professionals,” he says. “The other critical piece that makes USPTO special is the agency’s commitment to supporting and sponsoring affinity groups. At the USPTO, we have a united purpose and strive to be a culture of inclusivity and diversity, and the integration of the affinity groups is a way the USPTO solidifies the culture.”

As a proud member of the UMA, Kennith believes the agency’s continued support “is an emphatic sign to all potential veteran candidates that this is a place where you are welcomed and supported.”

## The First Salute

By **Bob Houser**, *USPTO*

The first salute is a tradition in which newly commissioned military officers give a silver dollar to the person from whom they receive the first salute of their career. It extends honor and reverence to a fellow service member who has inspired, supported, and unselfishly mentored others throughout their career and life.



Chief Master Sergeant Anthony J. Twitty (retired U.S. Air Force), Lead Correspondence Management Analyst, Office of the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

(USPTO), is pictured to the right of John (Jack) Houser in front of USPTO headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. Houser gave Chief Master Sergeant Twitty a U.S. silver dollar in exchange for his first salute upon commissioning as a

Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

In reflecting on his journey to military service, Jack shared that “Chief Twitty encouraged, mentored, and provided humble inspiration to me. He is my friend, my family, and his steady and kind way will always be a source of calm forcefulness—he taught me to listen, consider, and be positive—he gets me! I will always be thankful to him for his leadership, patience, and continued service to our country.”

Second Lieutenant Houser graduated from the University of Tennessee Air Force Reserve Officer’s Training Corps Detachment 800 program (May 2023) and is currently serving as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas.





## Photos from around the services

ARMY



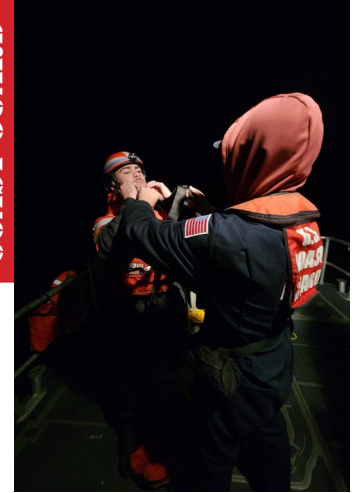
Troopers of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment maneuver to their next objective during Exercise Remagen Ready 24-1 on Fort Cavazos, Texas, November 5, 2023. Remagen Ready 24-1 is an 11-day training exercise focused on Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) with the division as the unit of action. LSCO requires cohesion to properly execute multi-domain operations across warfighting functions. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Darrell Stenbridge)

AIR FORCE



Capt. Joe Bowser, a flight nurse at the 911th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, secures a litter stanchion on a C-17 Globemaster III, assigned to the 911th Airlift Wing at Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, Oct. 20, 2023. The C-17 is capable of carrying up to 36 litters of wounded to provide in-flight medical care. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Diana Ferree)

COAST GUARD



Petty Officer 3rd Class Noah Carrico conducts a safety sweep of Petty Officer 3rd Class Kanon Juneau, Coast Guard Station Charleston's surface swimmer, before he enters the water to assist a man aboard a 31-foot sailboat aground on the Charleston jetties near Charleston, South Carolina, Nov. 2, 2023. Due to unsafe conditions, the Station Charleston boat crew could not safely remove the operator and he was hoisted by a Coast Guard Air Station Savannah helicopter crew and transported to Charleston Executive Airport in Johns Island. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Seaman Caleb Brown)

SPACE FORCE



The DoD time reference, the U.S. Naval Observatory Master Clock, is backed up by the Alternate Master Clock pictured here at Schriever Space Force Base, Colorado, Oct. 27, 2023. The Master Clock in Washington, D.C. and the Alternate Master Clock at Schriever SFB are both disciplined to a timescale comprised of signals from multiple atomic clocks. Most users receive this time through the Global Positioning System. (U.S. Space Force photo by Airman 1st Class Justin Todd)

MARINE CORPS



U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Jakob Santos inspects an R80D Skyraider drone during Exercise Apollo Shield at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, Oct 19, 2023. Exercise Apollo Shield is the culminating event of Marine Corps Warfighting Lab's 1-year crawl-walk-run bilateral effort to test equipment capabilities and evaluate tactics, techniques, and procedures. The Combat Center is home to the infantry battalion experiment 2030, the first unit to receive the equipment tested by MCWL. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Justin Marty)

NAVY



Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) approaches logistics supply ship BRF Jacques Chevallier (A 725) for a replenishment at sea while underway in the Atlantic Ocean, Nov. 4, 2023. George Washington is conducting a replenishment at sea (RAS) with BRF Jacques Chevallier demonstrating partnership and commitment in the maritime domain. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class John Jarrett)

\*All photos this page are courtesy of the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service ([DVIDS](#))

## There I was...

Please email your, or your family member's, veteran, civil service, or patriotic high-resolution photos, original art, or short poetry to [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov). Note that submission constitutes your approval for UMA to share the content in the newsletter and on social media and the editorial team reserves the right to approve or deny content. Have A LOT of creativity to share? Consider contributing to [Veterans' Voices](#), which publishes veteran prose, poetry, and art.



Far left: Joint field exercise with Army and Marine Corps photographers at Ft. Belvoir, VA. Above, center: Dakota Meyer (left) and D. Roman Gray at the Pentagon after Meyer received the Medal of Honor from the President. Top right: Filming Marine's doing various tasks in support of "Operation Blue Devil." This is a field exercise for logistic Marines going to their MOS school at Camp Johnson, NC, for both officers and enlisted Marines. Bottom right: Day 1 of Operation Enduring Freedom, just outside the border of Iraq. They had just sounded the alarm of incoming Scud, so we had to put on our gas masks while filming Marines loading into vehicles, getting vehicles staged and ready to invade Iraq. (Courtesy photos from D. Roman Gray)



Photos from the holidays on deployment in Iraq, Camp Victory XVIII Airborne Corps 2007 - 2008. (Courtesy photos from Angela Jenkins)



## UMA honors veterans during Veterans Day event

By Elizabeth Caraway, *UMA Secretary*

The USPTO Military Association (UMA) celebrated Veterans Day on Nov. 9, 2023 with its annual Veterans Day event. The celebration featured a luncheon, a musical performance by the Patenters USPTO chorus, remarks from leaders, and guest speaker Lt. Col. Eric Atkisson, USA (Retired), the agency's communications division manager.

Veterans Day honors America's veterans for their willingness to serve and sacrifice for the nation, and the UMA planned a program with numerous agency veterans sharing their experiences and viewpoints. The Patenters performed songs like "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America," as well as all the service songs, inviting audience members to stand and sing along during their respective service song.

After welcome remarks by UMA president Alford Kindred, the audience enjoyed comments from UMA executive advisor and USPTO Chief Administrative Officer Fred Steckler, who explained that the Veterans Day event has become an agency tradition, starting with the formation of the UMA in 2012. Since its beginning, the group has sought to support veterans while raising awareness of military and veteran service in the agency, he said.

"Our commitment [to veterans] extends beyond the walls of the PTO," said Steckler, a Navy veteran, highlighting the various partnerships and volunteer endeavors the UMA regularly participates in.

Derrick Brent, Deputy Director of the USPTO, followed Steckler and offered heartfelt thanks to all those who "answer the call to serve." Although not a military veteran, Brent shared that both of his parents are Air Force veterans and he is "honored to work at an agency with a truly vibrant veteran community." He also shared the story of Civil War veteran Charles Gould, who continued to serve his nation as a patent office employee following Army service. Gould was both a Medal of Honor winner and a patent holder.

Next, Army retiree and Patent Trial and Appeal Board, Board Executive Troy Tyler took the stage to address our "why"—the importance of maintaining the "premier all-volunteer fighting force in the world."

"We can't lose sight of that," he urged, citing both the dwindling number of American military veterans and the recruiting shortfalls all military service branches are experiencing.



Tyler shared several personal experiences from his own transition from military to civil service, including people who didn't understand why veterans get hiring preference in the federal government. He discussed the hardships and sacrifice that so many service members willingly endure, from deployments to missed birthdays, and explained, "That's why you should thank a veteran. [...] Every veteran deserves thanks. We live free, we live safely, and there's no better country in the world to do it."

UMA vice president and Army veteran Michael Argüello highlighted the POW/MIA, "Missing Man table." If you are unfamiliar with this military tradition, [learn about it](#).

The event guest speaker, Lt. Col. (Retired) Atkisson, was one of the founding members of the USPTO Military Association. He joined the Army at age 17 and was deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm at age 18. He served in the military for 25 years and now oversees a communications team of 25 people at the USPTO. His presentation, titled "A Tale of Two Veterans," served to showcase the necessity of recording veteran stories.



Atkisson focused on the experiences of two individuals—Al Dietrick and Morris McCullough. The former was a World War II veteran that Atkisson interviewed when Dietrick was 86. The latter was Atkisson's own grandfather, who didn't talk about his service; "What little he might have shared with



others about his service in two world wars was lost to time," said Atkisson. The difference between the impressions left behind by each relate directly to the stories they shared. He elaborated:

“ On the one hand you have Al, who at some point late in life began to open up about his experiences in the Second World War. And when he did, there were people there to listen. And record. And write. I was privileged to be one of them, but I was only one of many.

Now, Al's stories live on. They will outlive all of us. They will be remembered, maybe even quoted in future books and documentaries. To add texture and new firsthand accounts of the battles he was in, the things he experienced. Grandpa Mac, on the other hand, seems to have rarely talked about the war with family, other than a few odd details shared with his grandchildren, most of which they would later forget. No one ever attempted to write down or record the stories he may have had—stories that will forever remain unknown and untold. All we have is my one half-forgotten child's memory of hearing him talk about the Red Baron.

The moral to the story, explained Atkisson, is to capture the memories and experiences of veterans before it's too late. "If you have a veteran in your life, get them to share their stories. Record them, write them down. Build a bridge across that gulf between you. If you are a veteran, don't wait to be asked. That bridge - it goes both ways. There is no better time of year than the present and no better day of the year than Veterans Day to remind ourselves of this," he said.

As for what military service means to him, Atkisson said, "It means that I was part of something bigger and better than myself, something important and good that included Al, Grandpa Mac, and millions of others, including some of you here with us today and watching from home. Something ennobling that lifts us all up, no matter how mean or humble the circumstances from which we came."

And that's something that I think all veterans can identify with.

*Opposite page: Members of the USPTO Military Association pose at the Veterans Day event on Nov. 9, 2023. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Eric Atkisson delivers remarks. This page, from top to bottom: USPTO chorus group the Patenteers perform at the UMA Veterans Day event. Deputy Director Derrick Brent (far left) speaks with UMA members. UMA members William Covey, Anhtuan Nguyen, and Eric Atkisson don uniforms for the Veterans Day event. UMA members sang their service songs during the ceremony start. (All photos this page and facing page by Jay Premack, USPTO)*





## The Origin of Veterans Day

By Ephraim Blair, UMA Youth Communications Apprentice

Every year on November 11, Americans celebrate Veterans Day to honor the tens of millions who have honorably served in America's Armed Forces. Behind this seemingly simple holiday is a great deal of history.



POW/MIA table at Veterans Day event (USPTO Photo by Jay Premack)

Veterans Day originated as Armistice Day, which celebrated the signing of the ceasefire that ended fighting between the Allied and the Central Powers during the First World War and took effect at eleven in the morning on November 11, 1918. It was first observed a year later, just a few months after the Treaty of Versailles. The intention of the holiday was to recognize the cessation of hostilities which brought a close to "the war to end all wars," those who fought in World War I, and those who died in it. The Treaty of Versailles was ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1926, and Armistice Day became a legal holiday in 1938 "designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations" and commemorate the veterans of the Great War.<sup>1</sup>

In 1938, they did not realize that "the war to end all wars," and the treaty that ended it, was going to lead to a far deadlier war that would result in almost four times as many American casualties.<sup>2</sup>

The Second World War brought about an unprecedented

amount of death and destruction. The United States had to join the fray after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, leading to "the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation's history."

After years of combat, the war finally came to a close, but now America had to combat the influence of communism, leading to involvement in the Korean War.

In 1954, Armistice Day was amended and changed to Veterans Day to commemorate those who fought in all American wars, not just World War I. President Eisenhower, a retired general himself, issued the first Veterans Day Proclamation urging, "proper and widespread observance," to honor all who have served.

In 1968, the Uniform Monday Holiday Act was passed to make Veterans Day and several other holidays three day weekends, regardless of the anniversary of the events that were being celebrated. There was a great deal of confusion and backlash, especially over Veterans Day being in late October instead of on November 11. In response, the holiday was permanently moved back to its rightful historical place of November 11 in 1978. Ever since then, annually on November 11, Americans, from sea to shining sea, celebrate all veterans who served from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror, during peace and war.<sup>3</sup>

1. Calvin Coolidge, Proclamation—Armistice Day, 1926, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/328733>.

2. "America's Wars," U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, [https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs\\_americas\\_wars.pdf](https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf).

3. "History of Veteran's Day," U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, <https://department.va.gov/veterans-day/history-of-veterans-day/>.



UMA Youth Communications Apprentice Ephraim Blair, son of April and Jeffrey Blair, is an eighth grader in Virginia Beach, VA. 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.

### Join our Facebook group: USPTO Military Association Mess

Now that more members of the UMA are teleworking, it can be more difficult to ask questions, share accomplishments, and get to know one another. Our new unofficial Facebook group, [USPTO Military Association Mess](#), seeks to provide a place to do that. The tongue-in-cheek name refers both to the "beautiful mess" that is everyday life, as well as a military mess, a designated area where military personnel socialize and eat.

Fun fact: the root of the word "mess" is the Old French word "mes," meaning a "portion of food."

## Who is the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

By Ephraim Blair, UMA Youth Communications Apprentice

The year is 1991 and an Air Force F-16 is struck by lightning, forcing the pilot to eject from the flaming plane into the swamps of the Everglades infested with alligators. The pilot survived and the incident earned him the call sign of "Swamp Thang." That pilot was Charles Q. Brown, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. How did Captain "Swamp Thang" of the United States Air Force become a decorated officer and America's highest-ranking military officer?

Charles Quinton Brown Jr., or "Chuck," was born in 1962 in San Antonio, Texas. He grew up in a military family. His father was colonel in the Army who served in Vietnam and his grandfather served during the Second World War, but he initially showed little interest in joining the military, wanting to be an architect instead. Eventually he ended up at Texas Tech University and his father convinced him to join ROTC. Though he still was not interested in the military, then one day during the summer his life changed forever. At Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, he got to fly in a Cessna T-37, a small Air Force training plane. Brown thought that the flight was exhilarating, comparing it to a roller coaster. After receiving his bachelor's degree and completing ROTC, he got a commission in the United States Air Force in 1984.<sup>1</sup>

"C.Q.," as he came to be known, would come to serve decades in a variety of positions and ranks. In 1985, Brown became a Second Lieutenant, the lowest officer rank in the Air Force. In May, he started "undergraduate pilot training" at Williams Air Base, Arizona. He started fighter training in New Mexico in May 1986. Then, he starts specifically F-16 pilot training in Florida in August. In February 1987, he got his first promotion and became a First Lieutenant. A few months later, he got his first foreign assignment as



(U.S. Air Force photo by Eric Dietrich)

an F-16 pilot in South Korea. In late 1988, he served as an F-16 Instructor Pilot, wing electronic combat officer, and wing standardization and evaluation flight examiner in Homestead, Florida.<sup>2</sup> On January 15, 1991, Captain Brown was involved in the aforementioned crash, in which his plane caught on fire after being struck by lightning. He safely ejected and survived after being transported to the hospital. A government report found that no one, including Brown, was at fault in the incident.<sup>3</sup>

In 1989, while he was stationed in Florida, he married his wife Sharene, whose father also served in the military. They have been married ever since and have two sons together.<sup>4</sup> The family continued to move from Florida to Nevada and from Nevada to Arlington, Virginia, where as aide-de-camp to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force he got promoted to the rank of major in 1996. For the next couple decades he moved to a variety of places like Florida, Hawaii, Nevada, Virginia, South Korea, Germany, Italy, and Qatar. He was rewarded with many awards and promoted several times, becoming a four star general in 2018.<sup>2</sup> He has over 3,000 flight hours, 130 of which were served in combat. As a pilot, Brown served in several operations as a part of the Global War on Terrorism post-9/11, including Operation Southern Watch, Operation Northern Watch, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Odyssey Dawn, Operation Unified Protector, and Operation Inherent Resolve.<sup>5</sup>

In 2020, President Donald Trump nominated the then commander of the Pacific Air Forces, General Brown as the 22nd Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force and he was confirmed by the Senate, 98 to nothing.<sup>6</sup> Prior to his confirmation by the Senate, General Brown commented



(U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Eric Burks)

*Continued on next page*



*"Chairman of the Joint Chiefs" continued from previous page*

online in a viral video about the death of George Floyd and how he was the first African-American to be nominated for the position of Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force. This surprised many people because in general "senior defense leaders rarely make such public commentary."<sup>7 & 8</sup>

While he was Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Brown was named an honorary member of the Tuskegee Airmen and received the symbolic red jacket associated with it. During the ceremony, Brown expressed his gratitude for all that the Tuskegee Airmen did and how they "paved the way" for him.<sup>9</sup>

The time came for President Joe Biden to consider nominees to replace General Mark Milley as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Brown was the frontrunner from the start, but General David Berger of the Marine Corps was also under consideration.<sup>10</sup> As expected, Brown got nominated for the position. When it came time to be confirmed by the Senate, he was confirmed 83 to 11.<sup>11</sup> He did not receive a unanimous confirmation as he did with his confirmation as Chief of Staff of the Air Force, but that is due to an issue unrelated to Brown personally or his experience. On the contrary, his expertise on the Indo-Pacific during heightened tensions with China has been highly praised.<sup>12</sup> General Milley retired from his position on September 29, 2023, and General Brown replaced him.<sup>13</sup>



(U.S. Navy [photo](#) by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chris Williamson)

Now after decades of service, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Charles Q. Brown will be navigating the many conflicts and threats to America across the globe in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

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## Who We Are

The USPTO Military Association (UMA) is a USPTO affinity group 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](mailto:uma@uspto.gov).

## Meet your 2024 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: Michael Argüello

Michael Argüello is the current UMA Vice President and has been a member of UMA since his first week with the agency back in 2014. He is an International Program Specialist supporting international patent cooperation initiatives. Before coming to the USPTO in 2014, Michael supervised security and emergency management operations for 8 years before entering a non-supervisory analyst role under Civil Rights at TSA. Additionally, he served in the U.S. Army as an Infantryman for about 8 years with two combat tour deployments.



### Secretary: Elizabeth Caraway

Liz Caraway has been with the USPTO as an HR marketing and communications specialist for less than a year, but has already "found a home" with the UMA. An Air Force veteran, Liz served in both active-duty (6 years) and the reserves (3 years) as a public affairs officer. She also taught English at the Air Force Academy. A couple of Liz's other roles have included co-owning a defense small business and serving as editor of publications for HQ Army Retirement Services. She currently oversees UMA social media, website updates, and the UMA newsletter, *Scuttlebutt*. Liz lives in Sterling, VA, with her software engineer husband (also an Air Force



veteran) and two daughters.

### Treasurer: Christian Laureano-DeJesus

I am a Service-Connected Marine Corps Veteran. I was an O311/Infantry and was last stationed at MCB Twentynine Palms, assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion as a Scout. Currently Serving as an EEO Specialist with the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity & Diversity at USPTO.



I served as an Alumni Board of Director Treasurer/Board Member, April 2014 - April 2018, for the Fiver Children's Foundation in New York City. They run a Summer Camp and run year-round programs for inner city and Upstate New York youth. Some of the duties included meeting quarterly and/or as needed, even if only electronically; reviewing and approving plans of reorganization and growth; reviewing and approving amendments to the bylaws; authorizing collaborations, other commitments of the organization, and their terms; approving changes in the number, composition, qualifications, authority, or duties of the governing body's voting members; and the number, composition, qualifications, authority, or duties of the organization's officers or key employees. I served as fundraiser for the Alumni Association within the organization. As Treasurer of the Alumni Association, I helped manage and/or oversaw the management of the Alumni Board of Directors' financial affairs and assisted in developing a budget and making and preparing financial reports as required.

In my spare time, I do professional photography, coach Little League Baseball, and was the Director of Security for the church I previously attended.

### Representatives-at-Large:

#### Antonio L. Brown

I am a self-driven, proven leader who is known for being energetic and passionate about people and work. I have the skill and ability to work on teams in a leadership capacity while brokering partnerships to accomplish a goal. Lastly, one of my greatest talents is to come into an environment and change the culture to promote positive values and behaviors. Military Service - United States Marine Corps 1993 - 2001



#### 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





# UMA SCUTTLEBUTT

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 is also a member of the Research and Development Art Unit (RD00, March 2023-present). Some of the roles of RD00 are to find ways to improve the customer experience of applicants and improve the work experience for patent examiners.

### Joseph A. Fischetti

As an honorably discharged U.S. Coast Guardsman, and the son of a bronze-metal decorated World War II U.S. Army veteran father, I respectfully seek re-election as a member at large to the UMA Board.



My fervent respect and love for these United States of America and the veterans thereof, drives me to make UMA our Agency's premiere veteran association and one of the most respected in government. My legal training will offer UMA a perspective I believe will be an asset in support its Mission.

Generating a culture of veteran importance is key in my view.

### Joan Goodbody

I have a diverse background and have worked many jobs. I have been at USPTO for 17 years, 4 as a contractor/search specialist and 13 for the government - first 4 1/2 as examiner (Business methods), then over 7+ as a Classifier and now for the past 1 1/2 as an examiner (Navigation and Autonomous vehicles). For 12 years prior to that, I was a reference person/librarian, specializing in Government Documents at 2 different Major Universities (TA&M, MTU). I do not have a direct connection to the Military, except that my father served in WWII. I have over the years worked with active duty and veterans. I taught history at a technical college in Charleston, SC during base closures; taught veterans with disabilities canoeing and kayaking in both Charleston and NOVA. I have been a member of UMA since the early days when Sieg recruited me.



### Angela Jenkins

Angela has worked at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) since 2015 as a Paralegal Specialist. Angela recently retired from



the United States Army Reserve with 35 years of honorable service, reaching the rank of Sergeant Major and has extensive experience and training as a Leader. Angela is also the Co-Founder of Lighthouse Empowerment Center Inc., (Chief Operating Officer, COO) and the Treasurer for Judge Advocate General's Association of Legal Paraprofessionals (JAGALP).

Angela's background as a Paralegal and as a Human Resource Technician has afforded her the opportunity to work at many different companies. Angela has helped several entrepreneur businesses launch and is ready to serve.

### Abdhesh Jha

Abdhesh Jha is a Primary Examiner in Art Unit 3668, examining in the Vehicle Controls, Display, and Navigation field. In addition to his examination duties, Mr. Jha is presently serving on a detail as an Assistant Outreach Coordinator at the Elijah J. McCoy Midwest Regional office, located in Detroit, Michigan. In this capacity, he plays a pivotal role in fostering engagement with stakeholders, as well as coordinating and actively participating in events designed to educate the public about intellectual property matters and available resources.



Before joining USPTO, Mr. Jha was a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the United States Army, where he served as an assistant facility manager. In this capacity, he shouldered the responsibility of overseeing the well-being of 450 personnel, managing real estate assets valued more than \$100 million, and ensuring the quality and habitability of these properties for incoming US Soldiers, all in adherence to the stringent guidelines of US Army Quality and Standard while stationed in Germany.

Mr. Jha earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, AL. Originally hailing from Kathmandu, Nepal, he embarked on his journey to the United States in 2006 to pursue his undergraduate education. Currently, Mr. Jha resides in Raleigh, NC, with his wife and two sons.

### Dorene Matheis

I have been with the USPTO since 2015 and a proud, active member of the UMA since 2017. Before joining this great organization, I served 22 years in the Army JAG Corps.



Serving is in my DNA, which is why I so strongly value the mission and outreach of the UMA. Not only do we look

out for one another’s individual development and success, but we collectively serve as ambassadors for veterans throughout the agency, and as supporters of veterans through collaboration with external organizations. Over the last year, I proudly partnered with fellow members to create and administer mentoring partnerships, and I coordinated panels to highlight the UMA for agency interns, as well as participated as a panelist for the Women’s History Month event. I’m committed to championing these types of activities and more as a Representative-at-Large in the coming year.

**Britainy Riggins**

I’ve been at the USPTO for 5 years and currently work in the Patents-Project Management Office. I have been a member of the UMA since before my membership even started. When Candice Dow told me they were looking for veterans to do an interview for a Veterans Day event, I volunteered immediately. I had only been an employee for a few weeks. Michael Cleveland asked me how long I had been a member of UMA. I said “as of today I guess” I applied that day and have been a member since. UMA has been a safe place for me to go and learn



about my organization, grow my skills professionally, and network with other veterans who really “get me”. I’ve been able to share my passion for outreach and event planning with UMA, and I continuously strive to bring information and resources to UMA members. Hooah!

**Marina Veney**

I have been with the USPTO since November 2019. I have also been a member of the UMA since that time. I am an Executive Administrative Assistant working in the Trademarks Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB). I am a mother of two and a veteran of the United States Air Force Reserves, recently retired after 23 years of service. I served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom at Balad AB, Iraq as a medic. I run a small dog boarding business out of my home (which I love). I’m a Baltimore Ravens fan. I believe I will be a great asset to the UMA because I am a people person and I love helping others. This would be my first opportunity to serve in this type of role as government civilian but I’m a hard worker, quick learner, and well organized. I look forward to serving the UMA Board to best of my ability.



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>.

**UMA Weekly Coffee Break recap**

- OCT 10:** Marie-rose Monthe shares career story
- OCT 17:** Kayley Squire, military advisor, presents
- OCT 24:** Jordan Landes shares military transition story
- OCT 31:** UMA Board candidates speak
- NOV 7:** Budget discussion
- NOV 14:** Open Forum
- NOV 21:** Marina Veney shares career story
- NOV 28:** Communications update & upcoming in 2024

The weekly UMA Coffee Break is a virtual gathering that offers UMA members the chance to tell their story, hear about veteran organizations, and ask questions. Coffee Breaks are every Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m. and the Teams meeting link is distributed via UMA member email distribution list. Contact [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov) if you are a member who is not receiving the invites.





## Why do we need to remember Pearl Harbor?

By Ephraim Blair, *UMA Youth Communications Apprentice*

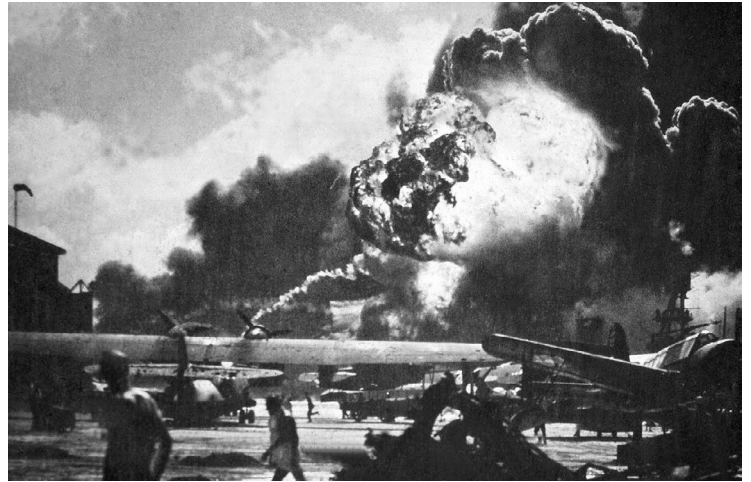
It was just a quiet Sunday morning on December 7, 1941, in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in the middle of the Pacific. Nothing unusual was occurring; sailors were just waking up and making their way to the base. Then at about eight in the morning, hundreds of planes came out of nowhere and attacked the unsuspecting Americans. The Japanese had caught the Americans by surprise and were able to kill 2,403 service members, wound 1,178 more, damaging or destroying 19 ships, and destroying hundreds of airplanes.<sup>1</sup>

It was a devastating blow to the Pacific Fleet and the nation as a whole, catapulting America into World War Two. Excluding the Civil War, the attack at Pearl Harbor was the first invasion of American soil by a foreign country since the War of 1812. Japan was attempting to get the United States to lift sanctions on iron, oil, and steel. In the process, they attempted to paralyze the United States in the Pacific, amid their huge scale invasions of China, French Indochina (modern-day Vietnam), and the rest of the region. To this end, on December 7, 1941, unprovoked, they attacked the United States, not only at Pearl Harbor, but at other assorted American territories and bases. The attack commenced after the infamous break of radio silence, "Tora! Tora! Tora! (Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!)"

Even though the Japanese were able to inflict heavy casualties on the Americans, they failed to destroy the repair shops, oil tanks, or any aircraft carriers (which were all out to sea). The attack was deadly, but did not destroy the American resolve. Their attempt to prevent the United States from entering the Pacific achieved the opposite



*A Sailor renders honors to the USS Arizona Memorial before mooring in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. (U.S. Navy photo/Seaman David A. Brandenburg)*



*Aircraft at Hickam Field, Hawaii, continue to burn and explode in the immediate aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. (National Archives photo)*

result.<sup>2</sup> An indignant America declared war on Japan, with both chambers of Congress passing a declaration of war with huge majorities (82-0 in the Senate and 388-1 in the House).<sup>3</sup> On December 11, 1941, the other Axis Powers, the allies of Japan, declared war on the United States. Now America was fully in the war, in the Pacific and Europe, with Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy having declared war on them.<sup>4&5</sup>

The United States ramped up production to get retribution and win the war. In fact, they were able to salvage almost all the ships at Pearl Harbor and return back to service before the end of the war. Of the 19 ships damaged and or sunk, the only ones that were unsalvageable were the USS Arizona, the USS Oklahoma, and the USS Utah.<sup>6</sup>

The United States was quickly able to mobilize the Pacific Fleets and on June 4, 1941, the tide started to turn in the Pacific. On their quest to control the Pacific, the Japanese made a fatal mistake by attacking the American Base on the Island of Midway. The Japanese were unaware that the American carrier fleet was just east of the island and heading towards them, ready for battle.

After the Japanese planes refueled on their carriers, the Americans released their dive bomber and dealt a deadly blow to the Japanese fleet, from which they would never recover. In an astounding victory the Americans won, sinking four Japanese carriers and one cruiser. The Japanese lost ten times as many men and hundreds more planes. The Battle of Midway still cost America two ships; the USS Yorktown was sunk by a Japanese submarine and an American destroyer



was also destroyed. Midway halted the Japanese expansion and put the Americans in a good spot to start "island hopping" their way to victory in the Pacific by September 2, 1945.<sup>7</sup>

We must never forget what happened on December 7, 1941. We must always remember that on that day, thousands of Americans were killed or injured. This brazen attack led directly to American involvement in the Second World War, the most deadly war in world history. America won the war, but the victory was hard fought. The attack at Pearl Harbor altered the course of history. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt summarized the level of devastation of the attack very well in his address to Congress the day after, famously uttering the words, "December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy."<sup>8</sup>

And from the ashes of destruction, America, and Americans, rose up to once again fight for freedom.

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## Military Retiree Newsletters

 <p><a href="#"><u>Army Echoes</u></a></p>	 <p><a href="#"><u>Air Force Afterburner</u></a></p>	 <p><a href="#"><u>Coast Guard The Long Blue Line</u></a></p>
 <p><a href="#"><u>Navy Shift Colors</u></a></p>	 <p><a href="#"><u>Marine Corps Semper Fidelis</u></a></p>	 <p><a href="#"><u>DFAS newsletter</u></a></p>

## Veteran Resources and Contacts

USPTO Veteran Hiring Program Manager: Sharon Gibson, [sharon.gibson@uspto.gov](mailto:sharon.gibson@uspto.gov) or [HireVets@uspto.gov](mailto:HireVets@uspto.gov)

[Defense Finance and Accounting Service](#)

USPTO OHR Military Service Time Buy Back Contact: Gladys English, [gladys.english@uspto.gov](mailto:gladys.english@uspto.gov)

[TRICARE](#)

[Combat-Related Special Compensation](#)

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

[Veterans Service Records](#)

[GI Bill](#)

[Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 then Press 1, or Text 838255](#)