



# U.S. PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE MILITARY ASSOCIATION



SCUTTLEBUTT

Summer 2025



*Clockwise from left: USPTO colleagues paid respect to fallen service members last week during the annual UMA-sponsored Memorial Day Walk of Remembrance from the USPTO headquarters to Alexandria National Cemetery, the sacred resting place for more than 4,000 military members. Top right: Luke Wright, Major, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.) speaks during the ceremony. Bottom right: UMA member Michael Argüello places a carnation on a grave at the cemetery. (Left and bottom right photos by Michael Cleveland/USPTO, top right by Charles Rones/USPTO).*

## UMA commemorates Memorial Day with Walk of Remembrance

By Elizabeth Caraway, Scuttlebutt editor

This year's annual USPTO Military Association (UMA) Memorial Day observance on May 22 was particularly special. From beautiful music provided by vocalists, a bagpiper, and a bugler; to poignant guest speakers; two color guards; and carnations to place on graves of the fallen, each component of the ceremony honored and respected the sacrifices of service members in a profound way.

Following a welcome from UMA president Robin Hylton, the

Alexandria City High School JROTC presented the colors while the USPTO Patenters Chorus performed the National Anthem. The chorus then performed "God Bless America."

Both the Acting Director and Acting Deputy Director of the USPTO offered remarks during the event. Coke Morgan Stewart, the Acting Under Secretary for Intellectual Property and Acting Director for the agency, admitted that this year's

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### Join our weekly virtual chat!

The weekly **UMA Coffee Break** is a virtual social gathering for UMA members on Tuesdays at 9:30 am and 2 pm ET. Contact [uma@uspto.gov](mailto:uma@uspto.gov) if you are a member who is not receiving the invites.

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*"Memorial Day" continued from previous page*

commemoration was her first with the UMA, and she was struck by its poignancy.

"We need to do more for our veterans," she said. "We do a lot [in the agency], but we need to do more."

Following the Acting Director, longtime UMA member and USPTO Acting Deputy Director Will Covey addressed the crowd, focusing on the sacrifice of service members.

Former UMA president Alford Kindred introduced the guest speaker, U.S. Marine Corps Major (Ret.) Luke Wright. Mr. Wright served in the Marine Corps for more than 20 years and now serves as a Marine Corps JROTC Regional Director. His speech emphasized the power of knowing that someone has your back in life, whether in everyday civilian or corporate life, or in the military.

Each event attendee was presented with a poppy pin, which is a remembrance symbol derived from the 1915 poem, "In Flanders Fields," written by Canadian officer and surgeon John McCrae during World War I. [Editor's Note: Poem on adjacent page.] Attendees were also invited to take a service member card for one of the graves at the Alexandria National Cemetery, find the grave, and lay a carnation on it.

The Walk of Remembrance was led by an Air Force Color Guard from Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling in Washington, D.C., as well as bagpiper and agency patent examiner Sean Reidy, who traveled from out of state to support the event.

Once at the cemetery, Ms. Hylton offered remarks, Air Force



*Top: Bagpiper and patent examiner Sean Reidy leads the procession into Alexandria National Cemetery. Bottom: UMA Member Candace Mundt-Bates places a carnation on a grave at the cemetery. (Photos by Michael Cleveland/USPTO)*

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## Who We Are

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

### Scuttlebutt Editorial Staff

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

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



*"Memorial Day" continued from previous page*

Chaplain and Major Jesse Brown gave the invocation, and Taneisha Upperman sang "America the Beautiful."

After additional remarks from Major (Ret.) Wright and Ms. Hylton, Sergeant First Class Matthew Gaunitz, Army bugler in the U.S. Army Band Pershing's Own, played Taps before attendees placed flowers on graves.



## In Flanders Fields

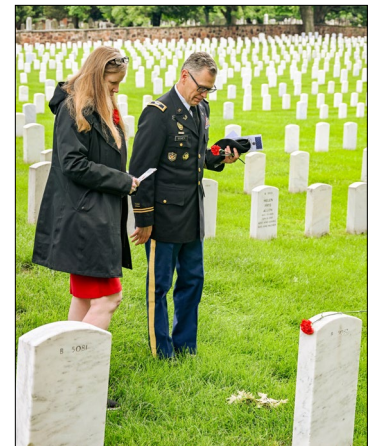
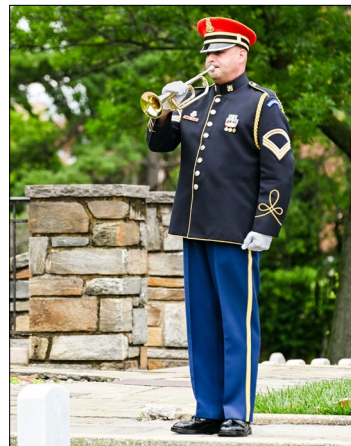
By John McCrae



*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*



Top: Acting USPTO Director Coke Morgan Stewart delivers remarks. Center left: The USPTO Patentees chorus performs. Center middle: Sergeant First Class Matthew Gaunitz plays Taps on bugle. Center right: Acting Director Stewart and Acting Deputy Director Will Covey lay flowers on graves. Bottom left: UMA president Robin Hylton presents speaker Luke Wright with the "Man in the Arena." Bottom middle: Taneisha Upperman performs "America the Beautiful." Bottom right: Major Jesse Brown offers the invocation. (Center middle and right photos by Charles Rones/USPTO. All other photos by Michael Cleveland/USPTO)





## Recognizing the U.S. Army's origins before its 250th birthday

By Ephraim Blair, UMA Youth Communications Apprentice

June 14, 2025, the U.S. Army celebrates its 250th birthday.

Most Americans know the date of Independence Day, when the Second Continental Congress officially adopted the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming a set of natural rights and the responsibility of the government to protect those rights, as well declaring the United States an independent country. However, the Revolutionary War had already started over a year before July 4, 1776. And, like signers of the Declaration, they had already made a "pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."<sup>1</sup> In fact, over a year before America was established, there was an official army to secure the cause of freedom, making the US Army "America's first national institution."<sup>2</sup>

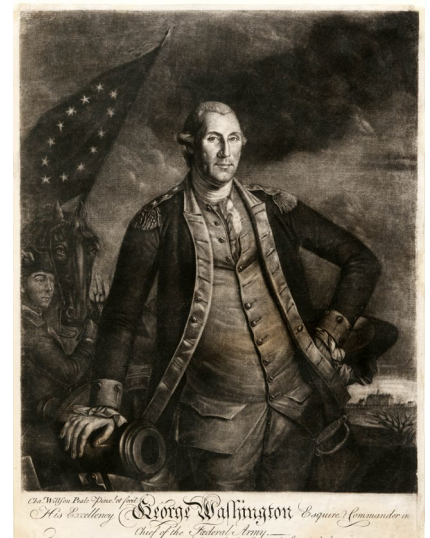
Conflict over taxes, sovereignty, rights, and representation came to a head at Lexington, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775. Thomas Gage, the Royal Governor of Massachusetts, was tasked with quelling the spirit of rebellion that was especially strong in New England after the Boston Tea Party in 1773. In response, Gage, appointed in 1774, drafted parts of the infamous Coercive Acts, closing the port of Boston, taking away the self-government of Massachusetts, moving trials of British soldiers to England, and allowing royal governors to force people to quarter soldiers in their homes. These Acts caused immense consternation amongst colonists, earning them the name the "Intolerable Acts." As the nickname suggests, they were used as justification for an increased push for independence. Thus, many colonists began arming themselves to prepare for a potential war, including at Lexington and Concord. British forces led by John Pitcairn attempted to disarm the colonists, seizing their firearms and gunpowder. Against this final act of tyranny, the Patriots fought back, firing "the shot that was heard 'round the world." And they won, marking the beginning of the Revolutionary War.



"The Battle of Lexington" by Williams Barns Wollen, 1910. (National Army Museum, UK)

Twenty-thousand militia men from all around New England took up arms "to fight for liberty." Yet, despite their encouraging victory at Lexington, they were horrendously disorganized.<sup>3</sup> The time for dilly-dallying was over. With a state of rebellion and war actively existing between the Thirteen Colonies and Great Britain, it was not feasible to fight the world's greatest superpower with thirteen separate militias, all submitting to different commanders, even if they were fighting for the same cause and as allies. (Loyalist officers were dismissed from colonial militias after the Intolerable Acts, especially in New England.) Previously, at the First Continental Congress in 1774, Virginian Richard Henry Lee proposed the formation of a nationwide militia in preparation and anticipation of war. However, his prescient suggestion was rejected. Rather, Congress approved a plan to boycott British goods.<sup>4</sup>

Less than a month after the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress met for the first time on May 10, 1775. Although he was not a delegate, George Washington of the Virginia Militia attended.<sup>5</sup> On June 14, 1775, the Continental Army was created by the Congress to maintain "a united colonial response against the British enemy." The first men to enlist were from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. George Washington was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the newly minted army.<sup>6</sup>



"George Washington, Chief of the Federal Army." Print by artist Charles Willson Peale, 1780. (National Portrait Gallery)

From the beginning, the Continental Army faced habitual supply issues, forcing soldiers to endure much suffering, low pay, and difficult communication. Despite this, the Patriots soldiered on through victory and defeat, as the British "plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people."<sup>7</sup> Eventually, with French help, the Patriots won the Battle of Yorktown

*Continued on next page*

*"U.S. Army Founding" continued from previous page*

in October 1781. In November, after General Cornwallis's surrender, news reached the astounded British. Upon hearing the news, a depressed Prime Minister Lord North said, "Oh God. It is all over. It is all over." North resigned in March 1782 after Parliament authorized peace negotiations with America. On September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed, officially ending the war and recognizing the independence of the United States of America as a sovereign country.<sup>8</sup>

Quickly, the recently recognized country moved to establish a system of government to govern all Thirteen States more efficiently while allowing them to retain their independence. One of the chief aims of this newly formed constitutional republic was to strengthen the mutual defense of all the former colonies. Although the Continental Army won the War for Independence, it was still seen as overly reliant on the states for defense. The Articles of Confederation prohibited the maintenance of standing armies during peacetime.<sup>9</sup> After immense debate, the Constitutional Convention in 1787 gave the Federal Government the power to maintain an army, leading to the formation of the Department of the Army under the Department of War (later the Department of Defense).<sup>10</sup>

As a rhetorical flourish, people frequently like to say something along the lines of "America is an idea." But our nation is more than an idea. It is a country built on forever-enduring principles and ideas. The freedom and existence of our nation were won on the battlefield with swords, guns, and musket balls, not just pen and parchment in debate halls. As we celebrate the 250th birthday of the U.S. Army

this year, and the sesquicentennial of our nation next year, we should never forget the sacrifice of our brave soldiers from Lexington to Yorktown, New Orleans to Gettysburg, Belleau Wood to the Bulge and beyond.

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UMA Youth Communications Apprentice Ephraim Blair, son of April and Jeffrey Blair, is a high school freshman 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.



## Maintaining readiness 250 years later

U.S. Army paratroopers assigned to 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, conduct a company-level situational training exercise (STX) lane at Pabradė Training Area, Lithuania, May 19, 2025, during Swift Response 2025. The exercise sharpens small-unit tactics and mission planning in a multinational training environment, reinforcing readiness and interoperability across NATO forces.

As the U.S. Army's only Airborne Brigade forward-stationed in Europe, the 173rd serves as the Contingency Response Force for U.S. European Command—able to deploy on short notice to deter aggression and defend NATO's eastern flank. Swift Response, linked to Lithuania's national exercise Iron Wolf, validated multinational warfighting readiness with combined air-land operations and medical support. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jose Lora)





## Photos from around the military services

### ARMY



A Hellenic Army Leopard 2A6 HEL tank assigned to the 1st Armored Cavalry Battalion, First Army, Greece, is ground-guided back to the starting point after providing direct support during a combined arms live-fire exercise rehearsal as a part of Immediate Response 25 during DEFENDER 25, Krivolak Training Area, Krivolak, North Macedonia, May 30, 2025.

Demonstrating global deterrence and the U.S. Army's ability to rapidly deploy U.S.-based combat power in Europe and the Arctic region alongside Allies and partners, DEFENDER 25 brings U.S. troops together with forces from 29 Allied and partner nations to build readiness through large-scale combat training. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Michaela C.P. Granger)

### NAVY



ATLANTIC OCEAN (May 22, 2025) Lt. j.g. Thomas McKinley uses a sextant to measure the distance to the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) from the bridge wing of the amphibious transport dock USS San Antonio (LPD 17), during a strait transit evolution. The Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and 22nd MEU are underway conducting ARGMEUEX which includes simulated mission sets, like strait transits, and prepares integrated naval task forces for sustained, high-end joint and combined combat. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Ryan Kersting-Schlimgen)

### MARINE CORPS



A U.S. Marine Corps amphibious combat vehicle attached to 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division, drives onto the well deck of the amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), during Quarterly Underway Amphibious Readiness Training 25.3 while underway in the Pacific Ocean, May 28, 2025. QUART is a joint training exercise designed to develop and sustain essential amphibious readiness skills for effective operations in maritime environments while reinforcing the Navy-Marine Corps partnership. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Luis Agostini)

### COAST GUARD



U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod MH-60 Jayhawk conducts a search and rescue demonstration during Fleet Week NYC at Liberty State Park in Jersey City, New Jersey, May 25, 2025. Throughout Fleet Week, the Coast Guard members engaged with the public through ship tours, search and rescue demonstrations, and educational outreach, offering New Yorkers a firsthand look at their diverse missions and commitment to maritime safety. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Breanna Boardman)

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

### SPACE FORCE



Senior Airman Dylan Hughes, 30th Civil Engineer Squadron Explosives Ordnance Disposal technician, prepares to transport a digital x-ray system to survey an undisclosed building during an EOD training exercise held at Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif., May 22, 2025. Space Launch Delta 30's 30 CES EOD technicians worked hand-in-hand with local bomb squads to conduct a joint training venture set to strengthening local partnerships, inter-service communication for explosives safety and improve unit-wide technical expertise. (U.S. Space Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Draeke Layman)

### AIR FORCE



A U.S. Air Force MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft, assigned to 432nd Wing, sits outside a sunshade at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, April 15, 2025. The MQ-9 baseline system carries the Multi-Spectral Targeting System, which has a robust suite of visual sensors for targeting. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Renee Blundon)

## UMA legacy of service



Retired Army Soldier and 2016 UMA president Dean Dominique has exciting news to share: his son Nicholas is a new Space Force officer! Nicholas graduated from Virginia Tech in May with a B.S. in Industrial and Systems Engineering with a minor in Leadership and Service. He will go on to Space Force training before being assigned his specialty in the service. (Courtesy photo from Dean Dominique/USPTO)

### Trivia Time

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

1. How old is the United States Army?
2. How many service members are buried at Alexandria National Cemetery?
3. When and where was D-Day?
4. What is the name of the Marine Corps retiree newsletter?





## The History of D-Day

By **Ephraim Blair**, *UMA Youth Communications Apprentice*

For years, Adolf Hitler's National German Socialist Workers' (Nazi) Party steamrolled through Europe on its conquest for world domination, racial purity, and the annihilation of the Jews and other undesirables. In 1944, despite a failed invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazis kept their chokehold over much of Europe, including France. After "just over six weeks" of fighting, the Germans conquered France, along with Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, in May and June 1940. In France, they installed the puppet Vichy Government. Although the British managed to rescue over 300,000 troops during the Dunkirk evacuation to fight another day, the grueling war was to continue.<sup>1</sup>

On December 11, 1941, the Germans declared war on the United States hours after the U.S. Declaration of War against Japan for the Pearl Harbor Attack, dragging Americans into the War in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Starting in 1942, there was talk of "a cross channel attack" of Nazi-held Western Europe to open another front to diffuse the stress exerted on the Soviets, who were formerly allied with Germany, during the Nazi campaign in Eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> Initially, the invasion plans were drawn up for 1943. However, it was evident that it would have to be postponed because, even with American help, the Allies did not have enough troops.<sup>4</sup>

At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, with Prime Minister Winston Churchill, declared that the end of the Second World War would only come with, borrowing a phrase from Ulysses S. Grant, "unconditional surrender" of the Axis Powers.<sup>5</sup> FDR agreed, at Churchill's suggestion, to concentrate on the North Africa and Mediterranean campaign "by launching an invasion of Sicily and the Italian mainland designed to knock Italy out of the war."<sup>6</sup> Yet, unlike the British, Roosevelt continued to push for an invasion of France, as was preferred by the

beleaguered Soviets. "By far the dominant figure, FDR got his way."<sup>7</sup>

In 1943, the Allies experienced a string of victories. In February, the Soviets repulsed the Nazis from Stalingrad in the deadliest battle in history. By May, the Allies had won the North Africa Campaign. Encouraged by the events, FDR and Churchill met again in Washington, D.C. for what was codenamed the "Trident" Conference. They further planned the invasion of Italy and finally agreed to a cross-channel invasion of France, setting the date for 1944. The invasions of Sicily and Mainland Italy followed in July and September, respectively.<sup>8</sup>

Planning was initially limited, as much of the manpower and material was still located in the Pacific and Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> At the Tehran Conference, FDR and Churchill attempted to mollify Stalin by promising that the postponed opening of a second front was scheduled for May 1944.<sup>10</sup> Since America would "be supplying most of the men" and supplies, FDR had to select who would lead Operation Overlord in "his most important decision of the war." Initially, it was thought he would select his chief of staff, George Marshall, whom he liked very much. However, Marshall was unpopular with Churchill, so he decided to keep him as chief of staff. Instead, he selected General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had led the campaigns in North Africa and Italy.<sup>11</sup>

Immediately after the Tehran Conference ended, planning kicked into high gear. Multiple sites in Northern France were considered, including Brittany, Pas-de-Calais, and Normandy on the Cotentin Peninsula. Brittany was rejected because the Nazis could easily cut off Allied forces at a narrow isthmus on either peninsula. Pas-de-Calais was the area closest to Britain, so the Nazis, in anticipation, heavily fortified it. (The



*Omaha Beach in the aftermath of D-Day (estimated June 28, 1944), National Archives Photo.*

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"D-Day" continued from previous page



Allies continued to mislead them to believe this with fake radio traffic and inflatable tanks.) So, Normandy was selected as the location for the May 1 invasion.<sup>12</sup> However, the weather and the need for more men and amphibious landing craft led to the invasion being postponed until June 4, forcing the 39 divisions, 22 of which were American, to lay in wait. Further weather delays pushed the invasion to June 6.<sup>13</sup>

Hundreds of thousands of Allied "soldiers, sailors, and airmen," mainly American and British, waited nervously in Southern England to hear their fate and the fate of the Free World. They were about to cross the English Channel to liberate Europe from Nazi domination, starting with the heavily fortified beaches of Normandy, France, where inevitably thousands of them would perish. With fear permeating the atmosphere, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces Dwight D. Eisenhower gave out paper copies of a brief, yet powerful, address he delivered over the radio to rally his beleaguered troops:

*You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you...Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely... I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!*<sup>14</sup>

In the early hours of June 6, an airborne assault was launched with paratroopers jumping out to prepare the landings by destroy Nazi infrastructure in and around the port city of Cherbourg. Many of them were killed by the onslaught of machine gun fire. There was much confusion and disorganization in the early landings, but the 160,000 Allied troops adapted and carried on the invasion. The American forces focused on Utah and Omaha Beaches, which had difficult terrain and heavy fortifications, during Operation Neptune, the initial assault phase of Overlord. Brits, Canadians, Poles, and Free Frenchmen stormed the other beaches: Juno, Sword, and Gold. Eventually, after a difficult fight, the Allies overran the Nazis at Normandy, despite their elevation and weaponry. Of the 160,000 Allied troops who landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, 9,000 were killed or injured, the majority of whom were American.<sup>15</sup>

After D-Day, the Battle of Normandy commenced, leading to the liberation of France and the rest of Europe, and, eventually, the end of World War Two. It is so easy to speak in terms of great events and people, as I have done. But we

must think about what it means for D-Day to be the largest amphibious assault in history: it means D-Day had a greater human cost and sacrifice than any other. On the fortieth anniversary of D-Day, President Ronald Reagan gave one of the most famous memorial speeches ever at Pointe-du-Hoc, where brave American soldiers led by Lieutenant Colonel James E. Rudder rushed the German artillery to save the lives of their comrades storming the beaches, and as the number of D-Day veterans unfortunately and inevitably dwindles, we must rededicate ourselves to the cause they fought for. Even if we do not remember the names of all those who fought and perished, we must acknowledge that, as Reagan so eloquently and simply said, "These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war."<sup>16</sup>

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## 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.



### UMA Treasurer Angela Jenkins

(Left to right):

- Basic Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, 1986
- PFC Jenkins at Camp Grayling, Michigan, 1988
- SPC Jenkins at Fort Benning, Georgia, 1990
- SFC Jenkins' official photo for 9th Legal Support Organization, Ohio, 1995
- MSG Jenkins at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, 2009
- MSG Jenkins at Camp Victory, Iraq, 2008
- SGM Jenkins retires at Fort Myer, Washington D.C., 2023

(Courtesy photos from Angela Jenkins)



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 bids Fred Steckler farewell

By Elizabeth Caraway, Scuttlebutt editor

UMA members and agency colleagues gathered to express appreciation and bid farewell to Fred Steckler, former agency Chief Administrative Officer and UMA Executive Sponsor, in the National Inventors Hall of Fame Museum on April 2.

The event was about “heartfelt gratitude for Fred’s steadfast executive championship” of the military community, said UMA president Robin Hylton. The UMA was founded 13 years ago and has supported hundreds of veteran colleagues and thousands within the military community through its monetary donations, letter-writing campaigns, and volunteerism. After remarks from several former UMA presidents and the two new executive advisors, Fred took the stage to celebrate the USPTO’s veteran-friendly and service member-conscious environment. From the garrison flag that hangs in the atrium to the Memorial Day Walk of Remembrance and Wreaths Across America events, Fred said, UMA is helping to shape the agency’s culture. We will miss his leadership, but wish him the best in retirement!

(Clockwise from top left: Arlene Jones, left, and Robin Hylton present Fred Steckler with a picture of the USPTO campus with the mat signed by colleagues; Fred holds up one of the agency’s first veteran recruitment posters, an initiative he started; from left, Alford Kindred, Fred Steckler, Greg Dodson, and Troy Tyler pose together - Alford was a UMA president and Greg and Troy are replacing Fred as UMA advisors; Farewell attendees pose in front of the Madison Building. Photos by Michael Cleveland/USPTO)







## UMA partners with local high school cadets for "Flags-in-the-Ground"



UMA partnered with 13 cadets from Thomas Edison High School to place flags and flowers at Alexandria National Cemetery graves in advance of Memorial Day, honoring service members who gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect American freedoms. The cadets were led by Army LTC (Ret.) Briton Rosenberry. *(Courtesy photos from Arlene Jones)*



## Military Retiree Newsletters



[Army Echoes](#)



[Air Force  
Afterburner](#)



[Coast Guard  
The Long Blue Line](#)



[Navy Shift Colors](#)



[Marine Corps  
Semper Fidelis](#)



[DFAS newsletter](#)



## Headline highlights: A look at news affecting veterans

**COVID-19 Military Reinstatement:** Under an Executive Order signed by President Trump on January 27th, 2025, if you were involuntarily separated from Military Service due to COVID-19 vaccination requirements, you may be eligible for reinstatement to your former rank and eligible for back pay, bonuses, or other compensation that accrued during your "reinstatement period."

**Access to non-VA care no longer requires secondary approval:** The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced changes that will make it easier for VA-enrolled Veterans to access health care from non-VA providers at the department's expense.

**Record breaking VA claims production brings backlog under 200K:** The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that its disability benefits compensation claims backlog is under 200,000 for the first time since March 5, 2023. A VA claim is considered backlogged once it has been pending for more than 125 days.

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

**Donate during Army Birthday Month through Exchange and Army Emergency Relief:** As the Nation celebrates the Army's 250th birthday, the Army community can make a big difference with a small symbolic gift while shopping at the PX in June. In recognition of the oldest U.S. armed service branch's 250th birthday on June 14, authorized shoppers can make a \$2.50 donation to Army Emergency Relief at Army & Air Force Exchange Service in-store registers, including self-checkout, throughout the month of June.

## Veteran resources and contacts

USPTO Veteran Hiring Program Manager: [HireVets@uspto.gov](mailto:HireVets@uspto.gov)

USPTO OHR Military Service Time Buy Back Contact: [HumanResources\\_USPTO@uspto.gov](mailto:HumanResources_USPTO@uspto.gov)

Benefits questions for current Reservists: [BenefitsTeam@uspto.gov](mailto:BenefitsTeam@uspto.gov)

Pay questions for current Reservists: [OHR-CB@uspto.gov](mailto: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](https://988lifeline.org)