

WILLIAM & MARY



MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Special Assistant

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Happy New Year!

My resolution for 2023 is to continue to grow, amplify and expand the reach of William & Mary military and veteran programs and partners. It's a true privilege to represent the military and veteran communities as well as the Tribe. Service and education are both hallmarks and necessary components of democracies and successful states, and they are embedded in the W&M ethos. Military and veteran programs are a natural fit for the alma mater of the nation where W&M student veterans continue to lead impactful lives and seek ways to make a difference and contribute to global challenges.

To that end, the William & Mary military and veteran community engaged in meaningful projects both before and during the Winter Break. Inside this newsletter you'll find some of the highlights, to include the annual trip to Arlington Cemetery to participate in the Wreaths Across America and a new venture to the Student Veterans of America (SVA) conference where W&M veteran students were showcased on panels and participated in breakout sessions with leaders from the Veterans Administration and business communities.

Our team is off to a running start, booking a full first quarter of events and engagements with federal, state, local and corporate partners. We're accepting applications for the second cohort of *Flourishing Through Life Transitions* students and starting the veteran entrepreneur certificate program while continuing work with military branches and preparing for Charter Day.

The team is excited about the future and all the ways we can continue to develop and evolve. I look forward to hearing from you and continuing the work to serve those who have served.

Go Tribe,

Kathleen

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Recap of Events

Wreaths Across America at Arlington National Cemetery

On December 16, 2022, more than 20 W&M students, alumni and staff remembered and honored our nation's veterans through the laying of wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes.



Student Veterans of America Conference | Orlando, Florida

In our first year in attendance, six W&M students and four staff members attended the SVA National Conference (NatCon) January 4-7th. This year, W&M staffed a booth that welcomed hundreds of visitors, allowing us to make key connections with businesses that support our veterans and programming and also recruit potential W&M students. At the conference, W&M hosted and moderated two panel discussion featuring our own student veterans. SVA NatCon is the largest gathering of student veterans anywhere in the world. NatCon serves as a focal point in the academic year to share ideas, best practices, and network with student veterans, military-connected students, their families, supporters, and allies, as well as corporate, government, and nonprofit partners.



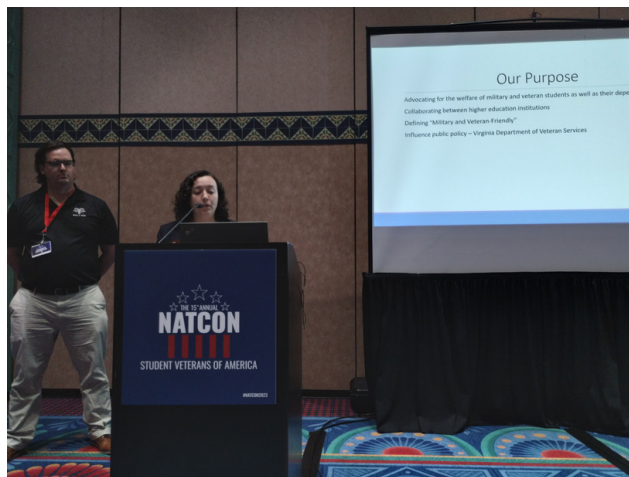
(From left to right) W&M student veterans Shijun Zeng, Meagan Hicks, Colleen Grace, and Kate Milenski (missing from photo Jacob Stechmann and Margaret XU)



Charlie Foster meets with a conference attendee at the W&M table

Panel Discussions at the Student Veterans of America Conference

Topics included *Learning to Flourish After Service: Building Institutions for Lifelong Support & Empowerment* with Colleen Grace, Meagan Hicks, Shijun Zeng, Margaret Xu, and JD Due (left photograph) and *Redefining Veteran Student Success in Higher Education: Standards Written By Veterans, For Veterans with Katherine Milenski* (right photograph)



Military and Veteran Student Spotlight



Kate Milenski, '22

IN HER OWN WORDS: Q&A

Kate is a Boatswain's Mate Petty Officer 1st Class serving as Boat Forces Instructor in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves. She recently graduated in December 2022 with a Bachelor's degree in Kinesiology & Health Sciences and a minor in Psychology. During her time at W&M, she was the Student Veterans of W&M President, served on the W&M Military and Veteran Affairs Internal Steering Committee, was the Toastmasters at William & Mary Founder & President, and was a member of the SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society. She also volunteers at Dream Catchers as an Equine Specialist in Mental Health & Learning.

What is a Boatswain's Mate and what does one do? *I have been a Coast Guard Boatswain's Mate for almost ten years. My primary duties at small boat stations have been search and rescue as well as law enforcement. Currently, I am assigned to Training Center Yorktown's Boat Forces Center, where I teach the next generation of Boatswain's Mates about seamanship, search pattern techniques, and emergency response.*

Where were you stationed last on active duty? Any historic events happen during that time? *My last active duty unit was Station Washington, D.C., where our most prominent mission was protecting Air Force One crossing the Potomac River. My time there was certainly marked by historical events: the funeral of George H.W. Bush, the onset of COVID-19, the creation of the Black Lives Matter Plaza, and the inauguration of President Joseph Biden. I was even recalled on January 6th, 2021, and served as the station's duty officer for the following 72 hours.*

Why did you choose to apply to W&M? *I chose to apply to William & Mary because I had attended Northern Virginia Community College while stationed in Washington, D.C., and I did not want to lose any credits crossing state lines. Also, I was accepted into William & Mary during Spring 2020 and deferred until Fall 2021 when my Coast Guard active duty contract was up. I deeply appreciate the honored deferral despite COVID-19, as it gave me a sense of certainty despite the otherwise tumultuous times.*

What was it like to transition from active duty to the USCG Reserve while also going to school?

Transitioning from such a high operational tempo into the classrooms of William & Mary was certainly difficult. I felt very lost and talked to very few people as I went through orientation and the first week of classes. My trajectory changed when I was introduced to the Office of Student Veteran Engagement, and I felt much more confident that I belonged.

There is a lot of research about the civil-military divide. But you have bridged it a lot, meeting other students, faculty, and staff where they are. How were you able to do that? *I think approaching people non judgmentally and actively listening are big reasons I can do that. It allows me to really put myself in others' shoes to understand their goals and how I could help them using my skills and connections.*

You have a broad and deep interest in health and wellness. Why is that field so important to you? *Both my parents are pharmacists, so healthcare and taking care of others were a big part of my household growing up. I knew it was important to me when I first learned about taking care of others in a medical capacity through a Babysitter's First Aid in 2007.*

What's next? *I am applying to medical school this cycle and hope to advocate for the needs of the military and veteran community in the healthcare community.*

Announcements

Flourishing Through Life Transitions Certificate is Now Open!

William & Mary's Veteran-to-Executive Transition (W&M VET) certificate program- *Flourishing Through Life Transitions*-emphasizes a comprehensive approach centered on wellness & self-discovery. Our certificate program trains veteran & service members to transition to high-level civilian positions, while flourishing in their careers and personal lives.

Our unique, holistic curriculum leverages strengths across William & Mary's campus and subject matter expertise. *Flourishing* emphasizes physical and mental wellness, develops insights into corporate culture, and builds business skills critical to flourishing in management and other positions.

Format: *In-Person*. This custom program will enroll approximately 40 transitioning veterans and spouses.

Certificate Fee: *Free*. Housing, parking, course materials, program events, and some meals are included free of charge to participants.

For more information on applying, please contact flourishing@wm.edu or scan the QR code



Please take a moment to honor William & Mary's military heritage and help veterans and their families. With your gift today, we can continue to build momentum for expanded veteran services and support for our students and military community .

GIVE HERE



The Pat Tillman Scholars Application is **now open until February 23, 2023**. The Pat Tillman Foundation unites and empowers remarkable military veterans and spouses as the next generation of public and private sector leaders committed to service beyond self. The fellowship program supports Tillman Scholars with academic scholarships, a national network, and professional development opportunities, so they are empowered to make an impact in the world. For information on the Pat Tillman Foundation, visit pattillmanfoundation.org