



TILLMAN SCHOLARS

— CLASS OF 2017 —

PAT TILLMAN  FOUNDATION

MEET THE SCHOLARS

Click on a scholar to view their story.

Anthropology

- ❑ **Gretchen Klingler**
The Ohio State University, B.A., Anthropology

Architecture

- ❑ **Tara Heidger**
Columbia University, M.A., International Urban Planning
M.A., International Affairs

Biology

- ❑ **Marquerite Herzog**
University of Texas at Arlington, Ph.D., Quantitative Biology
- ❑ **Emily Junkins**
University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., Microbiology

Business & Economics

- ❑ **Eiman Behzadi**
University of Virginia, MBA
- ❑ **Tyler Bentley**
Arizona State University, B.A., Technological
Entrepreneurship & Management
- ❑ **Charlotte Burnett**
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, MBA
- ❑ **Justin Davis**
Northwestern University, MBA
- ❑ **Damon “DJ” Faldowski**
University of Pennsylvania, MBA
Harvard University, MPA
- ❑ **Thomas Mangan**
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MBA
SM, Mechanical Engineering
- ❑ **Austin McKinney**
Harvard University, MBA
- ❑ **Kyle Milliken**
The College of William and Mary, MBA
- ❑ **Harold Penson**
University of Chicago, MBA
- ❑ **Dave Prakash**
Stanford University, M.S., Management
- ❑ **Patrick Robinson**
Stanford University, MBA

Education

- ❑ **Michael Nelson**
The Ohio State University, Ph.D., Educational Studies
- ❑ **Scott Swisher**
Fordham University, Ph.D., Contemporary Learning and
Interdisciplinary Research
- ❑ **Landon Wilson**
University of Maryland, B.A., English & Education

Engineering

- ❑ **Jennifer DiCarlo**
Colorado School of Mines, Ph.D., Operations Research

- ❑ **Heath McClung**
University of Missouri-Saint Louis, B.S., Engineering
- ❑ **Zachary Meade**
University of Nebraska, B.S., Electrical Engineering
- ❑ **Joshua Pericles**
University of South Florida, B.S., Computer Engineering
- ❑ **Christopher Puckett**
UCLA, M.S., Systems Engineering

Environmental Studies

- ❑ **Alicia Jacquet-Morrison**
Indiana University, M.S., Environmental Science
Master of Public Affairs
- ❑ **Christine Mott**
Northern Arizona University, Ph.D., Forestry

History

- ❑ **Keldrick Roy**
Harvard University, Ph.D., American Studies

International Affairs

- ❑ **Sarah Abdella-El Kallassy**
Johns Hopkins University, M.A., Middle East Studies &
International Economics
- ❑ **Cristine Starke**
Georgetown University, B.A., International Affairs

Intelligence/Security

- ❑ **Meghan Curran**
University of Denver, M.A., Security Studies

Law

- ❑ **Stephen Carl**
Baylor University, JD
- ❑ **Paul Wade**
University of Missouri, JD

Medicine & Health Sciences

- ❑ **Jessica Blake**
George Washington University, DPT
- ❑ **Candice Creecy**
Wake Forest University, M.M.S., PA Studies
- ❑ **Anthony Dolomisiewicz**
Texas A&M University, Doctor of Medicine
- ❑ **Jerad Eldred**
University of New Mexico, Doctor of Medicine
- ❑ **Jonathon Florance**
Harvard University, Doctor of Medicine
- ❑ **Johnnie Gilpen**
University of Oklahoma, M.S., PA Studies
- ❑ **Shane Harris**
University of Miami, DPT
- ❑ **Paul Hastings**
University of Washington, M.M.S., PA Studies

- ❑ **Karl Holt**
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Doctor of Medicine
- ❑ **Jason Homza**
Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine,
Doctor of Medicine
- ❑ **Stephanie Latham**
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School,
Doctor of Medicine
- ❑ **Megan Malone**
University of Washington, Masters in Global Health
- ❑ **Laura Moye**
University of Illinois at Chicago, Ph.D., Neuroscience
- ❑ **RyAnne Noss**
Edward via College of Osteopathic Medicine,
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine
- ❑ **Ryan Schmoll**
University of Arizona, Doctor of Medicine
- ❑ **Matthew Sherlaw**
University of the Incarnate Word, B.S., Rehabilitative Science
- ❑ **Richard Shore**
Indiana University, M.S., PA Studies

Nursing

- ❑ **Leilani Attilio**
George Washington University, DNP, Nursing
- ❑ **Caroline Booth**
Vanderbilt University, MSN, Midwifery
- ❑ **Britt Johnson**
University of Minnesota, MSN, Nursing
- ❑ **Kim Shaughnessy**
Villanova University, DNP, Health Systems Leadership
- ❑ **Laura Tolver**
Rutgers University, DNP, Adult-Gerontology

Psychology & Social Work

- ❑ **Elizabeth Abbott**
University of Minnesota, M.S., Social Work
- ❑ **Aaron Banas**
George Washington University, Ph.D., Psychology
- ❑ **Bridgette Bell**
Jackson State University, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology
- ❑ **Elizabeth Burgin**
University of North Texas, Ph.D., Counseling
- ❑ **Ester Raha Nyaggah**
University of Southern California, M.S., Social Work
- ❑ **Andrew Qualy**
University of St. Thomas, M.S., Social Work

Public Policy & Administration

- ❑ **Ryan Gross**
Syracuse University, MPA
- ❑ **Jarrod Romine**
Texas A&M University, B.A., Political Science

ELIZABETH ABBOTT

U.S. Army | University of Minnesota | Master of Social Work



“I believe we all have an obligation to serve, whether that be in the military or in our own communities.”

Elizabeth served nine years in the U.S. Army, including two tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During her last deployment, Elizabeth worked on an Iraqi Army base in the Diyala province as part of a Military Transition Team. The MiTT's mission focused on helping the fledgling Iraqi Army rebuild their maintenance and logistics branches. Elizabeth served as the team's supply sergeant, providing them the essentials of daily life, from food to ammunition. They lived sparse but full lives. Elizabeth's aspirations for a career in social work arose from the gratification she found in this kind of nuanced logistical work.

After returning home, Elizabeth experienced a number of close personal losses, leading her to recognize how the foundation of hospice work mirrors the work of a supply sergeant—both roles help individuals maintain the ordinary aspects of life during extraordinary circumstances. She is now excited to build upon the career path she began in the Army by pursuing a degree in social work, where she hopes to be of service again.

SARAH ABDELLA-EL KALLASSY

U.S. Marine Corps | Johns Hopkins University | M.A., Middle East Studies & International Economics



“The best solution to any problem is a locally sustainable one. I want to be the extra set of eyes helping communities find the solutions in their midst.”

Sarah proudly served as a Marine and spent two, year-long tours in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. A Pashto linguist, she was a liaison officer to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, assigned to the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program. During her time in Helmand, Sarah focused on empowering Afghan women to participate in the peace process and aiding the Afghan government in their efforts to reintegrate Taliban members into local communities.

These experiences taught Sarah the high value of regional expertise and locally sustainable solutions. In the Middle East Studies Program at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Sarah is conducting research on the current role of women in the peace process and models of best practice for their further integration in the greater Middle East region and Afghanistan. A Fouad Ajami Fellow, she is also conducting research on the local sustainable solutions to resilience challenges in the civil society and infrastructure of the city of Byblos, Lebanon. In her free time, she serves as the ESL Coordinator for No One Left Behind, a non-profit serving Afghan and Iraqi SIVs.

Sarah hopes to use her regional expertise, language skills, and practical experience gained through her military service to serve as a policy advisor, implementing sustainable solutions to peace and resilience challenges in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

LEILANI ATILIO

U.S. Army | George Washington University | DNP, Nursing



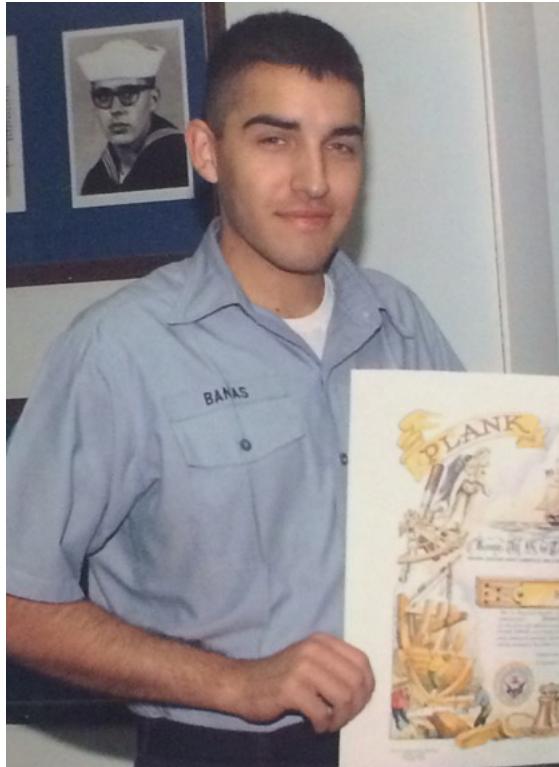
“Closing the gap in ideologies can only be achieved if we place dignity, respect, and compassion at the foundation of our personal and professional life.”

Service to the community is the driving force in Leilani's career. As a child she remembers watching her mom meet patients each morning for their daily dialysis. Her mother's compassion and commitment to service inspired Leilani to enroll in nursing school. While an Army ROTC cadet, September 11th occurred and Leilani was committed to preserving the hope and security that is the foundation of the United States. This also included protecting the dreams of her parents who emigrated from the Philippines. Leilani served in the military to show gratitude for the country and people who welcomed and supported her parents. As an Army Nurse Corp officer, Leilani was a critical care nurse and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

After leaving the military, Leilani became a public health nurse and found her passion working with underserved communities on drug policy. But Leilani felt a call back to the clinical world when she recognized the stigma people with drug addiction face in healthcare. Leilani enrolled in George Washington University's Family Nurse Practitioner program to become a primary care provider. Her goal is to provide healthcare for marginalized communities and to leverage her position as a family nurse practitioner to advocate for drug policies directly impacting her patients. She hopes to train new nurses to hone their clinical skills and educate them on policy and advocacy so they may become change agents. By working in drug policy, clinical care, and education, she aims to bring positive, sustainable changes on how we deliver healthcare.

AARON BANAS

U.S. Navy | George Washington University | Ph.D., Psychology



“Life is about recovery after battles, both physical and emotional. As a psychologist, I will help others recover from life’s hardships and find their way home.”

With a strong sense of responsibility and empathy for others, Aaron enlisted as Navy Corpsman. During his service, he found meaning through working with others who had lost hope. He learned that saving a life did not just mean stopping the bleeding or keeping an airway open; it also meant helping others find meaning and that they were not alone in their suffering.

After his enlistment, Aaron felt lost. Knowing that he needed change, he set out on a six-month journey into the wilderness. Through his journey, he found a way to live each day with mindfulness and appreciation and discovered that he could help others find their own path to recovery. He accomplished this by coordinating retreats for combat veterans. During the retreats, he shared the story of how Odysseus went to war then became lost finding his way home. Aaron found that Veterans returning from war may be physically home, but mentally they are still searching. The responsibility of bringing everyone home rests not only on the veteran and the mental health provider, but also on their communities. Aaron is seeking his doctoral degree in clinical psychology so that he may better understand the nature of suffering and pathways to healing.

Aaron plans to create a collaborative community in which psychotherapy is normalized, members of the community are educated about helping veterans, and transition services address the needs of returning veterans. Aaron believes that building resilience with returning veterans will equate to a more resilient and healthy community.

EIMAN BEHZADI

U.S. Army | University of Virginia | Master of Business Administration



“My ultimate goal is to develop innovative technologies that empower service members to learn more effectively and be exposed to a myriad of other cultures.”

The son of Iranian immigrants to the United States, Eiman always knew he wanted to give back to the country that gave him and his family so much. After earning his Master's degree in Public Policy at American University, Eiman decided to serve his country by joining the U.S. Army as an intelligence analyst. During his time with 3rd Special Forces Group, he learned critical languages such as Arabic and Farsi, and taught culture and language courses to Green Berets. It was in the Special Forces language lab that Eiman discovered his true calling to help Special Operations Forces better equip themselves with the language and cultural expertise they would need for future deployments.

After five years of service, Eiman transitioned out of the Army. He subsequently developed a virtual reality start-up venture to pursue more efficient methods to educate and train Special Forces in the cultures and languages they serve with, relying on his firsthand experience in the Army. He plans to introduce both augmented and virtual reality solutions to mimic combat scenarios where soldiers can practice language and cultural immersion before they deploy.

Eiman is currently pursuing an MBA at the University of Virginia to better position his startup venture so he can help train and prepare the Special Operations Forces community for their uniquely challenging missions.

BRIDGETTE BELL

U.S. Army | Jackson State University | Ph.D., Clinical Psychology



“I decided leaders should spend less time worrying about suicide and more time leading their soldiers to life preservation and improvement. I want to revolutionize the way the Army employs psychology.”

Hoping to become an Army Doctor through a unique college experience, Bridgette entered the United States Military Academy in 2000. She immersed herself in academic and extracurricular activities, but instead of pursuing medical school she commissioned as a Human Resources Officer in May 2004. She served as an HR Officer at Fort Bliss and Fort Knox, a Company Commander at Fort Myer, and an Engineering Psychology Instructor at West Point. While deployed to Iraq, she dealt with trauma survivors first-hand as her unit's primary responder for sexual assault victims.

Bridgette found a passion for psychology in the toils of command. She spent 22 months analyzing and implementing suicide prevention strategies with minimal manning and unimaginable stressors within her unit. She left command with a greater appreciation for the study of resilience, the human dimension, and behavioral health services. She completed a Master's thesis on the Army Suicide Prevention Program and returned to West Point to teach cadets the power of human-centered design. Bridgette is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Jackson State University and works with the VA on Virtual Reality research. She plans to specialize in trauma, grief, and writing/art therapy.

A fourth-generation soldier, Bridgette is truly proud to wear the uniform. She incorporates military service into every aspect of her life, including as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., The ROCKS, Inc., and an avid volunteer. She recently founded an organization that aims to recycle military uniforms to raise money for homeless veterans programs and veterans services.

TYLER BENTLEY

U.S. Navy | Arizona State University | B.A., Technological Entrepreneurship & Management



“Technology is changing the fundamental strategies of the modern battlefield. A focus on technological innovation will increase small unit effectiveness, minimize exposure, and ultimately, save our operators lives.”

As a young adult, Tyler was eager to find an opportunity that would develop his confidence, build leadership skills, and test his motivation. He found that opportunity in 2007 when he joined the military to become part of a highly trained Naval Special Warfare Unit. As a member of Naval Special Warfare, Tyler has spent nearly 10 years working with some of the most elite military units serving our nation's interests.

Inspired by a devotion to serve others and an entrepreneurial mindset, Tyler began to study emerging technologies that have the potential to save lives and maximize the efficiency of our special operations units. Through his continued studies of Technological Innovation at Arizona State University, Tyler hopes to facilitate the implementation of autonomous drone technology to further battlefield tactics and mitigate casualties to civilians and operators, alike. Tyler ultimately believes that harnessing these new technologies and assimilating them into the hands of our elite operators, will ensure our special operations teams remain at the forefront of 21st century battlefield strategy.

JESSICA BLAKE

Military Spouse | George Washington University | Doctor of Physical Therapy



“I know what it is like to experience a lengthy recovery process after trauma. I want to help my patients achieve their goals through rehabilitation.”

As she has followed her husband's Army career, Jessica has worked as a civilian for the military as well as a healthcare administrator for the Department of the Army. For three years, she served as a physical therapy technician in an Army health clinic and was honored to play a small role in the recovery of injured soldiers. Her patients' drive, determination, positivity and commitment to service of others, sometimes after severe injury or a long road with chronic conditions, inspired her. Over time, she learned about many aspects of coping and recovery through her patients, and she discovered a passion for giving back through physical therapy.

With the support and encouragement of her husband and family, Jessica is pursuing her goal to support the military community and underserved communities as an Orthopedic Physical Therapist. Through her program, she has had the opportunity to work not only in military settings, but also with special needs childrens' adaptive sports groups and with underserved populations in Washington, D.C. area as well as internationally. As a physical therapist, she hopes to work with many of these populations, guiding her patients through challenges, celebrating their successes in recovery, and inspiring them to achieve goals that may seem unreachable.

CAROLINE BOOTH

U.S. Army | Vanderbilt University | MSN, Midwifery



“The Army shaped my values and gave me a perspective that’s proven invaluable during life’s hardest challenges, leaving me capable of providing calm, confident care to women facing similar obstacles.”

Inspired by her older sister, Caroline's childhood dream to attend West Point and serve in the Army began at the age of seven. Fifteen years later, she captained the Army women's soccer team and majored in engineering management before graduating in 2009. Caroline commissioned as an engineer officer and quickly deployed to Diyala Province, Iraq.

Her deployment experiences as a platoon leader shaped Caroline's character and challenged her far more than any classroom or soccer field. Her soldiers inspired her daily with their devotion to each other and the mission. From them, she learned the hardship and worries faced by their spouses at home and discovered that grit, strength and toughness are hallmark characteristics of military families.

After returning from Iraq and transitioning to the Reserves, the value of the Army family made an indelible mark on Caroline's life when she and her husband tragically lost their infant son who was stillborn at 41 weeks. Caroline relied on the strength of her military family for support, as only a community all too familiar with loss can provide.

Having volunteered in local hospitals since leaving active duty, Caroline hopes to use her personal experiences and education to give back to the community which impacted her life tremendously. As a midwife, she's eager to serve soldiers and spouses throughout her husband's active duty career, contribute to a growing field of research into stillbirth causes and prevention, and continue volunteering with a new focus on serving underprivileged women who lack adequate natal care.

ELIZABETH BURGIN

Military Spouse | University of North Texas | Ph.D., Counseling



“As a counselor, I want to be an advocate for wellness and mental health for service members and their families because I understand the sacrifices our nation requires of them.”

Inspired by the selflessness of the Army communities she and her husband have called home, Elizabeth is committed to honoring the service and sacrifice of those in uniform and their families. The mental health challenges facing the soldiers and families in her own life led Elizabeth to pursue a career in counseling. Elizabeth has experienced firsthand the difficulty of finding and fostering community amid frequent transitions and her husband's combat deployments to Afghanistan. In the tradition of so many military families seeking to make the most of every place they call home, Elizabeth has sought to build community by volunteering in Family Readiness Groups for her husband's units, as well as establishing therapeutic groups and programs for children and families in community agencies and on military installations.

As a doctoral student, Elizabeth leads research and writing efforts to develop counselor-specific competencies for military mental health care and military-focused adaptations to evidence-based treatments, with a focus on play therapy. Elizabeth has been honored to speak at national and local conferences to better inform counselors about ethical and practical considerations for working with the military population. She is preparing for a career counseling military families and training fellow counselors to meet the complex, evolving needs of those who serve. She is committed to using her position as a professional counselor to advocate for the military community to receive ethical, efficacious mental health care, commensurate with the sacrifices they and their families make.

CHARLOTTE BURNETT

U.S. Army | University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill | Master of Business Administration



“The Army taught me that an organization’s greatest asset is its people. I want to build human capital in business that seeks to drive change and questions the status quo.”

As the second oldest of nine children, Charlie always felt it was important to be a part of something larger than herself. Charlie recognized Army ROTC at Wake Forest University as an opportunity to join one of the greatest teams in the world. After graduating college, Charlie was stationed at Fort Bragg, NC where she served four years as a Human Resources Officer in the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

As the Human Resources Officer in an organization that continually deploys hundreds of soldiers across ten countries in the Pacific Region, Charlie discovered her passion for managing human capital and building organizations. It is much more than putting the right person in the right position. Charlie realized the value of leveraging the Army's greatest asset: our people. Charlie is pursuing her Master of Business Administration to further develop her passion of shaping organizations through expertly crafted human dynamics. Charlie believes business has the power to drive change, but behind that change is always people—people making decisions and questioning the status quo.

Charlie is passionate about women integration in the Army and creating equal opportunity within the military. As the founder of the Fort Bragg Women's Mentorship Network, Charlie quickly learned that managing human capital is essential to closing the gender gap. As a female veteran, she wants to use her skills as a Human Capital Consultant to create her own Human Capital Consulting firm that advises Fortune 500 companies to build women capital and create global leaders.

STEPHEN CARL

U.S. Army | Baylor University | Juris Doctor



“The U.S. Army showed me the power of selfless sacrifice. I want to be a leader who cultivates that same sacrifice within my community to end the orphan care crisis.”

Stephen commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army to give back to the nation that had given him so much. He was selected to attend flight school and soon became a MEDEVAC helicopter pilot. In Afghanistan, Stephen and his aircrew flew dozens of urgent MEDEVAC missions and saved countless lives.

Upon returning from combat, Stephen had a life-changing experience when he and his wife became foster parents and firsthand witnesses of the orphan care crisis. He saw countless children who were victimized by circumstances they could not control, and then re-victimized by a community that would not come to their aid – there were too many foster kids without a place to call home. Stephen saw parallels to his experience on the battlefield. As an Army Officer, he and his fellow Soldiers embraced a commitment towards one another that lead them to sacrifice their safety and comfort for a fallen comrade, no matter the cost. Stephen wondered why his local community couldn't do the same for abused children.

After eight years of honorable service, Stephen was discharged from the Army and is attending Baylor Law School to gain the skills necessary to become a passionate advocate for these children. Stephen envisions a community of committed individuals who embrace a sense of belonging and obligation to the most vulnerable among them – a community that can end the orphan care crisis. He hopes to devote the rest of his life to serving as a lawyer and leader to that end.

CANDICE CREECY

U.S. Marine Corps | Wake Forest University | M.M.S., Physician Assistant Studies



“Relief from illness and injury is a right that should be provided to all people regardless of socioeconomic status or geographical location. Suffering is indiscriminate. As should be our service.

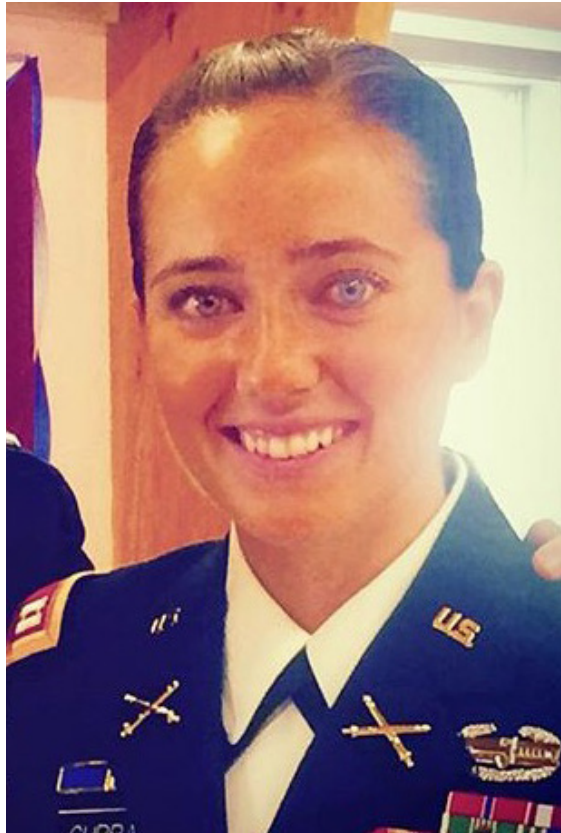
Candice grew up in a military family where a deep sense of service was portrayed daily by her father, an Air Force Aircraft Technician. Like many of her peers, the events of 9/11 re-shaped Candice's outlook on life and it became evident it was time to follow in his footsteps. Candice accepted a commission in the U.S. Marine Corps in 2005, earned her aviation “Wings of Gold” in 2008, and was designated a F/A-18 Weapon Systems Officer in 2010. Candice spent the next three years fighting the Global War on Terrorism from the skies above at home and abroad. She currently trains high risk of capture personnel at Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School - East.

In 2013, Candice founded Rise Above Seven Summits to bring awareness to the struggles she witnessed within communities while traveling abroad both in uniform and out. The project seeks to create awareness through climbing the highest peaks on each continent, while simultaneously providing peer-based fiscal support to grass root charities within the region. To date, Candice has climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro and Denali, raising over \$10,000 for projects in Tanzania and the United States.

Candice's experiences with Rise Above Seven Summits has shown her a world in need of care and compassion. Because of this, Candice is pursuing a Master of Medical Science degree at Wake Forest School of Medicine. As a physician assistant, she hopes to combine her love for adventure and passion for service to help remote communities in a tangible and sustainable way.

MEGHAN CURRAN

U.S. Army | University of Denver | M.A., Security Studies



“Utilizing the resiliency I have gained through my military service, I strive to improve human security outcomes by working to build capacities in post-conflict societies.”

Like many veterans of her generation, Meghan recognizes September 11, 2001 as a turning point in her life that influenced her decision to join in the military. However, amidst the tragic memories of that day, Meghan most vividly remembers the resiliency that the country she loves displayed in the face of incredible adversity. It is this admiration for her country and her fellow countrymen, that inspired Meghan to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, where she graduated and commissioned into the field artillery branch in 2009.

After serving as a field artillery platoon leader and executive officer, Meghan applied and was selected for deployment to serve on the U.S. Special Operations Command's first Cultural Support Team. As a CST, Meghan was responsible for collecting relevant, time sensitive, and mission critical intelligence from Afghan women and children in order to support the operations of the 75th Ranger Regiment. In October of 2011, Meghan's personal resilience was tested when her friend and teammate Second Lt. Ashley White Stumpf was killed in action and she was selected to replace her.

Inspired by her service in Afghanistan, and the fragile human security environment she worked in, Meghan is now pursuing a Master's in International Security, with concentrations in intelligence and human security, and continues to serve in the reserves as a civil affairs officers. Meghan hopes to improve global human security outcomes by working to identify risks and vulnerabilities in post conflict societies, and helping to mitigate emerging threats by building capacities for community resilience.

JUSTIN DAVIS

U.S. Navy | Northwestern University | Master of Business Administration



“Vision and integrity must drive our future leaders.”

Justin joined the Navy in 1998 to “See the World,” inspired by the prior service of family members and their stories from abroad. After graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy and 15 years of commissioned service with partner nations, in combat theaters, and contingency operations, Justin has found a brotherhood and seen firsthand the results of organizations that champion teamwork, accountability, and vision. His choice of academic study was driven by a desire to find and incorporate external perspectives, which he brings from the Kellogg School of Management's globally oriented Executive MBA curriculum. He readily applies the program's unique insights as he looks at future challenges to the service, doing his part to sustain the vision and adaptation required to preserve and protect our nation's freedoms.

Inspired by the exponential changes emerging in technology, organizations, and social systems, Justin looks forward to the opportunity to apply his leadership experience from the military and his academic worldviews gained through Kellogg. He seeks to help shape our future American way of life with the integrity and accountability he found so pervasive in service. He looks forward to involvement in disruptive technology and business to allow communities to experience the same cohesion, vision, and purpose he found in the military, by helping to create the means for individual economic independence and self-sufficiency to safeguard freedoms domestically which he has spent 15 years protecting abroad.

JENNIFER DICARLO

U.S. Air Force | Colorado School of Mines | Ph.D., Operations Research



“Everyone has unique talents and gifts. The key is using them to make the world a better place.”

Just 11 days after graduating from high school, Jennifer left home to attend the Air Force Academy. She graduated in May 2001 with a double major in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering. No one could have foreseen that the world she commissioned into would so drastically change just a few months later. Jennifer's first assignment was to attend graduate school, completing a Master's in Aerospace Engineering at MIT in June 2003. She always enjoyed school and learning, but after watching the war news for two years she was eager to begin pilot training and finally serve overseas.

After completing pilot training, Jennifer was assigned to fly the B-1 Bomber. She flew her first combat mission over Afghanistan in January 2008. Over the next several years she would fly 142 combat missions in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, amassing over 800 combat hours in the B-1 and the MC-12. Shortly after her third deployment, Jennifer was medically retired with 14 years and 7 months of active duty service.

With her military career unexpectedly cut short, Jennifer decided to go back to school to pursue a Ph.D. in Operations Research. During her time in the military, Jennifer experienced operations research being used very successfully in the war effort and the subject fascinated her. She had frequently dreamed of being a teacher, often tutoring others or helping them learn during her time in the service. Jennifer hopes to give back by teaching as a professor upon completion of her doctorate.

ANTHONY DOLOMISIEWICZ

U.S. Army | Texas A&M University | Doctor of Medicine



“Never accept the status quo when things are not working the way they should. If something is wrong, fix it.”

Anthony joined the service after September 11th and went on to complete the Special Forces Qualification Course training as a Special Forces Medical Sergeant. In his 12 years of service and over the course of multiple combat deployments with 10th Special Forces Group, Anthony realized he wanted to be more than a medic and decided to pursue medical school to become a physician. Driven by this goal, he earned his undergraduate degree and started medical school at Texas A&M, all while serving on active duty in difficult and demanding leadership positions.

During his service, he took charge of the Special Operations Combat Medical Skills Sustainment Course that was responsible for training over 1000 medics a year from all branches of the military. In this position he planned and implemented the restructuring of the course curriculum to better meet the needs of medics on the battlefield, including dedicating more time to hands on casualty scenarios and emphasizing realistic practice of medical skills.

After medical school, Anthony intends to continue serving with the National Guard as a military physician. He wants to continue to improve survival of casualties through superior medical training. He also hopes to continue his service as a physician in the VA Medical System, where he believes he can deploy his experience as a medic, instructor and leader.

JERAD ELDRED

U.S. Army | University of New Mexico | Doctor of Medicine



“Honorable service is measured and exemplified by the kind, competent, and diligent care for people in their moment of need, without regard for recognition or reward.”

Jerad was born the middle of five children in a rural town in New Mexico where his father was a blue-collar refinery worker and his mother served as a nurse. As a teenager, he struggled greatly with academics, but he found purpose serving as a volunteer firefighter and working with a search and rescue organization. In 1999 at the age of 17, Jerad decided to join the U.S. Army. Feeling that the Infantry was the best place to truly serve, he enlisted and was stationed in the 101st Airborne. He participated in the Afghanistan invasion after 9/11, but was severely injured in a helicopter crash. After his recovery, seeing firsthand how the war was being fought, he decided Special Forces was the place to be to make the biggest impact on the war effort.

After selection, Jerad was assigned to be a Special Forces Medical Sergeant and fell in love with medicine. With the 3rd Special Forces Group, he served four additional combat tours ranging from direct action mission sets to special project missions. In time, he became the Senior Enlisted Medical Advisor to the Group Command Team and the founder/manager of the Group's Wounded Warrior Program. For Jerad, along with being the proud father of two beautiful children, serving in 3rd Special Forces Group has been the single greatest honor of his life and has inspired him to become a doctor to continue serving others.

DAMON “DJ” FALDOWSKI

U.S. Navy | University of Pennsylvania | Master of Business Administration
Harvard University | Master of Public Administration



“To me, service is a way of life. A servant-leader embraces humility, deeply invests in the betterment of others, and puts others in front of self.”

As a senior in high school, DJ watched our nation come under attack, and the tragedies of September 11, 2001 marked his call to serve in the U.S. Navy. On active duty, he had the privilege of leading some of our nation's finest warriors, and his experiences have taught him the most important lesson in leadership—serve those who you lead. DJ credits his collective military experience with forging his leadership faculties and catalyzing his passion to live a life of service.

As he transitions from the military, DJ hopes to become a servant-leader in corporate, public, and philanthropic sectors. He hails from a hometown in the heart of an unconventional energy boom, and has recently witnessed the industry's unprecedented economic expansion as well as regrettable social irresponsibility. He believes the industry needs leaders capable of finding a marriage where all players work toward innovative renewable energy sources and champion corporate responsibility. His goal is to work in the private sector to provide growth capital to companies that are championing responsible energy practices. Determined to achieve this goal, he is pursuing both an MBA from the Wharton School and an MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School. He plans to utilize his knowledge and skills from graduate school to drive significant change across this multi-sector landscape. Eventually, he hopes to return to public service in a capacity that is best for our country.

While serving, DJ knew many teammates who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country and recognized a troubling pattern for their families: Gold Star Families initially receive abundant support, but it wanes over the years. His commitment to honor these fallen heroes and serve their families called him to help start the non-profit organization Legacies Alive which is committed to serving these families forever.

JONATHON FLORANCE

U.S. Army | Harvard University | Doctor of Medicine



“Operating in areas of conflict taught me how people are different and how we’re the same. Medicine will help me strengthen communities by caring for what makes us human.”

Jon enlisted in the infantry at 17, but entered West Point less than a year later. He commissioned back into the infantry and served as a platoon leader during the troop surge in Iraq. Relishing the experience of working alongside Iraqi security forces and partnering with local leaders to build lasting security, Jon applied to Special Forces.

As a Green Beret, Jon worked alongside people from a wide range of cultures. He deployed to Iraq, central and northern Africa, the Balkans, and Southeast Asia. Each experience strengthened his belief that people have so much in common, and that one thing above all else enables them to enjoy a secure and prosperous environment: community. Through community, people sacrifice for a greater good and put others above themselves, creating the conditions that undermine extremism.

Although the United States Armed Forces have an important role in the world, Jon felt he couldn't instill this sense of community through military strength alone. Instead, he witnessed several examples of small scale success where individuals literally built community with their own hands. Of all these examples, medicine proved the most powerful medium. Now at Harvard Medical School, Jon hopes to graduate into a profession which will allow him to address local and global health issues, in an effort to build stronger communities.

JOHNNIE GILPEN

U.S. Navy | University of Oklahoma | M.S., Physician Assistant Studies



“I can honor my fallen brothers and continue their legacy by working as a Physician Assistant in community healthcare programs that treat veterans and non-veterans alike.”

Inspired by his family's military legacy, particularly his grandfather's service during World War II and his father's service in Vietnam, Johnnie joined the military. He first served as a helicopter crew chief in the Oklahoma National Guard, then as a U.S. Navy Fleet Marine Force Hospital Corpsman. Through these experiences, he came to appreciate what it means to be part of team, dedicated to a purpose much larger than one's self. As a Corpsman, he found his passion in medicine. His experiences providing medical care for Marines, Sailors, and locals during deployments made him realize the need for more primary care providers. Johnnie believed that he could make the greatest impact in primary care as Physician Assistant (PA). After leaving the Navy, he set his sights on becoming a PA, while continuing to serve his country as a disaster response epidemiologist and medic at the local, state, national, and international levels. After years of preparation, his dreams have been realized.

As a PA, Johnnie plans to work within the VA healthcare system; he wants to be a transitional conduit for veterans as they move from the military to the VA. With compassion and empathy, he hopes to provide quality care to his fellow veterans and bridge the gap in trust between patient and provider to improve health outcomes among patients.

RYAN GROSS

U.S. Army | Syracuse University | Master of Public Administration



“Before signing a policy, senior defense officials must understand how their policies will impact every service member and their family, from the strategic level to the front lines.”

Ryan's grandfathers ignited the spirit of public service detailing their duties leading tank units through the Battle of the Bulge and serving on a Navy destroyer in the Pacific during WWII. Their military service instilled the horror of war, the necessity of strategic thinking, and the honor of public service, which continues to inspire Ryan's career with the Department of Defense.

As an Army officer, Ryan prepared an infantry platoon and intelligence analysts for combat operations following the 9/11 attacks. After his deployment with an Infantry Battalion in Baghdad, he transitioned from the Army to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), where for over a decade he has led intelligence analysis lauded by Ambassadors, DoD policymakers, and Commanding Generals. Through his experiences in Baghdad, Washington D.C., U.S. Central Command, and three civilian deployments to Afghanistan, Ryan witnessed how “one size fits all” policies developed at the national-level do not always translate effectively to the tactical environment, requiring commanders on the ground to determine how to tailor the policy to fit their battlespace. Ryan aspires to innovate defense policy to eliminate these policy-to-action complications.

DIA selected Ryan to pursue a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. There, Ryan will build upon the leadership and decision-making skills he gained throughout his career and hone his policy-development expertise, providing him with the tools he needs to drive defense policy that provides commanders the flexibility to implement policy according to their operational needs.

SHANE HARRIS

U.S. Army | University of Miami | Doctor of Physical Therapy



“I believe everyone deserves to live a life without limitations. As a physical therapist, I wish to help veterans reach their functional goals and return to an active, healthy lifestyle.”

Enlisting out of high school in 2006, Shane was motivated by a desire to serve his country and be part of something larger than himself. Four years later, he had seen more of the world, and learned more about life and leadership than he had ever imagined he could. Serving with 3rd Ranger Battalion, Shane's life changed when he was introduced to a platoon sergeant who had worked his way back into the fight, despite being a below knee amputee. As his enlistment was coming to an end, Shane set his sights on becoming a physical therapist, a career he deemed to have a pivotal role in the rehabilitation of an individual's physical and mental well-being.

Currently serving as the national student liaison for the Federal Section of the American Physical Therapy Association, Shane continues to advocate for providing the best possible care for injured service members. With a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Miami, he plans to work for the VA or as part of the military healthcare system, providing rehabilitation care for veterans and underserved populations worldwide. Shane is specifically interested in amputee care and working with patients who are suffering from Traumatic Brain Injuries. Additionally, he desires to advance those fields through research and publication. During clinical experiences, Shane has witnessed how relating over a common military background leads to stronger, more meaningful relationships with his patients, which has strengthened his desire to pursue a career serving those who continue to serve.

PAUL HASTINGS

U.S. Army | University of Washington | M.M.S., Physician Assistant Studies



“The road to global stability is built upon the proliferation of education and prosperity. My contribution will entail providing medical care and education to regions where very little exist.”

Possessing keen interest in global politics, Paul intently absorbed media during the days following the fall of the Twin Towers in New York City. Over the following years, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq would continue to pull at his psyche. Paul graduated from Michigan State University with his Bachelors in Biochemistry, immediately enlisting in the U.S. Army.

With his job as a support soldier becoming progressively less rewarding, Paul volunteered to join the Green Berets. Paul completed the selection and training process, adjusting to his role as a combat medic on 1st Special Forces Group combat dive teams. During this time, Paul fulfilled his dream of graduating from Ranger school, served twice in Afghanistan, once in the Philippines and on numerous training missions throughout Asia.

In Afghanistan, Paul learned that medically treating underserved populations breaks down cultural boundaries and has humanizing effects during conflict. Additionally, the juxtaposition of populations with and without access to education was very noticeable, even within the same country. Those with greater access to education are relatively accepting of others and open to alternative ideas concerning religion and governance.

Paul recently joined the National Guard while simultaneously progressing his medical education through his acceptance into the University of Washington MEDEX Physician Assistant program. He continues his decade of work with Special Forces while planning on utilizing his education overseas with various government and civilian organizations, to provide medical treatments and education to populations where little or no opportunity exists.

TARA HEIDGER

U.S. Army | Columbia University | M.A., International Urban Planning | M.A., International Affairs



“I have witnessed how conflict and poverty leads to displacement and inadequate housing. As an urban planner and policy expert, I want to lead efforts to address the complex issues of shelter.”

As an undergraduate student struggling to find purpose and direction, Tara decided to enlist in the U.S. Army. Over her twelve years of service as an intelligence analyst and psychological operations specialist, Tara has been exposed to rich and diverse cultures and ideas, while also witnessing the existential struggles that many people face around the globe.

Tara's time in Baghdad analyzing the city's people and neighborhoods left a lasting impact. She saw first-hand the devastating effects war has on a city and its inhabitants. Continued military service focusing on Europe and Africa led to the realization that her passion resides in aiding urban populations who live within the informal sector. Over the years, Tara's cumulative experiences in war-torn Baghdad, the favelas in Brazil and even volunteering with homeless populations in the United States, has led Tara to realize the significance that inadequate shelter has on a population. With this, Tara began focusing her studies on gaining a better understanding of global urban housing issues.

Currently pursuing a dual degree in Urban Planning at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and International Affairs with Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), Tara aims to round out her experiences abroad by focusing her studies on informal settlements, urban policy and specifically the issues of housing and shelter. Professionally, Tara strives to become a leader in an organization where she can take her experiences, coupled with her sense of duty and service, to address the world's most complex housing challenges.

MARQUERITE HERZOG

U.S. Navy | University of Texas at Arlington | Ph.D., Quantitative Biology



“I’m eager to help those who suffer behavioral disorders to understand the science of their conditions. Knowledge is power and I’m confident I can make a difference in these communities.”

A deep sense of patriotism motivated by the events surrounding 9/11, and a family tradition of Naval service, prompted Marquerite to enlist in the Navy. As a sonar technician conducting deep water passive surveillance she gained a strong appreciation for scientific research. Following nine years of honorable service, Marquerite felt she could continue to serve the greater good by pursuing a full-time career in science.

As she completed her undergraduate studies, Marquerite began work as a research assistant at Camp Pendleton, working closely with Marines as they returned from Iraq and Afghanistan deployments. With a team of neuropsychology and behavior specialists, she conducted investigations on patients and their caregivers dealing with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and combat induced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These studies gave her a unique perspective on the physical and emotional challenges service members undergo when returning to common social situations and family interactions.

Marquerite's work with these patients coupled with her passion for research led to her current Ph.D. studies at the University of Texas at Arlington, concentrating on the molecular basis of behavior. Her goal is to uncover fundamental genetic mechanisms that contribute to chronic depression, self-destructive addictions, and PTSD-like behavioral conditions that tend to plague military communities. Her long-term ambition is to become a faculty member at a university where her research and teaching can help veterans, active duty military personnel, and their families as well as set an example for women and minorities pursuing STEM careers.

KARL HOLT

U.S. Army | University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill | Doctor of Medicine



“Trauma can be a gift that silences the past along with the unimportant. I want to inspire others to use their trauma to maximize their own potential.”

In 2000, Karl witnessed an Army Trauma Surgeon save his friend after being shot in the stomach. Karl knew then that medicine was his true calling. 9/11 came a few months later, and the need to do something meaningful became overwhelming. His grandfather had served as a pilot in WWII. Serving was in Karl's blood as it made him feel empty to see all these individuals putting themselves on the line to serve their country and he felt compelled to contribute. The desire to serve merged with Karl's medical aspiration and he left a civilian career to become a Special Forces Medic.

Throughout his time in the service Karl saw a lot of trauma, but one moment in Afghanistan solidified his future. He and his team were in a helicopter crash wherein ten Americans lost their lives. Although severely wounded, he did his best to save as many possible. It took many years and many surgeries, but the process of recovery gave him unique compassion and insight. Knowing what it feels like to be on the other side of the hospital bed, Karl says his goal is to be a Trauma Surgeon, but his purpose goes beyond the operating room. As a doctor, he wants to inspire others to use their trauma to maximize their own potential; he also hopes to be a voice in Healthcare policy while pursuing several non-profit interests.

JASON HOMZA

U.S. Marine Corps | Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine | Doctor of Medicine



“In the Marines, I experienced the impact that can be made through selfless service. As a physician, I want continue to serve my community and help ensure its future health.”

When Jason's brother, a U.S. Marine, was hit head-on by a drunk driver, he was not expected to survive. However, he not only survived, but also fought back through months of surgery and recovery to return to his full capacity on active duty and even deploy to Iraq. It was then that Jason knew he had to become a Marine in order to reach that level of commitment, strength, and selflessness. In 2006, Jason deployed to Haditha, Iraq with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines. Because of its crucial location, Haditha had been held under an oppressive insurgency for several years. Jason and his fellow Marines endured months of aggressive resistance in the fight to return freedom to the Iraqi people.

When Jason returned home, he wanted to make a difference in his community just as he had witnessed the Marines' service make a difference in Iraq. Jason earned a degree and began working as a teacher in a disadvantaged school near his hometown Scranton, PA. While working within this community, Jason recognized that the region had an even more vital need. The area faces a physician shortage and many unique healthcare challenges. Jason again drew on his experience with the impact that can be made through service and left his position as a teacher to enroll in the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, which is located in the same town where he served as a teacher. Jason hopes to impact the delivery and availability of healthcare to the citizens of this region.

ALICIA JACQUET-MORRISON

U.S. Army | Indiana University | Master of Public Affairs | M.S., Environmental Science



“By working to unite people through our shared resources, I hope to be a leader for the greater global good.”

Motivated by her childhood experiences in sports, Alicia connected with the idea that the military was a team and that she could be part of doing something meaningful in the world. Inspired by Pat Tillman and others who joined the military in the wake of the September 11th attacks, she shared their desire to serve her country and help others.

Alicia had the opportunity to serve in Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Jordan. Throughout these experiences, Alicia was struck by how similar people were across the globe. Ultimately, she learned that communities seek the same things no matter where they are: clean water, fresh air, freedom to prosper, and security for their children.

Now back home in the Midwest and serving in the Army Reserves, Alicia is pursuing a Master of Public Affairs and a Master of Science in Environmental Science with a concentration in water management. She hopes that by working on cooperative international policies, she'll be able to ensure that every person has access to clean water wherever they are.

BRITT JOHNSON

U.S. Navy | University of Minnesota | MSN, Nursing



“I’ve learned that every experience provides an opportunity for growth. I want to fully engage in the lives of others, sharing my hard-learned lessons to strengthen their lives.”

When Britt entered into Navy ROTC in 1997, she couldn't have guessed that four years later, a terrorist attack on American soil would define her role as a Surface Warfare Officer. Being forward deployed, her ship was one of the first to engage, and it was an exciting honor and privilege to defend her country. Yet beyond whatever benefit she offered, Britt discovered that serving her country and fellow sailors gave her a great sense of fulfillment. After a medical diagnosis cut her time in the military short, the deep camaraderie, unity, and sense of mission she shared with her fellow service members followed Britt into civilian life.

Pursuing her newfound interest in science and healthcare, she started a career in pharmaceutical sales. However, when her oldest son spent two weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit, Britt discovered her passion. There she observed nurses who possessed the expertise, empathy, and dedication to care for the most fragile, dependent human lives. In those short but emotional days, her dream took shape.

Britt is pursuing a Master of Nursing degree and feels called to work as a pediatric critical care nurse, a balance between thinking quickly under pressure and providing comfort and compassion to families suffering intense grief and stress. The military developed in Britt an attitude that encourages her to engage in the battle, and she will use this drive to invest in the lives of patients and their families at their time of greatest need.

EMILY JUNKINS

Military Spouse | University of Oklahoma | Ph.D., Microbiology



“A passion for science must be motivated by compassion for others.”

From Emily's time volunteering in Zambia, she has been motivated by actual need versus perceived need; namely, what is practical and sustainable for a community versus what is unnecessary and potentially harmful. This paradigm defines her role as a military spouse and microbiologist. As a Ph.D. student with experiences in educational service, Emily believes there are two systemic issues that she can make a difference in with her training: target-specific scientific solutions and mentorship of STEM students.

First, Emily plans to use real-world problem solving in the field of microbiology; what are current problems our societies face and how can microbiology solve them. One solution will not fix a systemic problem across diverse communities, and often we as outsiders are ill equipped to translate practicalities of a solution to a community. Her time in Zambia revealed that education initiatives and scientific innovations must be designed with specific goals for specific communities. Consequently, Emily's collaborations, whether solving corrosion problems on USAF planes or using road-kill to find novel microbial drug targets, aim to produce practical solutions that can be applied across communities.

Second, two profound individuals have shaped Emily as a scientist by teaching her how to conduct meaningful research. She currently mentors a team of undergraduate students to provide the same guidance about seeking practical solutions to complex problems. Overall, Emily wants to set an example for her current and future students that compassion for others and passion for science is enough to realistically solve problems at the local and global level.

GRETCHEN KLINGLER

U.S. Air Force | The Ohio State University | B.A., Anthropology & Arabic



“Everyone has a story to tell that could change your life if you only take time to listen.”

Gretchen entered the military in 2009 searching for a new direction. She chose to join the Air Force as an Airborne Linguist and soon found herself at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. As she learned the Iraqi dialect of Arabic, Gretchen was inspired daily by her teachers' accounts of living in Iraq, their stories of joy and sorrow, and their resilience. Their pride in both Iraq and America remained with her long after shifting her focus to a new aircrew specialty.

Two deployments later, Gretchen found herself in Iraq acting as a stand-in translator in addition to her flying duties. She procured supplies for her crews, connected with local security forces, and spoke with civilian contractors for her team. Her most memorable moment was speaking to two teenage boys about their differences in faith and its portrayal in the United States, with one boy replying, “There are no problems between us, he is like my brother.” At that moment, Gretchen realized the importance of communicating to Americans the experiences of people from unfamiliar cultures, especially from the Middle East. She then decided to add Arabic to her passion for Cultural Anthropology upon her arrival at the Ohio State University.

Through her ethnographic work, Gretchen strives to provide opportunities for immigrants' and refugees' stories to be shared with and understood by more Americans. She believes that building stronger intercultural understanding in the United States and beyond will help us all embrace the beauty in our collective diversity.

STEPHANIE LATHAM

U.S. Navy | Rutgers - Robert Wood Johnson Medical School | Doctor of Medicine



“Working with the servicemen and women in the Navy, I felt a calling that I could continue to work not simply alongside them, but more importantly, in service to them.”

After graduating high school in 2001, Stephanie left her hometown of Easton, Massachusetts to serve her country in the U.S. Navy. She earned her commission in 2005, excited and eager to begin her career as a Navy pilot. Stephanie spent ten years flying the F/A-18C Hornet, serving alongside some of the most dedicated and talented sailors in the Fleet. However, after years of quietly exploring whether medicine was simply an interest for her or actually a passion worth changing careers for, she decided to begin the journey towards becoming a physician.

During the last of three combat deployments, Stephanie spent her off-duty hours in the medical bay aboard USS CARL VINSON, shadowing physicians, nurses and corpsmen. She soon realized that the sense of duty and commitment that she felt flying combat missions was much the same that she felt helping provide care to the sailors aboard the carrier. Though she will no longer fly combat sorties in the Hornet, Stephanie is excited to have the opportunity to continue her service in the Navy as a physician.

Stephanie is passionate about the personal aspect of medicine. She believes that medicine is fundamentally about improving the human condition, and that it starts with caring for each patient as an individual. She is excited about embarking on this new part of her journey as she continues to serve her country.

MEGAN MALONE

Military Spouse | University of Washington | Masters of Global Health



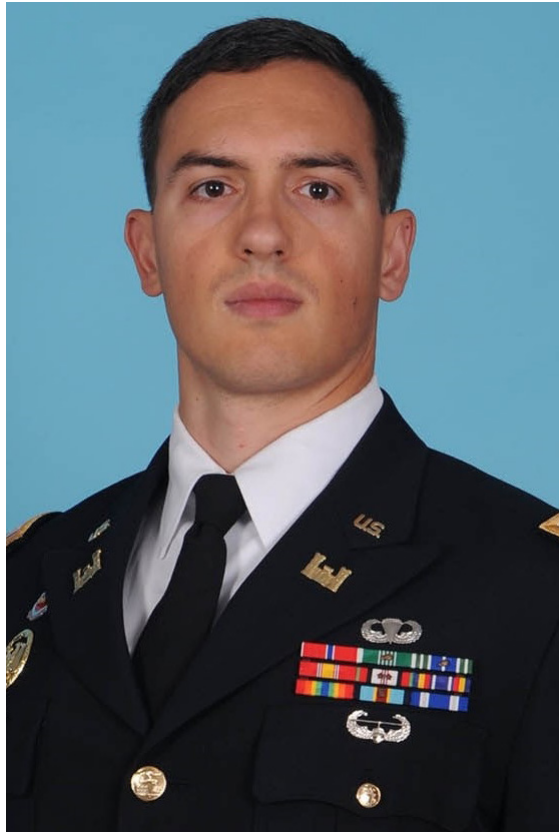
“Having seen the impact of disease first hand, I made it my life’s mission to serve others by helping to improve the quality of life for those without that availability.”

Searching for a greater purpose after the loss of her father, Megan, a first generation college student, moved to Thailand and began working in a hospital with the Red Cross while her husband was deployed. Immersing herself in Thai culture, she saw the burden that disease and lack of resources has on communities. Returning home, Megan worked tirelessly to gain knowledge and expertise by completing her undergraduate degree from San Diego State University, volunteering with public health efforts in Cambodia, Mexico, Peru, and the United States, and working with the Department of Defense HIV Prevention Program in an effort to prepare for a career in public health. Throughout her education, her husband and the Naval Special Warfare community have inspired her immensely. Channeling the resiliency that comes from being a part of the NSW community as well as the lessons she learned growing up in Flint, MI, Megan has chosen her own path to serve others by working to improve quality of life for people worldwide.

After completing her Masters in Global Health from University of Washington, Megan will continue her line of service by working with the Department of Defense assisting in their efforts fighting the global threat of diseases that plague developing nations where our military members serve. She is humbled and honored to be a member of the NSW community and to utilize the lessons of resiliency and service that she has learned from them to protect the health of the most vulnerable among us and of those who serve.

THOMAS MANGAN

U.S. Army | Massachusetts Institute of Technology | Master of Business Administration | SM, Mechanical Engineering



“Experiencing the shortfalls in our energy systems and the dangers of energy dependency, drives me to lead teams in developing innovative energy solutions.”

Tom felt the draw of the military from his youth, inspired by the service of every generation since his family arrived in the United States. He aspired to contribute to that legacy and never looked back. Over seven years as an Army engineer, he deployed twice to Afghanistan and once to Korea. Nothing was more fulfilling than working with others to accomplish impossible tasks. From Germany to Afghanistan, leading and building those teams formed the core of his military experience. Tom plans to take his lessons in team building from the army to his civilian career. There he will continue leading teams and strive to tackle challenging problems to improve society.

Tom's experiences, especially as a platoon leader and base engineer in Afghanistan, laid bare the shortfalls of our current energy systems and infrastructure. Energy, from fuel distribution to battery capacity was the most limiting factor in many operations. He witnessed the negative impacts of energy dependency when a VBIED targeted fuel trucks at the entrance to his FOB. Any reduction in fuel dependency would have saved millions of dollars, reduced the risk to human life, and increased security.

Practical experience drives his desire to develop immediate and affordable energy solutions. At MIT, Tom will study the interaction of energy storage, regeneration, and use in systems across multiple scales while pursuing his SM in mechanical engineering and MBA. After his studies, Tom aims to make an impact as a leader developing innovative energy solutions for energy generation and infrastructure.

HEATH MCCLUNG

U.S. Army | University of Missouri - St. Louis | B.S., Engineering



“The Army taught me to fight for my brothers, but my education allows me to now fight for hope, recovery, and change for patients with prosthetic and orthotic needs.”

Inspired by the books, biographies, and films about U.S. service men and women throughout American conflict, Heath enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2010. After completing Infantry and Airborne training, Heath was assigned to the Army's 10th Mountain Division where he worked in the Division Protocol Office before deploying to Afghanistan in 2011 with Attack Company, 1-32 “Chosin” Infantry Regiment.

Months of intense combat in the Arghandab River Valley did not prepare him for the morning of July 24th, 2011 when he and a team member were both severely injured by a command-detonated improvised explosive device. For the next thirteen months, Heath lived in the only VA active-duty rehabilitation ward, having more than a dozen surgeries and continuous physical rehabilitation in an attempt to save a badly damaged left leg. Ultimately after three years of limb salvage attempts, an above-knee amputation became the only option left. Heath credits the positive attitude, perseverance, and adaptation instilled from both combat and trauma in making this life-altering decision easy.

Fascinated with prosthetic technology and their current limitations, Heath is pursuing a Mechanical Engineering degree through the Joint Engineering Program between University of Missouri-St. Louis/Washington University. Eventually, he plans on pursuing his Master's degree in Prosthetics and Orthotics. By combining experience and education, Heath is determined to help patients in their own rehabilitation process as well as solving problems like socket fitment issues and affordable prosthetic technology that affect the daily lives of amputees around the world.

AUSTIN MCKINNEY

U.S. Air Force | Harvard University | Master of Business Administration



“Generations of Americans before us sacrificed everything to build today’s safe and prosperous world. Our generation has a duty to preserve national security through international cooperation.”

Following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Austin's passion for military service was deeply held from a young age. Six years in the U.S. Air Force across four continents taught him more about life and the world than he ever dreamed possible. In addition to a profound admiration for all Americans who serve, Austin learned the indispensable role that the United States plays in ensuring global peace and prosperity.

Through his training in the Air Force, Austin learned Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese to become a Regional Affairs Strategist for Latin America. He served at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá to advance bilateral relations with the Colombian military. He also deployed with a humanitarian assistance mission in Honduras to build an elementary school and provide medical care to rural communities. In these roles, Austin saw firsthand how U.S. Government agencies and the military work together to formulate and implement American foreign policy.

After his MBA studies in finance, investment, and commerce, Austin aspires to serve in the U.S. State Department's Foreign Service to advance international economic policy. Outside of school, Austin continues his passion for the military and community development through serving in the Air Force Reserve and the Board of Advisors for the YMCA of Boston's Chinatown. Austin's long-term objective is to be a senior leader in government for foreign policy. He aims to promote American values and international cooperation to guarantee security and prosperity for all.

ZACHARY MEADE

U.S. Air Force | University of Nebraska | B.S., Electrical Engineering



“Serving alongside the most courageous and selfless individuals, I found myself desiring to give back to the military community. As a physician-scientist I will improve the lives of wounded veterans.”

Joining the Army at the age of seventeen, Zachary has always placed others before himself. As an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician in the Army he gained an understanding and appreciation for life that he had previously taken for granted. After leaving active duty, he aims to create a career that puts veterans first.

Upon arrival to Nebraska, Zachary enrolled at University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Electrical Engineering program, and simultaneously began volunteering as an Emergency Medical Technician and firefighter. Through these experiences, he fell in love with healthcare, and Zachary focused his attention on bridging the gap between engineering and medicine. As a research assistant with the Biomechanics Department at the University of Nebraska, Zachary is working on a project to improve lower-limb prosthetic devices. In addition to his academics, Zachary continued service to his country by enlisting in the Nebraska Air Force National Guard where he still serves as an EOD Technician. He is also the president of the Student Veteran Organization where he assists veterans transitioning from active duty. His goal is to obtain an MD/PhD to pursue a clinical-based research career that is focused on improving the lives of veterans who suffer from debilitating wounds.

KYLE MILLIKEN

U.S. Navy | The College of William & Mary | Master of Business Administration



“Special Operations is all about team. Part of being at my best as a leader is finding ways to make those around me better.”

Growing up in Maine, Kyle loved the competitive nature, teamwork, and group success involved in sports. He competed in Division 1 track and field at the University of Connecticut, where he earned a spot as a walk-on. Planning to enlist in the military post-graduation, Kyle saw the demanding training and exceptional capability of the SEAL community as the place where he had the opportunity to combine his love of competition and teamwork with his desire to make a positive impact on the world. While sitting with a Navy recruiter during his senior year to determine his enlistment date, he watched on television as two planes struck the World Trade Center towers. Nothing more was needed to steel his resolve to become a Navy SEAL.

Kyle served in East Coast-based Naval Special Warfare Units throughout his career. As a Senior Chief Petty Officer, he spent the last nine years at Naval Special Warfare Development Group deploying numerous times in support of a Joint Task Force conducting overseas contingency operations.

On May 5, 2017, Kyle was killed during a combat operation in East Africa. Throughout his service, Kyle earned a multitude of personal and unit awards including five Bronze Stars with valor for actions in both Iraq and Afghanistan and a Silver Star (posthumously) for heroic actions in combat. As a team leader, he recognized that positively influencing a culture inspired by open communication, competitiveness, and efficiency maximized the performance of those around him. He had aspirations of combining his battlefield experience with the leadership and management skills of his MBA education to mentor future SEAL leaders while continuing his service within the Naval Special Warfare community.

Kyle was an amazing father, husband, son, brother, and friend, whose passion for life was contagious. He is survived by his wife, two children, father, mother, brother, and countless other family, friends and teammates. He was the cornerstone of his family, friends, and team and will be profoundly missed.

Kyle's legacy is one that his fellow Tillman Scholars carry forward with pride and honor.

CHRISTINE MOTT

U.S. Air Force | Northern Arizona University | Ph.D., Forestry



“The military showed me that everything in the world is connected. As a scientist, I want to explore those connections to repair and restore hope for our natural world.”

Chrissy entered the Air Force as a 17-year old cadet, intending to be a pilot or a flight surgeon. She completed a degree in biology in 2004, but decided to pursue the leadership opportunities presented by a career in aircraft maintenance over the chance to fly. Throughout 12 years of active duty service, Chrissy encountered a multitude of new ideas and cultures around the world.

Working in aircraft maintenance and information operations during two deployments allowed her to understand a larger, strategic picture and to identify the pieces required to solve interconnected issues. She learned to connect discrete ideas into a framework of actionable information, a skillset that is also valuable to scientific discovery. As she began to see patterns and connections between people, places, and things in various regions of the world, she also observed that humans have significantly impacted a number of sensitive ecosystems through conflict and modern conveniences.

When given the opportunity to teach biology at the Air Force Academy, Chrissy realized that her military skills could translate to solving problems in the natural world. Now, after taking a year off to work in the civilian sector and travel to new places, she is pursuing a Ph.D. in Forestry at Northern Arizona University while continuing to serve in the Air Force Reserve. Her ultimate goal is to understand the impact of invertebrates on forest restoration, and to use science to advance public policy and education to improve the health of forest habitats around the world.

LAURA MOYE

Military Spouse | University of Illinois at Chicago | Ph.D., Neuroscience



“My commitment to neuroscience research and encouraging minorities to pursue higher education, stems from the belief that diversity promotes growth, discoveries, and develops more effective drugs for disease.”

As the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, Laura knew first-hand the importance of serving her family and community. She grew up translating for others and helping her community, all while investing in her own education. As the first in her family to graduate high school and then college, Laura prioritizes serving underrepresented minorities, especially those in STEM. Between advocating for Latinas during her academic career or volunteering to translate letters for charity, Laura is inspired by the way education can promote growth.

Her commitment to help is evident through her dedication to neuroscience research. Interested in neuropsychiatric disease, Laura graduated with a degree in Neuroscience and Spanish. She chose to pursue neuroscience research because she wanted to better understand the brain and to develop safer, more effective therapeutics for patients. As a PhD candidate, Laura became interested in helping patients who suffered from traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). Currently, Laura is developing a new model of post-traumatic headache, a migraine-like pain which commonly occurs after a mild TBI. She is exploring a new drug target for these mTBI-induced headaches and aims to better serve patients who have suffered from a mTBI.

After completing her PhD, Laura plans on applying her skills and knowledge to the military. With the support from her wife, she intends on establishing a scientific career as a naval scientist, where she can be at the forefront of scientific research, be a main contributor in developing next-generation medicine and be a role model for women.

MICHAEL NELSON

U.S. Marine Corps | The Ohio State University | Ph.D., Educational Studies



“As an education professor, I hope to equip teachers and students with 21st-century skills like digital literacy, allowing our nation’s young people to succeed and contribute in a democratic society.”

The day after his 18th birthday and high school graduation in 2004, Mike boarded a plane for MCRD San Diego, where he would become a U.S. Marine. Mike was the first member of his immediate or extended family to serve in the military since the 1950s, but during his final year of high school he felt a call to serve his country, pushing him to enlist in the Marine Corps Reserves.

Upon graduating from recruit training, Mike began classes at the University of Michigan, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in education. After graduation, however, he delayed the job search as his unit deployed to Iraq. In Iraq, Mike served as a squad leader in a combat engineer platoon which completed tasks like conducting route reconnaissance and designing and building fighting positions. Mike enjoyed mentoring young Marines, but he also saw the damage wrought by war and the extent of the privilege which is afforded to citizens of the United States.

Mike’s experience as a deployed Marine taught him resilience, leadership skills, and an empathetic perspective that he carried with him as he completed a master’s degree while working as an English teacher, debate coach, and wrestling coach. Now, as a Ph.D. student focusing on learning technologies at The Ohio State University, Mike hopes to train the next generation of teachers and research ways to help them and their students build upon their digital literacy so today’s kids can become successful adults in the 21st century.

RYANNE NOSS

Military Spouse | Edward via College of Osteopathic Medicine | Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine



“Becoming a doctor will be my way of paying it forward for the countless blessings we have received during my husband’s wartime injury and continued recovery.”

RyAnne, a native of Alabama, married SFC Scot Noss, a native of Oregon, in August 2003 and the couple settled near Fort Benning, GA where Scot was stationed with the 3rd Ranger Battalion. Shortly after their marriage, RyAnne began her Ph.D. studies in Chemical Engineering at Auburn University. However, on February 17, 2007, life for this young couple changed forever when Scot was severely injured in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Scot suffered from a traumatic brain injury that left him minimally conscious and 100% dependent on daily living activities. RyAnne immediately went to her husband's bedside putting her studies on hold. Their journey took them to three different hospitals in three different states, where RyAnne enrolled Scot in several experimental treatments for severe disorders of consciousness. RyAnne became an advocate for her husband's health care and rehabilitation making sure that her husband and other severely injured warriors receive every chance to reach their maximum rehabilitation potential. RyAnne returned to Auburn University winter semester 2009 to complete her dissertation titled "The Rational Design of Recognitive Polymeric Networks for Sensing Applications." Finally in 2010, Scot and RyAnne moved to Trussville, AL to a beautiful, fully handicap accessible home built by Homes For Our Troops.

Inspired by her husband's continued fortitude to keep fighting during his recovery, RyAnne is pursuing a medical degree to continue to fight and care for our nation's most precious treasures: our veterans and members of the Armed Forces.

ESTER RAHA NYAGGAH

U.S. Navy | University of Southern California | Master of Social Work



“Trauma survivors need safe spaces where they can come as they are and heal their wounds, and it is my hope as a social worker to help create those spaces.”

Motivated by a deep desire to be part of something greater than herself, Ester Raha joined the U.S. Navy at 17 and served for four years as part of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her enlistment included a deployment on board the USS Nimitz to the Persian Gulf, where she met people from various cultural backgrounds. Her interactions with them piqued her interest in studying other cultures and understanding the social, economic and political forces that shape people's experiences. This led her to pursue a bachelor's degree in Comparative Ethnic Studies at Columbia University.

While at Columbia, Ester continued her service to her local community by training to become a mediator and mediated court-referred cases. Within her campus community, she served as part of the campus committee that adjudicates cases of alleged student sexual misconduct. After graduating, Ester volunteered as a crisis counselor and victim advocate for survivors of sexual violence. She found this service challenging yet fulfilling, and she realized how great a need there was for sexual assault survivors to find and receive support within their community. This, coupled with her military service and keen awareness of the prevalence of military sexual trauma, led her to pursue a Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Southern California. Ester chose the military social work concentration in hopes of incorporating her military and civilian experiences to serve and support trauma survivors and empower them to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

HAROLD PENSON

U.S. Army | University of Chicago | Master of Business Administration



“Deploying to Afghanistan showed me the lack of options some people have. Now, I want to use the opportunity afforded me to give better options to others through investing.”

Harold's call to serve came two years after he graduated from Stanford University and started a finance career. At the time, the Global War on Terror was turning out to be an enduring effort. Harold grew uncomfortable knowing others risked their lives for his safety. Additionally, being a former collegiate wrestler, he wanted to be challenged mentally and physically. So in 2005, he enlisted in the U.S. Army to serve as a Green Beret medic and help eliminate America's enemies while providing medical aid to injured soldiers.

As a Green Beret, Harold witnessed the difficult circumstances that caused some people to pick up arms. Once, he treated a former-Taliban member who was mortally wounded by the Taliban for joining a U.S.-backed security force. Prior to the war, this man farmed for a living. When conflict eroded the economics of farming, he joined the Taliban to feed his family and keep them safe. When U.S. forces gained ground, he quit the Taliban and joined the local security force. To Harold, this man was not truly evil; he merely had to make difficult decisions given a set of bad options.

Experiences such as this taught Harold that people in fragile states need real economic opportunities. As he pursues an MBA at the University of Chicago, his goal is to become a socially-impactful venture capitalist, bringing startup funding and managerial expertise to businesses in emerging markets and underserved communities that most investors avoid.

JOSHUA PERICLES

U.S. Army | University of South Florida | B.S., Computer Engineering



“Everytime I see the US Flag, I am reminded of the ideals it represents and the freedoms that were won and preserved by those who defended it.”

With a strong desire to serve, Joshua enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2006. After successfully completing Special Forces Assessment and Selection, he attended the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Special Forces Qualification Course where he earned his Green Beret. During his service, he deployed to South America and Afghanistan where he conducted missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During his deployments, he worked with many US Partner Nation Forces and saw first-hand the difference the United States can make in the lives of people who are being targeted and oppressed by militant forces. Seeing the sacrifices made by his fellow warfighters, he was reminded of the courage it takes to serve, and the freedoms these acts of selflessness provide our Nation. After serving over eight years on Active Duty, Joshua decided to separate from the Army and pursue a degree in Engineering.

Wanting to continue to work in an environment where he would be presented with difficult problems in dynamic situations, Joshua found himself pursuing a career with NASA as an engineer. It was important for him to serve within an organization whose mission was to ultimately benefit others. After being selected for a NASA co-op program, he is currently working with aerospace engineers while completing a B.S. in Computer Engineering. He hopes to work on human spaceflight projects and eventually pursue a graduate degree in Aerospace Engineering.

DAVE PRAKASH

U.S. Air Force | Stanford University | M.S., Management



“Don’t let who you are limit what you can do; don’t let what you do limit who you can be.”

Dave was a medical student living in Washington, D.C. when he experienced the attacks of 9/11. As an immigrant from India, the terrorist attacks on his adopted country resonated deeply. He resigned from his medical residency training to commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Force. Dave entered pilot training to serve in a combat role and became a bomber pilot.

Dave served in the B-52. His unique perspective as aviator and physician served him well as an operational test pilot. Dave tested new weapons and systems that increased the lethality of the venerable bomber. As a flight surgeon, he never lost sight of the human element as he cared for the same people that served beside him. He fought to improve the human-machine interface in future bomber platforms and initiated a program to modernize B-52 ejection seats that will save lives and reduce life-cycle costs.

Dave is attending Stanford's Graduate School of Business in order to help build Parallax Enterprises, a company that will save lives by helping surgeons think more like pilots by applying aviation safety principles and electronic checklists in the operating room. After succeeding in the private sector, Dave hopes to return to government service as an Air Force undersecretary for leadership and force development.

CHRISTOPHER PUCKETT

U.S. Air Force | UCLA | M.S., Systems Engineering



“As a military pilot, my mission is to deliver essentials to those in need—anytime, anywhere. My goal is to continue to make that positive impact on a global scale.”

From a young age, Chris was passionate about two things: flying and military service. As a son and grandson of military veterans, he was inspired by the stories of his grandfather's service during the Korean War, the immense survival knowledge of his father from the jungles of Central America, and the undaunted compassion of his mother saving lives as an Army nurse. These stories of camaraderie, leadership, adventure, and a passion to help others led him and his sister to take oath to serve in the U.S. Air Force.

Chris' passion of the skies led him to obtain his private pilot license in high school and to pursue a career in aviation. After graduating from Duke University and commissioning from ROTC, Chris attended pilot training at Columbus Air Force Base. Upon completion of the program, he was assigned to fly the C-17 Globemaster III at McGuire Air Force Base. Chris has delivered over 5 million pounds of cargo, provided aeromedical evacuation for injured troops, and logged over 100 hours of combat flying to support high visibility Presidential, Department of Defense, and humanitarian relief in over 27 countries.

Upon completion of his Master's degree in Systems Engineering from UCLA, Chris wants to become a test pilot and make positive advancements in the aviation community by designing and integrating safer and more environmentally sustainable systems. He also wants to become a certified flight instructor and to create a program to teach a new generation of future pilots and leaders.

ANDREW QUALY

U.S. Army | University of St. Thomas | Master of Social Work



“As a combat veteran, I know what it takes to make the transition from soldier to citizen. I want to help other veterans make it all the way home.”

Andrew's journey began as he watched the events of 9/11 unfold in a high school classroom in Shakopee, Minnesota. Feeling compelled to serve his country, Andrew ultimately chose to forgo a shot at playing hockey at the collegiate level after high school and instead enlisted in the U.S. Army. After completing infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia in 2004, Andrew was deployed to Iraq in 2006. While deployed, his unit was tasked with missions that included convoy escort, route clearance, Quick Reaction Force, and patrols. About six months into his deployment, Andrew and two of his comrades were badly injured when their vehicle was hit and destroyed while on a routine mission.

Andrew would spend seven months recovering from his injuries at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington DC. His injuries included an open head wound and Traumatic Brain Injury, a shattered right leg from the knee down, and multiple cuts with glass and other miscellaneous shrapnel abrasions. Unable to return to his unit, Andrew returned to Minnesota where he continued his rehab, both physically and mentally.

Having experienced the challenges of reintegration, Andrew understands what it takes to be successful in the transition from soldier to civilian. As a combat veteran, Andrew understands the importance of being a part of a team, and has incorporated this concept into his study of psychology and the pursuit of his masters degree in clinical social work in order to help other veterans make a successful transition from military to civilian life.

PATRICK ROBINSON

U.S. Army | Stanford University | Master of Business Administration



“How we treat our veterans influences the caliber and number of people who choose to serve in our military.”

For Patrick's family, military service is tradition. His father, grandfather, three uncles, aunt, great-uncle, and two cousins have all served on active duty. How our nation treats its veterans influences the caliber and number of people who serve in our military, but more personally, Patrick knows how veterans are treated is how his family is treated.

Patrick began his active duty career as an Army lawyer in February of 2009. He served as a legal assistance attorney, military prosecutor, deployed operations command legal advisor, military defense counsel, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney. Beginning in June of 2015, Patrick pushed to promote the care of veterans in the criminal justice system. While serving as a federal prosecutor, he led the creation of a Veterans Treatment Court on Fort Hood to connect justice-involved veterans to mentorship and treatment in lieu of incarceration and conviction.

This court, the first treatment court on a military installation, grew out of Patrick's experience with the military community, observations of the mental health challenges faced by many defendants, successes and failures to effect change within the military, and a desire to support efforts to move from the default of incarceration to more effective criminal justice strategies. Patrick seeks to build on these efforts through the MBA program at Stanford by developing a social venture that seeks out veterans in the justice system who have mental health challenges and helps those veterans get back on their feet and reclaim their honor.

JARROD ROMINE

U.S. Marine Corps | Texas A&M University | B.A., Political Science



“Having seen the diversity of what the world has to offer, with the right training, I want to be the one to bring good medicine to bad places.”

Jarrold served over eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps, deploying four times during that period, including in Special Operations with 1st and 2nd Raider Battalions, with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, and with 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company. Jarrold's military service included training advising and assisting numerous foreign military units, being designated an Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist, and being awarded the Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with bronze "V" for action taken during combat operations in Afghanistan.

At Texas A&M, Jarrold is pursuing a B.A. in Political Science focusing on international politics and diplomacy, along with pre-med and a minor in public health. He also works with the Veterans Resource and Support Center and serves as the Campus Program Coordinator for Warrior Scholar Project. In addition, Jarrold is a General Committee Member with the 62nd Student Conference On National Affairs (SCONA) and a member of the Texas A&M Premedical Society.

After graduation, he intends to pursue graduate studies in International Affairs as well as medical school in order to give back through a career in Emergency Medicine. As a physician, he wants to bring skill and experience to providing medical care to patients in environments where it might otherwise not be available.

KEIDRICK ROY

U.S. Air Force | Harvard University | Ph.D., American Studies



“Although I leave my uniform behind, I will never leave the service.”

After graduating from the United States Air Force Academy in 2009 and earning his Master's degree in 2010, Keidrick served in the Air Force nuclear operations career field as a missile combat crew commander, flight commander, and nuclear procedures evaluator. In 2015, he returned to the Air Force Academy, where he has been teaching English as an active duty Captain.

As an instructor at a military institution, Keidrick became interested in the civil-military divide in higher education. In 2017, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded him a grant to lead a project entitled “Beyond Black and Blue: Race and the Future of Civil-Military Relations,” which brought together students and professors from civilian liberal arts colleges, the Air Force Academy, and West Point to discuss strategies for teaching students about race and ethnicity within and across their institutions.

The relationships he developed with students and faculty around the country while leading efforts such as these helped him to cultivate stronger connections between teaching and service in both military and civilian contexts. Keidrick is now entering Harvard University to pursue a doctoral degree in American Studies, an interdisciplinary program in which he will explore the connections among American literature, religion, and political philosophy. After earning his Ph.D., Keidrick plans to continue the teaching, research, and service he began as a junior officer. He will transition from carrying nuclear launch codes to decoding the human condition at the intersection of race, literature, and public policy.

RYAN SCHMOLL

U.S. Air Force | University of Arizona | Doctor of Medicine



“The preservation of freedom inspired my service to our country. I apply the same principle in medicine to empower patients to live passionately according to their values.”

Growing up in a military family, Ryan was taught from a young age the significance of service before self. At 18 he started his military journey at the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he learned Arabic and the importance of teamwork and leadership. After graduating, Ryan volunteered for an assignment to Iraq, managing personal security teams for Iraqi politicians. Upon returning stateside, he performed nuclear alert duties as a launch control commander and instructed junior commanders to ensure safe and secure operations with ICBMs. He then went on to work with NSA and Air Force Space Command assets to support counter terrorism operations in Afghanistan and Southwest Asia.

Throughout his time in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Southwest Asia, Ryan observed a common thread: the power of medicine to de-escalate violence and improve relationships within the communities served. Moved by military physicians' ability to transform the communities they served, he decided to pursue a career in medicine.

Now a second year medical student, Ryan is keen to apply the lessons he learned in the military to helping communities closer to home. His research efforts are focused on non-opioid pain relief, healthcare record management and security, and improving access to telemedicine. By leveraging his big data experience from the NSA, Ryan is working hard to develop a more secure way to manage healthcare records in a way that will also personalize patient care. He also hopes his work with non-opioid pain treatment will someday help reduce opioid dependence throughout the United States.

KIM SHAUGHNESSY

U.S. Navy | Villanova University | DNP, Health Systems Leadership



“Our servicewomen and veterans have sacrificed so much for our country. They deserve the best healthcare we can offer them - I want to ensure they receive it.”

Growing up in a small town outside of Boston, Kim watched her parents, a career firefighter and a nurse, devote their lives to helping others. Inspired by their example, Kim attended Villanova University on an ROTC scholarship and was subsequently commissioned as a Navy Nurse. Dedicated to service, she spent her collegiate years volunteering as an EMT with a local fire department, then began her career working in the ICU of a major military medical center. As an ICU nurse, and later an obstetric nurse, she recognized disparities in health outcomes among vulnerable military women and veterans, the risk of which has grown through 16 years of war. She felt called to focus on the healthcare needs of these women, ultimately becoming a Certified Nurse Midwife.

In 2011, while she was stationed in Okinawa, the Great East Japan Earthquake unleashed a savage tsunami. A thousand miles south of the epicenter, Kim's mettle was tested as she and her team successfully managed 100 pregnant evacuees and family members; coordinating their care, delivering their babies, and facilitating their return to the United States. “There was so much devastation, sadness, and fear,” said Kim. “Being able to ease the burden and anxiety for these military families who experienced this tragedy was one of the proudest moments of my career.”

Still on active duty, Kim is pursuing her Doctor of Nursing Practice, planning to utilize this, along with her expertise in women's health, to effect change in women's health policy in order to improve services and reduce disparities across the military, and through partnerships with the Veterans' Administration.

MATTHEW SHERLAW

U.S. Army | University of the Incarnate Word | B.S., Rehabilitative Science



“As veterans, service is part of our identity. With the right tools, there is no limit to how our generation of veterans can shape the future.”

Matthew joined the Army from foster-care to give back to the community he owed so much. While serving as a paratrooper in the 82nd airborne division, his neighbor and classmate from high school was paralyzed overseas by an IED. It was at his welcome home ceremony in Vermont that Matthew was motivated to volunteer for EOD training.

Matthew deployed to Afghanistan with the humbling mission of combating the number-one killer on the battlefield: the IED. He was soon confronted with the stark realities and human costs of war, finding himself providing medical care to injured teammates and Afghan soldiers. It was during these experiences that he began to feel drawn to medicine. Later, when his own vehicle was struck by an IED, he was treated by military physicians and saw the profound impact they made in their patient's time of need. This solidified his resolve to become a physician himself.

Motivated by his comrade's injuries on the battlefield, he began studying rehabilitative science. Continuing to combat the long lasting effects of IEDs on veterans' health will be a cornerstone of Matthew's career. While applying to medical school, he continues to volunteer at the VA, where he hopes to serve as a physician in the future. He believes many of the challenges facing the VA could be better navigated if more veterans were physicians and leaders within the system. Matthew is thoroughly convinced that differences are made one person at a time. He works hard every day to become that person.

RICHARD SHORE

U.S. Air Force | Indiana University | M.S., Physician Assistant Studies



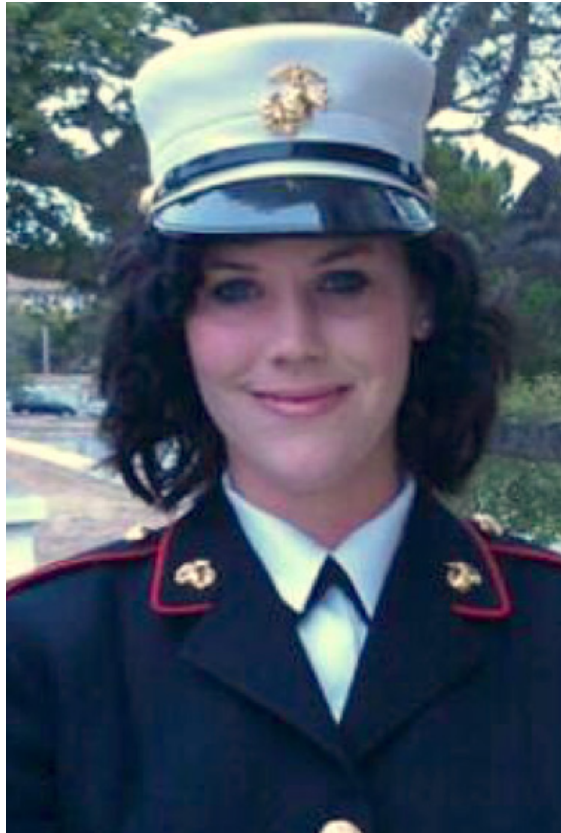
“I will always endeavor to be worthy of the PJ creed: These things we do, That Others May Live.”

After numerous deployments and over a decade as an elite Air Force Pararescueman, it would have been easy for Rick to become numb to the extensive pain and suffering he saw. Rather than letting the tragic and intense lessons learned harden his heart, he used them to hone his mind and his life's mission: create a positive difference in the lives he touches, whether it is providing medical care, teaching others, or just being a compassionate ear to a stranger.

Rick's military career began when he left college, following the tragic events of 9/11. His desire to help others led him to enlist and begin the long and arduous journey of becoming a Pararescueman. He hoped the skills he would gain in training would help in the immediate need of ensuring our country's safety. Over the course of his service, Rick was involved in operations as varied as life flight evacuations of critically wounded children to providing life-saving treatments of wounded soldiers on the ground amid ongoing combat operations. These experiences in combat rescue instilled in him a love of medicine and desire to further his knowledge to become the best possible provider. After being medically separated from the Air Force, Rick chose to return to school to become a Physician Assistant. He plans to work in Veterans Affairs so that he can continue to care for the men and women who have served this country.

CRISTINE STARKE

U.S. Marine Corps | Georgetown University | B.A., International Affairs



“I’ve experienced the inefficiencies of rebuilding in a post-conflict or war zone. I hope to sustain peace by advising a more effective and efficient rebuilding process.”

Originally interested in the combination of service and international experience, Cristine enlisted in the Marine Corps to become a linguist before she graduated high school. After becoming proficient in Arabic, Cristine deployed to the Horn of Africa where her mission was primarily counterterrorism in Somalia. There she witnessed a tension between the dozens of counterparts on the ground and misunderstanding, not between Arabic and English speakers, but between various U.S. agencies of different specialties. Each with their own set of acronyms, overlapping goals, and oftentimes duplicity of mission, competing agencies negatively affected the impact of U.S. assistance in the region. While forward deployed, Cristine applied to Georgetown in hopes of affecting change in this area in a different capacity than a junior enlisted Marine.

Since coming to Georgetown, Cristine has seen further misunderstanding between these two worlds, development and defense, but from the academic perspective. For this reason, Cristine became the President of the Student Veteran’s Association where she strives to bridge the civilian-military divide on campus. She hopes to continue to bridge this divide in the future through diplomatic means, either serving at the U.S. Agency for International Development or at a non-governmental organization. With her experience and exposure, she hopes to become a valuable asset on the ground in post-conflict or war-afflicted states. After graduation, Cristine hopes to continue on to a Master’s Degree in International Development to better serve her country.

SCOTT SWISHER

U.S. Army | Fordham University | Ph.D., Contemporary Learning & Interdisciplinary Research



“Education is the foundation on which a just and equitable society is built. I feel obliged to help strengthen that foundation by working to make it more inclusive.”

Scott honorably served in U.S. Army for four years. During his service, he supported airborne operations for elite units as a parachute rigger. In 2003, he deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While serving in Afghanistan, Scott became increasingly aware of the essential role that education plays within a given society. He was particularly struck by how the lack of equal access to education seemed to contribute to the generational poverty and political instability in the region.

After separating from the Army in 2004, Scott studied at Montana State University where he double majored in English Literature and Philosophy. He then pursued an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language at Gonzaga University. Scott then taught at Montana State University-Billings for a year, before volunteering for the Peace Corps. From 2012-2014, he served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kukes, Albania, where he taught English at a regional university and worked to improve the capacity of local Albanian teachers.

The values of persistence, selfless service, and integrity that the Army instilled in Scott more than a decade ago are still foundational to his work today. As a Ph.D. student in Contemporary Learning and Interdisciplinary Research, Scott's research is focused on cultivating greater access to and equity within U.S. universities and colleges. As an educator, Scott strives to share his knowledge and experiences with his students to help them achieve their full potential.

LAURA TOLVER

U.S. Marine Corps | Rutgers University | DNP, Adult- Gerontology



“Good or bad, life experience in any capacity is beneficial. We must learn to stop looking at undesirable experiences negatively ... if you learned from a situation, consider it tuition.”

Laura's grandmother attained a Master's in Nursing at a time when African-Americans couldn't practice in most areas and her grandfather achieved a bachelor's in social work then worked as a chef on a train to put himself through medical school. Stories of both their struggles taught Laura the value of education and the hard work it takes to accomplish your goals. Not long after losing her mother, Laura joined the U.S. Marine Corps, seeking direction on financing her education. In time, she earned the respect of her superiors and peers as a Marine. She was named recruit training honor graduate, received meritorious masts, and was awarded Squadron Marine of the Quarter.

One night, sleeping in her barracks room, Laura was attacked. Raped, shamed, and inevitably blamed, her life was forever transformed. Labeled a liar, and made the subject of ridicule among her peers, she was broken. Shortly thereafter, her father suffered an anoxic brain injury and Laura accepted an honorable discharge that she might aid in his care. She went on to complete her first bachelor's, then another accelerated bachelor's, both with honors. All the while she suffered in silence. Now, she is using her story to inspire evolution in others, citing her growth and successes as “the harvest of her life's trials.” As a nurse, Laura uses her practice to encourage others to recognize happiness, peace, and success as choices, not feelings. As she embarks on her journey to becoming a nurse practitioner in Rutgers Doctorate of Nursing program, Laura leans heavily on the principle of Patch Adams: “You treat a disease, you win, you lose. You treat a person, I guarantee you, you'll win, no matter what the outcome.”

PAUL WADE

U.S. Army | University of Missouri | Juris Doctor



“Every life has value, and giving every person the ability to be valuable should be our goal.”

Paul is part of a family with a long line of service to the United States. 9/11 happened when Paul was in college, and he knew he wanted to serve in some way following those events. As the United States invaded Iraq, Paul enlisted to become an infantryman so he could serve his country on the front lines of the war on terror.

Paul deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan as both an enlistedman and then as an officer. Paul's last two deployments were to the eastern part of Afghanistan, where he worked very closely with Afghan police and army. While working with Afghans, Paul noticed that a functioning economy stopped terror more effectively than any bullet could. A functioning economy relied upon the assurance of safety, the free flow of money, and the effectiveness of law. Paul saw firsthand how the poor were able to send their children to schools that would forever alter their ability to impact their community and the world. He saw the way a good job with prospects of a better life made people reject insurgent movements promising less economic growth.

Paul's work with Afghans has shown him the importance of trade, investment, and American companies moving overseas. Paul received his MBA with a focus in international business while serving in the military and left the Army after 12 years to pursue his Juris Doctor at the University of Missouri in order to help America become successful in growing business outside its shores.

LANDON WILSON

U.S. Navy | University of Maryland | B.A., English & Education



“Embracing the Navy Core Values of honor, courage, & commitment gave me the means to become who I am today, unapologetically.”

In his quest to contribute to something bigger than himself, Landon joined the U.S. Navy in 2011. Serving as a Cryptologist, Landon was able to build a true sense of leadership and pride in the uniform he wore and the service he represented. Supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, he deployed to Afghanistan in 2013, supervising a team of joint international civilians and service members. Ultimately, Landon was discharged from the United States military for being transgender.

Taking this experience with him, and knowing there were thousands of transgender service members also serving in silence, Landon entered into LGBTQ+ advocacy in 2013, becoming a Board Member for SPARTA, an organization which works to implement policy change and inclusion for transgender and gender non-conforming service members. In 2015, Landon began pursuing his formal education with the goal to teach English to high school students.

For well over a decade, Landon has worked closely with youth who have otherwise been underrepresented in American society, whether it be because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, economic status, or ability. His ultimate passion in life is teaching and learning from youth, in and out of classrooms. He is currently a co-chair for GLSEN Northern Virginia where he works to ensure safe and affirming classrooms for LGBTQ+ students in grades K-12. Currently enrolled at the University of Maryland, Landon hopes to affirm, validate, and empower his future students, showing them that a truly authentic life is possible.