



Student Veterans of America

Summer '24 Newsletter

July 2024 | Issue No.08

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear SVA Chapter Leaders, Members, Donors, Partners, and Supporters,

As summer unfolds, I am filled with immense pride and enthusiasm for the extraordinary efforts of our SVA community. While campuses might be quieter, the energy and dedication of our chapters and National Headquarters are anything but slow. Together, we are laying the groundwork for an incredible 2024-2025 academic year, ensuring that our mission to empower student veterans continues to flourish.

However, as we prepared to send these updates, our nation was rocked by an attack on our democracy. In light of the recent assassination attempt on former President Trump, SVA has joined fellow veteran-serving organizations in condemning political violence. Our united statement declares, "As organizations serving and representing veterans and military families, we are united in condemning political violence of all kinds. Regardless of individual politics, an attack on any candidate for office, elected official, or election official is an attack on all of us. Our strength as a nation lies in our unity, and together, we can uphold the principles of a peaceful and democratic process." SVA remains committed to fostering an environment of respect, support, and empowerment for all. Thank you for standing with us as we navigate these challenging times and continue our vital work.

In June, our Headquarters staff convened for a transformative staff summit, focusing on team-building, implementing our ambitious FY25-29 strategic plan, and orchestrating our move to a new, state-of-the-art office at 655 15th Street NW, in the heart of Washington, D.C. This new location, with its breathtaking views of the White House and National Mall, symbolizes our commitment to being at the forefront of advocacy and support for student veterans, military-connected students, family members, caregivers, and survivors.

Our staff summit also unveiled an innovative curriculum for our upcoming Regional Summits, scheduled for July and August across the nation. These summits are designed to equip current and newly elected chapter leaders and advisors with the essential tools, techniques, and strategies needed to lead successful and sustainable chapters. By focusing on the empowerment and success of student veterans on campus, and introducing a new track for chapter advisors, we are strengthening our chapters' capacity to make a profound impact.

Excitement is building now that registration is open for the 17th Annual NatCon, set for January 2-4, 2025, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. NatCon is more than a conference; it is a celebration of our collective achievements and a launchpad for future initiatives. I encourage you to secure your spot by visiting www.studentveterans.org/natcon as hotel rooms are booking fast.

Advocating for our community remains at the core of our mission. We continue to intensify our efforts to work with policymakers in Washington and beyond to ensure that the needs of student veterans are prioritized. Our research team is driving this advocacy with groundbreaking studies on the unmet needs of student veterans and the campus-level policies that truly make a difference. These insights will guide our efforts and amplify our voice in shaping policies that support our community.

Informed by our research recognizing the importance of information in the decision-making process of transitioning into college and then into a meaningful career, we launched the SVA Advising Center and SVA Career Center earlier this year. These resources offer invaluable support at every stage of the veteran journey. I urge you to explore these tools and leverage them to achieve your goals. Visit www.studentveterans.org to learn more. For our alumni, partners, and supporters, consider telling your story on SVA's Advising Center platform to allow transitioning service members and student veterans to connect with you and learn from your journey.

As we prepare for the year ahead, I am thrilled about the opportunities our new National Headquarters will bring. This move signifies more than just a change in location; it represents our growth and unwavering commitment to excellence. Stay tuned for more updates on our new space and the exciting initiatives it will support.

Thank you for your steadfast support and dedication to our mission. Your contributions and efforts are the bedrock of our success. I look forward to the incredible impact we will make together in the coming year.

Respectfully,

- Jared S. Lyon, National President & CEO

The quarterly newsletter is a place to learn about the behind-the-scenes work of SVA Headquarters, review SVA's most recent programming, shine a light on stellar people and chapters in the community, and remain closely informed on the months ahead. As always, SVA is here to see student veterans to, through, and beyond their higher education journey.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



The infographic is a vertical white panel with a light blue geometric pattern in the background. It features four circular icons: a gear and person, a question mark, two people, and a hand with a speech bubble. At the bottom are the SVA and RTX logos.

ACADEMIC SERVICES AND SUPPORT RESOURCES
Get connected to partners providing specialized resources for your academic journey.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH THIS MAJOR?
Understand the direct connection between the academic program you are pursuing, or interested in, and the careers you can obtain.

SUCCESS COACHING
Meet with a Success Coach for assistance with goal planning, choosing an institution, using your VA benefits and more.

ADVISING CENTER HELP DESK
Have a question or need support that doesn't require a coaching session? Send us a note at advisingcenter@studentveterans.org

Student Veterans of America® (SVA) recently launched its Advising Center, a new resource designed to transform the veteran transition experience. The SVA Advising Center, made possible by a significant contribution by RTX, strengthens a crucial component of SVA's programs, helping transitioning service members and veterans find their path and maximize their higher education benefits.

The Advising Center equips veterans for their transition from military to civilian life with career-focused educational planning. Through resources, including a custom-built, AI-powered Pathway Explorer, veterans can assess their military and civilian experiences, align these with career interests, and identify academic programs for skill enhancement.

In addition to automated tools, the Advising Center provides personalized support from trained Success Coaches. Veterans and transitioning service members can use the center to assess their interests, choose the best educational programs, and engage in peer mentorship to connect with and learn from fellow veterans and industry professionals.

Jared Lyon, National President & CEO of Student Veterans of America, expressed his gratitude and vision for the new center: "We are profoundly grateful for RTX's visionary gift, which is a testament to their longstanding commitment to veterans and their families."

This contribution not only enables the creation of the SVA Advising Center but also strengthens our ongoing efforts to support veterans' educational and career aspirations. RTX has been an instrumental partner in our mission, helping us to expand our services and reach more veterans each year. With this new center, we can provide a continuum of support that empowers our veterans to succeed in higher education and beyond, enhancing their ability to achieve personal and professional success."

"RTX is committed to supporting the women and men who defend and protect freedom and democracy. SVA's new Advising Center is one of the ways our company and employees can help service members and veterans attain their educational goals and achieve long-term success in civilian professions."

- Randy Bumps, Vice President of Global Affairs and Public Relations for RTX

RTX and SVA joined forces in 2012 to help provide military veterans with the resources, support, and advocacy needed to achieve their greatest potential in higher education. With the addition of the Advising Center, SVA and RTX continue to accomplish the mission and vision to act as a catalyst for student veteran success, providing resources and support to, through, and beyond higher education.

RESEARCH

Student Veterans of America's (SVA) National President & CEO, Jared Lyon, and Chief of Staff, Abby Kinch, co-authored and published their recent research paper "The Military Separated Me; You Cannot Connect Me" in the Journal of Veterans Studies.

This paper discusses the use of the term "military-connected" as an umbrella for all who have been in some manner connected to the US Military, the negative impacts of this term, and its conceptual misalignment with the US Department of Defense's classification of veterans as separated.

"The Military Separated Me; You Cannot Connect Me" calls for a reevaluation of the lexicon, and emphasizes the importance of accurate and respectful language in addressing veterans' unique needs and experiences. The Journal of Veterans Studies is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal covering the interdisciplinary, international field of veterans studies, and is a publication of the Veterans Studies Association.

Amid the growing population of the term military-connected to act as an umbrella for all who have been in some manner connected to the US Military, this paper sets within Veteran Critical Theory, with support from Pragmatic Theory, an examination of the linguistic constructs within the veteran, Latin American, and LGBTQIA+ spaces. By juxtaposing these seemingly disparate ecosystems, this paper underscores the need for the veteran space to glean insights from the LGBTQIA+ community's journey in developing an inherently inclusive and adaptable lexicon, thereby fostering an environment that more authentically mirrors the lived experiences and unique exigencies of members.

The paper discusses the negative impact of the term military-connected and its conceptual misalignment with the U.S. Department of Defense's classification of veterans as separated while discussing the severed connection experienced by survivors. It calls for a reevaluation of the lexicon, emphasizing the importance of accurate and respectful language in addressing veterans' unique needs and experiences.



★ JOURNAL OF ★
**VETERANS
STUDIES**

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Alexis Smith

Student Veterans of America Board Member

Originally from Georgia, Alexis Smith is a veteran of the world's finest Navy, where she served for three and a half years on the USS GW Bush as a Master at Arms. She is currently a military spouse married to childhood sweetheart. She recently earned her master's in mass communications with a concentration in broadcast journalism. Smith ultimately wants to make documentaries about marginalized communities and veteran communities and then possibly work in government using these stories to repair the atrocities against those populations. Using the stories she tells, she wants to get laws passed to reform programs affecting veterans.

Smith joined the Navy because she couldn't afford college; school was important in her life. She has always loved learning and has never really stopped; she plans on eventually earning her doctorate. In the Navy, she worked on the security reaction force as a hostage negotiator, did tactical team movements, conducted team building exercises, and was a field training officer. During that time, she learned what it meant to work on a team and to not focus on the mission of self, but the entire collective.

One of her biggest passions now is building a collective-based organization where the focus isn't on the mission for one person, but something that will be for the greater good of everyone and benefit everyone. Additionally, because of her experiences in the military, she carries a focus now on mental health and taking control of mental health by working on coping mechanism, coping strategies, and reintegrating without letting mental health illnesses drive who you are.



STUDENT VETERAN SPOTLIGHT



Jose Ayon

Graduate Student at the University of Southern California

Jose Ayon, a University of Southern California (USC) graduate student and U.S. Army Reserves officer, is a first-generation American and the first in his family to attend a four-year university. Ayon's upbringing in California's capital city, Sacramento, inspired him to become part of the change within his community and led him to pursue an undergraduate degree in political science at the University of California, Berkeley; it was his participation in the JROTC program during his high school years that inspired him to serve as an officer in the U.S. military.

Ayon believes that sharing information about resources such as scholarships, academic and career advising, and benefits is crucial to success and is a value-add to Student Veterans of America's (SVA) mission to support veterans. In the future, he plans to become more involved with the SVA chapter at USC and attend more SVA events such as the 2024 SVA Regional Summit in Southern California.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

REGIONAL SUMMITS

Student Veterans of America (SVA) will be hosting the 2024 Regional Summits in six cities: Dallas, Denver, Atlanta, St. Louis, Boston, and Southern California. Additionally, our partners at Veterans Yoga Project, wear blue: run to remember, and FourBlock will be joining us for this year's Regional Summits.

Attending a Regional Summit is recommended for all current chapter leaders, future chapter leaders, chapter members, and university faculty, staff, and administration involved in the chapter. Whether you are starting a brand new chapter, building on an established one, or maintaining a thriving chapter, Regional Summits offer a variety of sessions that guide chapter leaders and advisors to grow chapter success strategically and navigate the academic year with tools, techniques, and tactics ready for impact.



GET READY FOR REGIONAL SUMMITS 2024

The definitive experience for planning and building a world class Student Veterans of America® (SVA) Chapter.

www.studentveterans.org/regionalsummits

July 18 - 20
Dallas, TX

July 25 - 27
Denver, CO

August 1 - 3
Atlanta, GA

August 8 - 10
St. Louis, MO

August 15 - 17
Boston, MA

August 22 - 24
Southern California

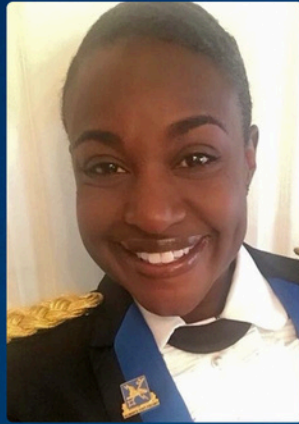
REGISTER TODAY!

SIGN UP TODAY IN MYSVA PORTAL FOR THE REGIONAL SUMMIT CONFERENCE NEAR YOU AT NO COST!

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Student Veterans of America is thrilled to announce the recipients of the 2024-2025 John Edelman Scholars Scholarship!

Established by John Edelman to support outstanding student veterans who are pursuing degrees or careers in mental health counseling, these \$10,000 scholarships not only recognize the exceptional accomplishments of these student veterans but also encourage their continued commitment to improving mental health services for their peers.



Please join us in congratulating this year's John Edelman Scholars: Quennie Eslava, Crystal X. Hunter, Ralph Figueroa, and Jordan Ferrari. We are incredibly grateful to John Edelman and proud of these individuals. We look forward to seeing the positive impact they will make in the field of mental health.

Student Veterans of America is thrilled to announce the recipients of our two 2024-2025 RTX Scholarships!

RTX Patriot Scholarship Recipients

Student Veterans of America and RTX have partnered to provide two \$10,000 scholarships to student veterans demonstrating a commitment to and passion for their chosen field of study.



Please join us in congratulating this year's RTX Patriot Scholarship recipients: John Carson Jr. and Jessica Fortino.

RTX SPY-6 Scholarship Recipients

The RTX SPY-6 Scholarship, named for the U.S. Navy's SPY-6 Family of Radars, provides returning sailors an opportunity to achieve educational goals and position themselves for success in civilian professions.



Please join us in congratulating this year's RTX SPY6 Scholarship recipients: Jesse Putney and Umar Ilyasov.



SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Student Veterans of America is thrilled to announce the recipients of the 2024-2025 Google SVA Scholarship!

As part of Google's commitment to military veterans, the company partners with SVA each year to fund scholarships. The scholarship provides assistance to student veterans who are pursuing university degrees in the field of computer science in the U.S. Selected students will receive \$10,000 for the upcoming school year.



Please join us in congratulating this year's Google SVA Scholarship recipients: (top row, left to right) Daniel Neshem, Daniel Seo, Linnea Castro, Miguel Pingol, (second row, left to right) Robert Hall, Idaly Garcia, Michael Shires, Rashawnda Ellis.



Apply for open scholarships from SVA's Partners. These are distributed to top student veterans in a manner that doesn't interfere with the G.I. Bill or other financial aid and total over \$100,000 annually.

<https://studentveterans.org/programs-events/scholarships/>

LOCAL CHAPTER NEWS

Robyn Roche-Paul helps to establish a SVA chapter at Frontier Nursing University

Student veteran Robyn Roche-Paul has been very active in leading the charge to establish a Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter at Frontier Nursing University (FNU). Roche-Paul has been an active member with SVA since she has attended the SVA Leadership Institute; in the FNU SVA chapter, she has served as the co-president.

Since Roche-Paul has help established a SVA chapter on-campus the chapter has had a great impact on the student veterans by providing essential resources, support and advocacy for military and veteran students at FNU.



SVA ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Katherine Martinez

Katherine Martinez, 2021 Student Veteran of the Year, was selected by the Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin to represent Student Veterans of America (SVA) on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) in 2023. Recently, Martinez was voted in as the new Vice Chair of the Joint Leadership Council of Veteran Service Organizations.

While serving on the JLC, Martinez has been appointed to the Legislative Procedures Committee and the Governor's Task force for preserving the Virginia Military Survivors & Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) in the Commonwealth of Virginia.



CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

Student Veterans go to Washington



Student veterans from the University of Baltimore, Virginia Tech, and James Madison University had the opportunity to tour the White House for the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. Student veterans carry on the legacy of our servicemembers and the 80th Anniversary of D-Day was a time to reflect on the heroism of the past and strive to embody the same spirit of dedication and resilience in our own lives.



LIVE WEBINARS

SVA webinars offer access to a wealth of resources and information. You can gain valuable insights on various topics such as career development, educational opportunities, and mental health resources specifically tailored for veterans. Staying informed about the latest developments, policies, and opportunities affecting student veterans is another significant advantage.

The content of these webinars is **specifically tailored to veterans**, addressing their unique needs and experiences. The interactive Q&A sessions allow you to get personalized advice and answers to your specific questions, making the experience even more valuable.

Participating in these webinars can be a significant step towards personal and professional growth, helping you make the most of the opportunities available to student veterans.

HOW-TO SERIES



UNLOCKING THE BENEFITS OF APEX

A GUIDE TO ACCESS AND PREPARATION

JULY 29TH | 6:30 PM EST



ENHANCING YOUR JOB SEARCH

WITH CAREER CENTER TOOLS & SUPPORT

AUGUST 12TH | 6:30 PM EST



USING DATA

TO TELL YOUR CHAPTER'S STORY

AUGUST 26TH | 6:30 PM EST

SIGN UP NOW!

[HTTPS://STUDENTVETERANS.ORG/PROGRAMS-EVENTS/WEBINARS/](https://studentveterans.org/programs-events/webinars/)



Through a network of nearly 1,600 on-campus chapters, Student Veterans of America® ensures that student veterans and military-connected students achieve their greatest potential.

Student Veterans of America

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