

WILLIAM & MARY



MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER



LETTER FROM THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT

KATHLEEN T. JABS

Dear friends of William & Mary Military & Veteran Affairs,

The excitement in Williamsburg continues with ongoing America 250 celebrations and new students arriving on campus. At William & Mary, we are highlighting the university's role in the founding and strengthening of our nation's democracy – and the generations of military members, veterans and families who are part of that story. William & Mary should be rightly proud of being home to some of the nation's first student veterans.

This summer, William & Mary's military history was featured as one of the lead stories in the America 250-themed July issue of GI Jobs. "America's Military Story Runs Through William & Mary" traces that legacy from the Revolutionary era to the military-connected students and families we serve today. The national recognition is particularly meaningful during the Year of Civic Leadership, as we consider how William & Mary's long tradition of service informs our work today.

We also begin the academic year with important news for our student veterans. The Commonwealth's 2026-2028 biennium budget includes \$150,000 annually and a dedicated position to support William & Mary's Office of Student Veteran Engagement (OSVE). This investment provides important state support for an office that has become central to how we welcome, connect and support student veterans and their families throughout their William & Mary experience. We couldn't be more excited and honored by this recognition. We invite you to stop by and visit OSVE in the Sadler Center next time you're on campus.

We are also building on the success of June's second-annual Empowering Military Spouses Symposium, which brought more than 160 military spouses to William & Mary for a day focused on connection, leadership and professional growth. Over the summer, we launched a virtual series at no cost to participants that is designed to keep military spouses connected to resources, ideas and one another throughout the year.

There is much more ahead. Our AUKUS work continues to grow. We were excited to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Adelaide University in July, place two interns in the Submarine Industrial Base offices over the summer and receive approval from GO Virginia Region 5 for a planning grant. In addition, we're welcoming 14 new Naval ROTC midshipmen for our second year NROTC cohort. Our partnerships with the Army and Air Force are likewise growing.

As we look toward the next 250 years, I am grateful for the people and partnerships that allow William & Mary to honor its history while continuing to serve those who serve.

I hope you enjoy this issue and the stories of service, leadership and impact it represents.

Go Tribe,

Kathleen

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Highlights

America's Military Story Runs Through William & Mary



Special Assistant to the President for Military & Veteran Affairs Kathleen Jabs was featured in GI Jobs' July "America 250" issue with her article, "America's Military Story Runs Through William & Mary." Many staff and alumni helped with the facts and edits.

The article explores William & Mary's enduring connection to military service, civic leadership and the nation's founding, while highlighting how that legacy continues through today's military-connected students, veterans, service members and families.

[Read the full article](#)

Beyond the Symposium: Empowering Your Next Chapter All Year Long

William & Mary Military & Veteran Affairs is continuing the momentum of the Empowering Military Spouses Symposium through Beyond the Symposium, a monthly virtual webinar series designed to keep the connections, conversations and professional development going all year long. Featuring expert speakers and military spouse leaders, the series explores career development, leadership, entrepreneurship, networking, financial wellness, advocacy, personal growth and more. Beyond the Symposium is open to military and veteran spouses, Gold Star and survivor spouses, former military spouses, veterans and active-duty service members. We're grateful to our sponsors for their support.

[Explore upcoming sessions and register →](#)



Highlights

Charlie Foster Named National Finalist for 2026 HigherEd Military Spotlight Award



Charlie Foster, M.Ed. '17, director of William & Mary's Office of Student Veteran Engagement, has been named one of seven national finalists for the 2026 HigherEdMilitary Spotlight Award. The award recognizes higher education professionals who demonstrate innovative approaches to supporting, growing and strengthening military-affiliated communities on college campuses. Finalists were selected by the HigherEdMilitary Advisory Council based on the quality of their nominations, commitment to the field and innovative work.

A U.S. Marine Corps veteran and William & Mary alumnus, Charlie leads efforts to support military and veteran students throughout their academic journeys while strengthening connections to resources, opportunities and community across the university.

[Read more about the 2026 HigherEdMilitary Spotlight Award finalists](#)

Major General James Wright Graduation

Congratulations to the graduating cohort of the Major General James Wright MBA Program at the Mason School of Business. This unique partnership between the U.S. Army and William & Mary provides a select group of military officers with advanced business and management education designed to strengthen the Army's operational effectiveness while developing the leadership capabilities of those who serve.



Highlights

Flourishing Through Life Transitions Orientation Program



To welcome our incoming residential students, the Center for Military Transition (CMT) recently hosted a week-long session of its groundbreaking Flourishing Through Life Transitions program. The cohort included incoming graduate and undergraduate student veterans and military spouses.

Now in its fifth year, Flourishing Through Life Transitions has become a cornerstone of CMT's work to help individuals successfully navigate significant personal, academic and professional transitions. This year also marked the second year that CMT has offered a dedicated iteration of the program for incoming student veterans and military spouses, helping participants build a strong foundation and sense of community before beginning their William & Mary experience.

Facilitated by CMT Executive Director Jonathan "JD" Due and featuring leading transition experts and award-winning professors, including Navy Veterans David Long and Virgil Fenters, the program helped participants explore their values, strengths and professional relationship skills. Through discussions and experiential learning, students focused on physical and mental wellness and resilience, relationship-building, other-centered leadership and effective communication.

Beyond preparing participants for the classroom, the program provided an opportunity to reflect on their identities, goals and the transitions that brought them to William & Mary. Throughout the week, participants built connections with one another and developed tools they can carry into their academic programs, careers and lives beyond the university.

As one participant shared, "This program provided me the peace of mind to face my upcoming transition from the military." Another reflected, "The program reinforced my desire to pursue my degree at William & Mary and confirmed that it is the right place for continued growth. Thank you for investing in veterans and professionals during times of transition!"

Highlights

Strengthening United States-Australia Collaboration



William & Mary was honored to be represented by Kathleen Jabs, Special Assistant to the President for Military & Veteran Affairs, at the Embassy of Australia's reception on August 21 celebrating collaboration between the United States and South Australia. Premier Peter Malinauskas MP shared his vision for strengthening the relationship between South Australia and the United States and the opportunities ahead in defense, energy security, artificial intelligence and other critical technologies.

As William & Mary continues to advance its AUKUS Center of Excellence in concert with the Hampton Roads Alliance and the William & Mary Whole of Government Center of Excellence, partnerships like these strengthen the trilateral relationship and help prepare the next generation of leaders.

W&M Students Make Global Impact Through NSIP Summer Internships

This summer, WGC's National Security Internship Program (NSIP) supported 44 William & Mary students serving in internships across the United States and around the world. Students worked with organizations including U.S. Combatant Commands, Air Combat Command, the U.S. Army Transformation and Training Command (T2COM) G-2 Intelligence Directorate, the U.S. Army War College, U.S. Army Research Lab, Virginia National Guard Cyber Fortress exercise, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific, and other national security partners. Throughout the summer, interns gained hands-on experience while contributing to the research, cybersecurity, and strategic planning that support and strengthen national security.

As a capstone to their internships, T2COM G-2 and USAWC interns presented their research and policy recommendations to senior military leaders. These presentations addressed topics ranging from China's economic and military challenges, gray zone tactics, and NATO deterrence to artificial intelligence and U.S. space superiority.

These briefings provided students with a valuable opportunity to gain firsthand experience delivering policy analysis and recommendations on complex national security challenges to senior decision-makers.

NSIP is proud to connect W&M students with opportunities that prepare them for a career in government while contributing to organizations across the national security community. If you would like to financially sponsor a NSIP intern, please contact wgc@wm.edu.



Student Spotlight



Tristen Johnson, Ph.D. Candidate

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Tristen is a Captain in the U.S. Space Force serving as an Acquisition Program Manager. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Computer Science at William & Mary, where his research interests include machine learning and ubiquitous computing. He plans to apply the knowledge and technical expertise gained at William & Mary to develop and execute artificial intelligence use cases in his next assignment supporting Human-Machine Teaming initiatives within the Space Force.

My experience at William & Mary has been both challenging and rewarding. Entering the Computer Science Ph.D. program while serving on active duty in the U.S. Space Force required me to transition from thinking primarily as an acquisition professional to approaching problems through an academic and technical lens. Computer science is an expansive field, and beginning the program meant stepping into areas that extended beyond my previous professional and academic experiences. Through coursework, research, and interactions with faculty and fellow students, I have become more confident in my ability to connect my military experience with the technical skills I am developing at William & Mary.

One of the most valuable aspects of my experience has been the support I have received throughout the university. Within the Computer Science program, faculty mentorship has helped me refine my research interests, challenge my assumptions, and develop a clearer understanding of how to approach complex problems through rigorous research. Balancing the responsibilities of military service with the demands of a doctoral program has not always been easy, but the support and flexibility I have received from faculty and the broader William & Mary community have been important to my progress.

My research has increasingly focused on machine learning and its application to real-world decision-making problems. Currently, I am examining Department of Defense acquisition data to better understand and forecast contract cost growth using econometric and machine-learning approaches. This research gives me an opportunity to bring together my experience as an acquisition program manager and the technical knowledge I have gained through the Computer Science program. Looking ahead, I am also interested in ubiquitous computing and the application of artificial intelligence to human-machine teaming. My goal is to take what I have learned at William & Mary and apply it directly to my next Space Force assignment, where I will have the opportunity to develop and execute AI use cases and explore how people and intelligent systems can work together more effectively to accomplish the mission.

ROTC & Association of 1775

Revolutionary Guard Battalion Celebrates a Successful Summer

The Revolutionary Guard Battalion completed a highly successful summer, with 23 cadets completing Advanced Camp, nine completing Basic Camp (a record high for the program), one completing Cadet Troop Leadership Training in Germany, one earning the Air Assault Badge, two completing Basic Training, and two participating in Army internships. Additionally, one MSIII cadet served as a cadet leader at Basic Camp.

The program also recognizes MSG John Bornhoeft, who graduated magna cum laude from Columbia Southern University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Safety and Health.



Ao1775 Welcomes New Alumni Representatives



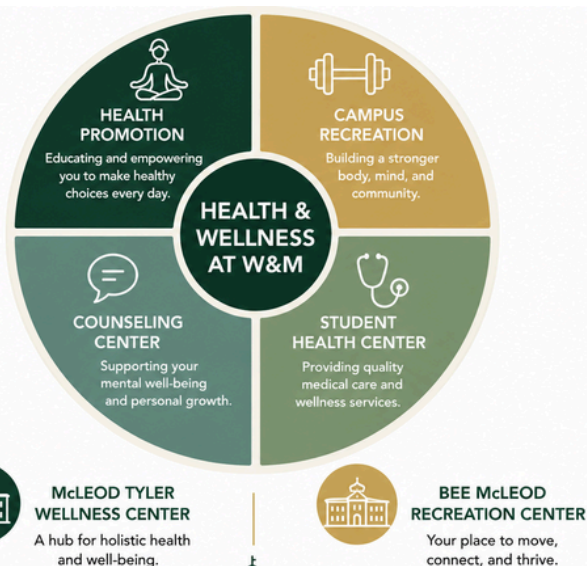
As we prepare for the upcoming semester and the terrific programming and events at William & Mary, Ao1775 welcomes Joey Ladymon '98(left) and John Mallory '04 (right) to the team as our Air Force/Space Force and Navy/Marine Corps alumni representatives, respectively.

If you are interested in helping connect with fellow alums from these military services, please contact Joey (Air Force/Space Force) at jladymon@hotmail.com or John (Navy/Marine Corps) at johnmallory1@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing everyone at Homecoming and the Military Appreciation Game! Ao1775 also participates in events such as physical training with Army ROTC cadets, as well as branching and commissioning celebrations. For general information and news on upcoming events, please contact Brit Erslev '97 at britkime@hotmail.com.

Announcements

Health & Wellness



Health & Wellness at William & Mary brings together four departments and two facilities offering a wide range of resources to help members of the Tribe flourish. From prevention to intervention, Health Promotion, Campus Recreation, the Counseling Center, and the Student Health Center provide programs and services through the McLeod Tyler Wellness Center and the Bee McLeod Recreation Center.

Learn more about the resources available to you by downloading the W&M Wellness app or visiting wm.edu/wellness.

Wear Blue: Run to Remember Parents Weekend

On September 19 at 8:00 am, the William & Mary community will come together during Parents Weekend for a meaningful run and walk that begins with a Circle of Remembrance.

Our regular Wear the Blue run/walks are held on the first Saturday of each month in front of the Raymond A. Mason School of Business!



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