

# WILLIAM & MARY



## MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER



### LETTER FROM THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT

KATHLEEN T. JABS

Dear friends of W&M Military & Veteran Affairs,

As this year closes, I'm struck by how strongly the William & Mary tradition of service continues to shape our community. Service is part of the university's DNA and is core to the William & Mary identity of educating leaders who serve in important ways. The MILVET team is honored to continue the tradition of supporting those who will serve, are serving and have served along with their families. We're also grateful for all the support we receive from faculty, staff, and alumni.

Our goal is to continue to expand our partnerships and build awareness of William & Mary's role in military and veteran education, transition and national security, and we welcome your help! Please see inside for events and happenings that might interest you.

This fall we had the opportunity to spotlight our military and veteran students at several forums, including the Inclusive Excellence Symposium, Homecoming breakfast and Veterans Day celebrations. Our Naval ROTC students attended the 250th Sea Services Birthday Ball.

We also had opportunities to forge more partnerships and grow William & Mary's role as a leader on the national and international stage in critical national security and military forums. A few highlights detailed include:

- William & Mary named as U.S.-based AUKUS Center of Excellence
- MILVET team engagements with federal elected officials
- MILVET team members featured on panels at Modern Warfare Week

We continue to work on building talent pipelines. I invite you to read the op-ed I co-wrote with Drew Warren, Strategic Policy Advisor, Dominion Energy, on how universities and corporations can build a veteran talent pipeline.

As we prepare to celebrate the holidays, we're mindful of how fortunate we are to live and work in such an engaged community. Many of you already mentor students, hire our graduates, advocate for veteran and military-family support, donate to our funds or join us at events. Thank you. Your engagement is helping build programs and pathways that matter. This effort takes a team—or rather, a Tribe.

Thank you for your continued support of our military-connected community. It's an honor to do this work with you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kathleen

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# October Highlights

## Championing Military Families on Capitol Hill

On October 1, William & Mary Military & Veteran Affairs visited Capitol Hill to continue conversations that began when Lindsay Blount, Ed.D., spoke at the Congressional Military Family Caucus earlier this year. The team met with Defense Fellows Rebecca A. Knox (Office of Congressman Sanford Bishop) and Amanda Gray (Office of Congresswoman Jen Kiggans) to discuss ongoing military family initiatives.

Alongside Julia Jester, B.S. '98, Ph.D. '03, Director of Federal Affairs, we shared W&M's work supporting military-connected students and the broader communities around them. The team also briefly greeted Congressman Bishop and his Chief of Staff, Kenneth Cutts, to thank them for their leadership and continued support of military families.

These conversations strengthen partnerships that help advance meaningful support for service members, veterans, spouses, and families.



## Inclusive Excellence Symposium

On October 10, a panel of William & Mary military and veteran students presented at the 10th Annual Inclusive Excellence Symposium, discussing belonging at W&M, including their dual transition experiences: transitioning out of the military and transitioning into a highly selective university. They discussed imposter phenomenon and community, and the roles peer and administrator engagement played in welcoming military and veteran students and ensuring they flourish.



Photo Caption: Charlie Foster, M.Ed '17, Bryce Elmore, MBA '25, Josue Jean '26, Mariela Haga '26, Hunter Strauch '27



# October Highlights

## Senator Tim Kaine Visits W&M and WGC



Photo Caption: Hunter White '28, Eileen Ackley '26, Danny Roque-Ballivian, Grace Martin '26, Senator Tim Kaine, Ryan Zamer '28, Kate Hamilton '27, Camden Good '26, Elizabeth Marcus, Luke Miller '27, and Elisabeth Nielsen '26.

While visiting campus October 13, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine and team sat down with students representing WGC-sponsored student groups the Wargaming Lab and William & Mary Global Innovation Challenge (WMGIC) and with participants from the National Security Internship Program, VICEROY Scholars program, and recent Cyber Fortress exercise. Also attending were USAF (retired) Maj Gen Mark Matthews and several students he instructs in the Innovation for Defense course. Senator Kaine discussed the important work that our undergraduates are doing to help make our nation more safe and secure. Among the many topics, students heard about the Senator's priorities, including his interest in AUKUS and drones. After a great discussion, the Senator visited the School of Computing, Data Sciences, and Physics, after starting his day with William & Mary Strategic Cultural Partnerships and the Williamsburg Bray School. Thank you, Senator Kaine, for engaging with these next generation leaders and our university!

## W&M Cohosts Regional Military Entrepreneur Forum with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families

On October 17-18, 2025, Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families co-hosted a regional Military Entrepreneurship Forum with the Military & Veteran Affairs Team. Just over 120 attendees participated in a series of panel discussions and breakout sessions designed to empower local veteran entrepreneurs. Significantly, the panel discussions featured W&M alumni, to include Chelsea Mandello, MBA '21 and Leland Reimas, MBA '24, as well as key subject matter experts on veteran entrepreneurship and employment, to include Dr. Bill Skimmyhorn of the Mason School of Business and Jonathan "JD" Due, the executive director, Center for Military Transition.



Photo Caption: Tim Ryan MBA '11; Derren Burrell, Arnold Blackmon, Leland Reimas MBA '24, JD Due

# October Highlights

## W&M to be the U.S. Academic Home of the Submarine Industrial Base with AUKUS Center of Excellence

Led by the Whole of Government Center of Excellence and in partnership with the Special Assistant for Military & Veteran Affairs, William & Mary will be home to the U.S.-based AUKUS Center of Excellence. This transformative idea was launched on 29 October 2025 as part of the Hampton Roads Alliance's (HRA) Playbook, a plan to grow the region's defense and shipbuilding industry. Alongside inter regional collaboration centers conceptualized in Sheffield, United Kingdom, and Adelaide, Australia, William & Mary will harness academic expertise to strengthen international efforts to design, build and support the next generation of nuclear-powered submarines.

[Read more about the AUKUS Center of Excellence](#)

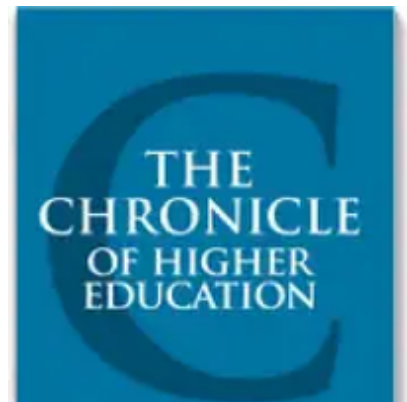


Photo Caption: (From left) Kathryn H. Floyd, Ph.D., '05, director of the Whole of Government Center of Excellence; Vice Provost for Research Alyson Wilson; Doug Smith, president & CEO of the Hampton Roads Alliance; and Kathleen Jabs, special assistant to the president for military & veteran affairs, at the launch event. (Photo by retired Navy Rear Admiral Charles "Chip" Rock)

## Jonathan "JD" Due Featured in October Chronicle of Higher Education Article

The October edition of The Chronicle of Higher Education featured insights about the Center for Military Transition in the article "Students' New Imperative: Always Be Networking." Jonathan "JD" Due, executive director of the Center for Military Transition, explained how integrating programs across the Business School—such as Mason's Executive Partner Program and the CMT's wellness-based, values-informed career readiness initiatives—help student veterans "truly flourish through their transitions." These programs equip them to recognize the conditions and opportunities that allow them to operate as their most productive, fulfilled, and resilient selves.

Click the icon to read the full article.





# Homecoming Events

## W&M Military & Veterans Breakfast

The Association of 1775 and W&M MILVET proudly hosted the Military & Veteran Family Breakfast during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend. Alumni, students, families, and friends gathered to celebrate William & Mary's military service members, veterans, and alumni while enjoying a hearty start to the day.

Following remarks by Kathleen Jabs, retired Army colonel and Ao1775 President Charles Bowery '92 led a panel conversation focused on the intersection of student experience and history. The discussion featured the following students: Jeremy Scruggs '26, Aubrey Good, J.D. '27, David Knapp, MBA '26, Parker Sauer '29 and Dan Penney, '26. The breakfast and conversation provided an opportunity to highlight service, elevate student perspectives, and strengthen connections across the W&M military-connected community. Photos courtesy of University Advancement.



## Olde Guarde Brunch



Olde Guarde members—alumni who graduated 50 or more years ago—and their guests gathered for a morning of food, fellowship, and celebration. The event featured a lively brunch complete with bloody marys and mimosas, along with remarks from guest speaker Kathleen Jabs, special assistant to the president of William & Mary for military and veteran affairs. Table hosts were W&M veteran and ROTC students.

The Olde Guarde also warmly welcomed alumni in their reunion years from the classes of 1965, 1970, and 1975, making it a memorable gathering of shared history and enduring connection.

## Whole of Government Center of Excellence Tailgate

The Whole of Government Center of Excellence hosted a lively Homecoming tailgate on the front patio of Swem Library from 12–3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 18. Guests enjoyed games, raffle prizes, burrito bowls, and margaritas as they gathered with friends and family to celebrate the weekend.





# November Highlights

## Military Appreciation Football Tailgate

On November 1, W&M Military & Veteran Affairs, Association of 1775, and ROTC hosted a Military Appreciation Tailgate before the W&M vs Albany football game. The tailgate welcomed more than 200 guests including W&M alumni, W&M ROTC, student veterans, parents, family and friends, and distinguished guests.



## Hampton Roads Naval ROTC Consortium Sea Services Ball

On November 5, OSVE Director Charlie Foster, M.Ed '17 joined W&M's inaugural class of Naval ROTC Midshipmen at the Hampton Roads Naval ROTC Consortium Sea Services Ball, celebrating the 250th birthday of the Navy and Marine Corps with students, faculty, and staff from universities across Hampton Roads.





# November Highlights

## Veterans Day Bell Ringing

The ringing of the Wren Bell is a Veterans Day tradition at William & Mary. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, a William & Mary student veteran slowly rings the Wren Bell to commemorate Armistice Day, the original inspiration for Veterans Day. All around the nation, bells will toll in unison at 11 a.m. William & Mary is proud to be among the institutions observing this time-honored tradition. President Rowe read aloud “Phantom Noise” by Brian Turner. Kathleen Jabs, Charlie Foster, M.Ed '17, and Sahian Nanez, '27 gave special Veterans Day remarks and W&M student veteran Brad Rushmore '26 rang the bell 21 times.



## Raymond A. Mason School of Business Veterans Day Celebration

More than 100 members of the Mason School and William & Mary community gathered to honor the service and leadership of military and veteran students, faculty, staff, and Executive Partners. Dean Todd Mooradian highlighted how veterans enrich classrooms and strengthen the shared commitment to principled, purpose-driven leadership. U.S. Air Force veteran Cierra Klett, MBA '26 reflected on her transition as an evolution in leadership. Quinn Overton (MBA '17), now with Ferguson, encouraged attendees to “put in the work now” by building strong relationships that create future opportunities.





# November Highlights

## Kathleen Jabs Co-Authors Op-Ed on Strengthening Virginia's Military Workforce

### *How universities and corporations can build a veteran talent pipeline*



**KATHLEEN T. JABS**

Special Assistant for Military and Veteran Affairs, Office of the President, William & Mary



**ANDREW B. WARREN**

Senior Strategic Advisor, Corporate Affairs, Dominion Energy & Co-Chair, Blueprint Virginia Veterans and Military

In the lead-up to Veterans Day, we are proud to highlight an op-ed in the Richmond Times-Dispatch authored by Kathleen Jabs of William & Mary and Andrew B. Warren of Dominion Energy. Their piece underscores the importance of building a stronger, more inclusive military-to-workforce talent pipeline—one that keeps Virginia at the forefront of veteran and military spouse employment.

Their message is a powerful reminder of the vital role Virginia's veterans, service members, and military families play in strengthening our workforce, economy, and communities. It also reinforces the ongoing need to recognize their contributions not just on Veterans Day, but every day.

[Read the full op-ed](#)

## GSOF Modern Warfare Week

On November 18-19, W&M Military & Veteran Affairs team participated in the Special Operations Forces (SOF) for Life Workshops at the Global Special Operations Forces (GSOF) Modern Warfare Week at Ft. Bragg. JD Due, Executive Director, Center for Military Transition, moderated the "Empowering Spouses for Transition" panel, which featured Kathleen Jabs, Special Assistant to the President for Military & Veteran Affairs, and Lindsay Blount, Ed.D. '24, Program & Business Manager, Military & Veteran Affairs. Together, they joined leaders from across the global special operations community to discuss the challenges and strengths of military—especially special operations forces (SOF)—spouses.

Katie Pelletier, Associate Director, Whole of Government Center of Excellence, and student representative J.R. Pikulsky, U.S. Army Special Forces Veteran, MBA '26, also attended on behalf of William & Mary. Our team hosted an information table throughout the conference, connecting with service members, spouses, and partners while highlighting W&M's expanding impact in the military, veteran, and national security community.



## National Security Internship Application Workshop

On Monday, October 13, the Whole of Government Center of Excellence, in collaboration with the Office of Career Development and Professional Engagement and the Writing and Communication Center, hosted a workshop for students applying for internships through the WGC National Security Internship Program. This session provided hands-on guidance on tailoring resumes and crafting compelling cover letters. Students gained valuable insight into how to make their applications stand out and build skills that will benefit them beyond these internship opportunities.



## Careers in National Security Panel

Professional development continued Friday, October 17th, as WGC Director Kathryn H. Floyd, Ph.D., participated in the panel, “In Their Shoes: Careers in National Security,” organized by the Office of Career Development and Professional Engagement, alongside fellow panelists Major General Charlie Lyon, USAF (Retired), Adjunct Lecturer and Affiliate, Whole of Government Center of Excellence and David Stiefel, Director, Global Biological Policy and Programs, Nuclear Threat Initiative. Panelists shared their career journeys, what motivated them to serve, the challenges and rewards of their work, and lessons learned along the way. Students engaged by asking questions, gaining career insights, and exploring the many ways they can contribute to protecting our nation’s security.



## Air Combat Command International Affairs (ACC/IA) Internship Begins

On Friday, November 7, students attended an information session with Lt Col Christopher DarConte, ACC/IA Deputy Director, to begin their ACC/IA internship for the 2025-26 academic year. Lt Col DarConte discussed the ACC/IA mission and priorities, and students had the opportunity to ask questions and share potential research topics for the internship. Through this guided, largely virtual program, interns conduct open-source intelligence research and prepare comprehensive assessments for command-wide foreign programs impacting U.S. strategic partners in the areas of security cooperation, international engagements, and political-military affairs. Final presentations will be given in April 2026 during a visit to Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Virginia.



## W&M Team 1693 Cyber Competes

A team of four students studying computer science at William & Mary – Lilli Arrington '28, Carson Gada '27, and two members of the inaugural cohort of VICEROY scholars Christine Hwang '27 and Elijah Gilliam '27 -- recently competed as Team “1693 Cyber” in Chapter 1: Shieldbearer, a VICEROY cyber competition. Sponsored by the Griffiss Institute, Georgia Cyber Range, and Augusta University’s School of Computer and Cyber Sciences, this event allowed students to apply classroom learning to real world cybersecurity scenarios, enhance teamwork, and gain hands-on experience. Team 1693 Cyber placed 13th out of 44 teams nationwide, reflecting W&M’s and VICEROY’s shared commitment to developing a skilled cybersecurity workforce. [Read more about the “Summer of Cyber”.](#)

## Lewis B. Puller Clinic Assists Veteran with PTSD Disability Claim

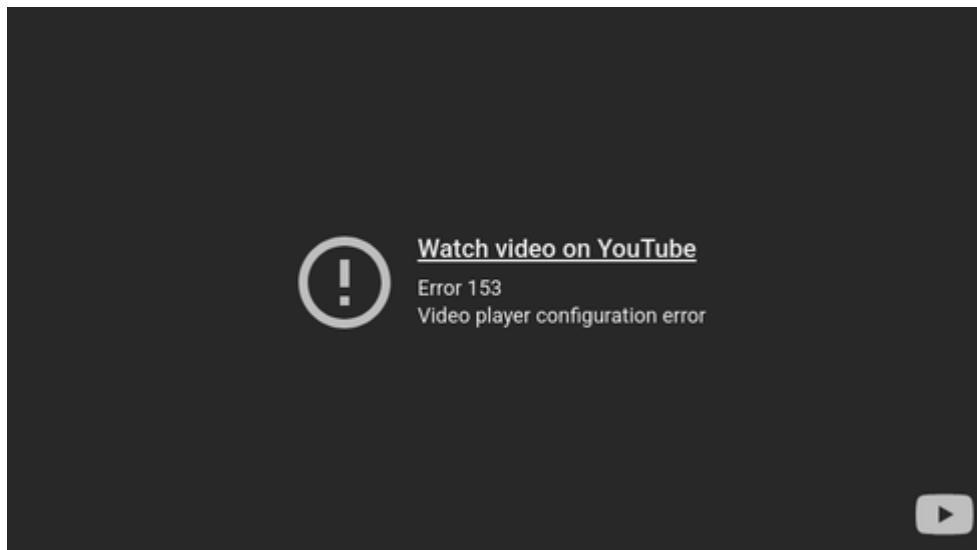
The Lewis B. Puller, Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic recently helped a male veteran obtain a disability rating of 100% for posttraumatic stress disorder along with severe depression due to a sexual assault suffered while the veteran was on active duty decades previously. In this instance, the veteran first sought the Clinic's assistance through a Military Monday appointment. During Military Mondays, Puller Clinic attorneys and students meet with veterans at a local Starbucks to provide veterans with pro bono advice and counsel regarding disability claims involving the Department of Veterans Affairs. After discussing the circumstances of his claims, the Puller Clinic accepted the veteran as a client of the Clinic.

While serving in the Marine Corps at the very end of the 1970s into the beginning of the 1980s, the veteran was drugged and sexually assaulted by a fellow servicemember. The veteran sought medical attention at a military hospital, where a doctor subsequently recommended discharge. The veteran's discharge document contained an adverse remark regarding the veteran's sexuality. As a result of the trauma of the sexual assault, he began to experience symptoms of PTSD and depression. The discharge note compounded the results of the sexual assault.

For over forty years, the veteran carried this trauma alone. In 2024, he independently succeeded in having the adverse remark on his discharge document removed and was issued a new discharge certificate. Based on the removal of the adverse remark on the discharge certificate, the medical evidence of mental health issues, and the effective advocacy by the Puller Clinic, the severity of the veteran's condition was recognized by Department of Veterans Affairs at the 100% compensation level. As a result of this decision and the ensuing benefits, the veteran is more financially secure and mentally healthy. The veteran finally received disability compensation that recognizes the trauma he endured while serving his country on active duty.

### About the Puller Clinic

At the Lewis B. Puller, Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic, students work directly with veterans, under the supervision of experienced attorneys, to advocate for their disability claims and help address a wide range of concerns like mental health, housing, and employment. Through their essential service, students develop essential legal skills while making a real difference in the lives of those who served. For more information about the Clinic, including how you can help support the Clinic, [please visit our website](#) and watch the video below





# Announcements

## Association of 1775



If you are a military, veteran, or civil service W&M alum who wants to give back to the College and current students, consider joining the Association of 1775, the College's military, veteran, and civil service alumni affinity group. Our vision: Alumni Centered, Student Focused. We are seeking planning and event ideas as well as a Civil Service alumni volunteer to join our military service volunteer leads.

Ao 1775 will support several upcoming events including the Army ROTC Branch Celebration (23 January 2026), Commissioning (May 2026), and W&M Weekend, Washington, D.C. (28-31 May 2026).

If you are interested in joining Ao 1775, supporting our growing community, or have questions, please contact [Brit Erslev '97](#)

## Wear Blue: Run to Remember

On December 6, join W&M military & veteran students, staff, and community on this Wear Blue: Run to Remember run/walk. Families and pets are welcome!



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