

# WILLIAM & MARY



## MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

### Letter from the Special Assistant

KATHLEEN T. JABS

Hello and Happy Summer,

This month's newsletter focuses on the many post-graduation activities and programs the military and veteran team hosted and participated in with students and transitioning military members across the career spectrum. While classes may not be in session, the campus and our team have stayed busy.



We started June 5 with the 2023 NATO Youth Summit in Washington, DC, emceed by student veteran Colleen Grace '23. Organized by NATO and William & Mary, the summit provided opportunities for students and other attendees to engage and explore how NATO addresses key security challenges. VET team member, Executive Director of the Whole of Government Center of Excellence, Kay Floyd, was instrumental in planning and coordinating the event and several student veteran alumni attended and participated.

Later that week, Charlie Foster, Director of the Office of Student Veteran Engagement, hosted the Warrior Scholar Program where transitioning military members participate in a one-week college-preparatory academic boot camp with a Humanities focus. In the camp, enlisted service members without a degree had the opportunity to take classes with William & Mary professors and experience the rigors of college life. [See the press coverage from the Virginia Gazette.](#)

On June 12, we kicked off the two-week Flourishing Through Life Transitions program for 38 transitioning service members, including 5 Ukrainians. Focusing on holistic wellness and executive transitions, the class was coordinated by JD Due with the Center for Military Transition. We have already seen interest in future W&M enrollment by the cohort. We were so grateful to have VET Advisory Group and BOV member, Ardine Williams, deliver closing remarks.

We remain grateful for the generosity of alumni, sponsors, and our MIL/VET Advisory Group team. We are working to tie our student veteran testimonials to measured outcomes to demonstrate the difference and value the dedicated focus is making to military transition. We also welcome any opportunities you may have for us to tell our story.

Thank you all for your support!

Go Tribe,

Kathleen

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# Events Recap

## 2023 NATO Youth Summit

On June 5, young people from NATO member nations and beyond joined a transatlantic conversation at the 2023 NATO Youth Summit, which took place online, as well as in Brussels and Washington, D.C. This year's summit was entitled "NextGen Freedom & Security." Organized by NATO and William & Mary, the event provided participants in-person and online with the opportunity to engage, build links, enhance understanding, exchange views and explore how NATO addresses challenges that the next generation sees as critical to their security. The issues covered ranged from disinformation to the latest technologies, and from climate change to national defense. Notably, the Washington, D.C. event was moderated by W&M student veteran, Colleen Grace (pictured below with Special Assistant Kathleen Jabs) and featured a conversation facilitated by Dr. Kathryn H. Floyd, Director of the W&M Whole of Government Center of Excellence. To watch the Brussels and Washington, D.C. event, visit the [NATO Youth Summit website](#).



## Service 2 School VetLink Summit

JD Due, Executive Director of the Center for Military Transition, and W&M student veteran Colleen Grace joined the nationally-recognized non-profit Service 2 School at their annual Ambassadors conference. JD joined a panel of leading business school representatives to discuss how graduate programs can structure innovative approaches to recruit, integrate, and (most importantly) empower student veterans to a new chapter of service. Colleen spoke on the Student Veteran Experience panel about her time at W&M as a student veteran.





# Programs Recap

## Flourishing Through Life Transitions

From June 11-23, the W&M VET Team had the pleasure of hosting 38 veterans and transitioning service members -- to include a 5-member delegation from the Republic of Ukraine -- during our Flourishing Through Life Transitions program. The two-week, groundbreaking transition program stressed physical and mental wellness as well as career exploration and professional skill development. The first week's focus -- led by Dr. Kelly Crace of the Center for Mindfulness and Authentic Excellence -- guided participants through a series of value alignment exercises designed to consider how they might flourish as an individual. The second week's focus -- led by Prof. Dave Long -- took that values-alignment work and introduced the context of work, crafts, and careers so that participants could visualize how they might flourish as a professional. Together, participants were exposed to all of W&M's veteran empowering resources as they visualized, explored and planned their next chapter of service.



## Warrior Scholar Project

William & Mary hosted a Warrior Scholar Project Humanities Boot Camp June 1-9. The project partners with highly selective colleges and universities to simulate the rigor of finals week, including lectures from our world-class faculty, writing instruction from staff and student tutors, and study skills and support from project alumni. William & Mary hosted a boot camp virtually last year, expanding this year to accommodate eight transitioning service members and veterans in on-campus housing and using state-of-the-art academic facilities.



# Military and Veteran Flourishing Participant Spotlight



## Chambala Roach, SFC, U.S. Army

### IN HER OWN WORDS

William & Mary's *Flourishing Through Life Transitions* program gave me a unique perspective on myself and my new chapter that no other program could offer. As a Military Veteran and spouse-focused program, it bestowed upon me three invaluable gifts that surpassed any other program I had encountered.

The first gift was the genuine understanding of who I am beyond my rank, position, and years of service. With a new mission in life, I thought I had planned everything appropriately. However, this program revealed ways to honor me daily, carefully choose my career path, and shed any unnecessary baggage I may have carried from decades of service into my civilian life.

The second gift was the opportunity to connect with a new group of individuals who shared similar experiences. Each person who led our instruction brought something unique and invaluable to our overall experience. Through lessons on mindfulness, communication, and leading with authentic excellence, I gained new insights for my journey ahead. This gift enabled me to think and lead passionately without compromising my essential qualities. This was especially important for those of us actively serving as we sought to balance our current work responsibilities and preparations for our future. The selected members from the William & Mary tribe offered a great support system, helping us avoid overwhelming ourselves, honor our values, and set reasonable goals for the future. The dedicated staff and faculty ensured we were equipped for what lay ahead.

The third and final gift was becoming part of the Tribe. The camaraderie fostered among the 40 individuals over two weeks was more profound than some connections I had made during my 20 years of service. The Tribe emphasized the importance of maintaining contact with one another even after graduation, providing ongoing support, sharing information, networking opportunities, and offering weekly motivational words. Regardless of whether we had served for 3 or 30 years, this cohort welcomed, encouraged, and supported us in our journey toward being our authentic selves.

Being a part of William & Mary's Tribe and being able to share our experiences with loved ones is a gift I never anticipated. Not only did I become a member of a prestigious organization, but I also discovered a newfound sense of purpose. The TAP classes I had taken previously did not touch my spirit as this program did. While I felt, on paper, I was on the right track, this program provided a safe space to be vulnerable and enough time to rebuild myself, enabling me to flourish and thrive through any transition life throws me.

This program is phenomenal, and I sincerely hope it continues for many years. It is essential for our service members, their families, and the community, enabling us to thrive in our new roles.

-SFC Chambala Roach

*SFC Chambala Roach, MBA, is a highly accomplished Station Commander for the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) and Adjunct Professor for William & Mary's ROTC department. She also serves as the Senior Talent Acquisition Manager, overseeing the education, acquisition, and scholarship processing of healthcare professionals dedicated to caring for the Army's soldiers and dependents.*

# Military and Veteran Flourishing Participant Spotlight

## Shijun Zeng '23



### IN HIS OWN WORDS

Why does every path lead us back to Plato's cave? I believed escape was the goal, not delving deeper. Fortunately, Charlie Foster and JD Due invited me to the Flourishing Program. Not only was I emancipated, but the program also illuminated the interior, making my escape a posh spelunking experience.

Previously, fear and the binary measure of failure or success trapped me in a bind, mirroring Plato's cave dwellers. The Flourishing Program shifted my viewpoint, prompting a reinterpretation of my world like the unexpected revelations of quantum physics. Rather than being outcome-focused, the Flourishing Program taught me how to focus on meaning through Dr. Kelly Crace's Authentic Excellence Initiative. Applying this philosophy to my own life led to profound change. Rather than being paralyzed by fear of failure, I try to flourish by aligning my actions with my values. The program guided me to focus on purpose and impact, a key part of Kelly's Authentic Excellence Initiative. Professor Long supplemented this lesson by teaching us to apply authentic excellence to our careers and work.

The program's first week, introspective and intrapersonal, was the most impactful. Kelly systematically approaches healthy engagement, instructing on structured behavior for an expressive mindset, fear management, and value expression. It's not about home runs but getting on base. Aligning growth and passion-fueled work with values scores more runs than Barry Bonds taking all the steroids.

Flourishing is not an endpoint or nirvana; it's a continuous journey of introspection, discovery, and re-evaluation. As Hamlet pondered, the question is indeed to be or not to be. The Flourishing Program reframes this existential inquiry; it's about defining the person you aspire to be rather than ticking off achievements. The response leans towards being—authentic and value-driven—rather than merely doing.

In my moment of doubt transitioning from military to civilian, student to worker (*hopefully*), the Flourishing Program brought light to guide me in this transition. It is not a deus ex machina that solves all my problems but rather a systemic approach to navigating Plato's metaphorical cave. It was the best class I ever took as a student at William & Mary.

*Shijun Zeng '23 was a Navy Corpsman who worked in the operating room of US Naval Hospital Okinawa and onboard the USNS Comfort. With the Comfort, he sailed to South and Latin America and the Caribbeans on two humanitarian missions that successfully completed over 2000 surgical procedures. At William & Mary, he studied chemistry with a particular interest in physical and analytical chemistry*



# Announcements

## W&M M.Ed., Clinical Mental Health Counseling student named 2023 Tillman Scholar



William & Mary is thrilled to announce that the PatTillman Foundation named Evan Turner, military spouse and W&M M.Ed., Clinical Mental Health Counseling candidate as one of its 2023 Tillman Scholars. Evan is a leadership development coach in her Nashville-based private practice. In 2019, her consulting opportunities expanded to include U.S. law enforcement agencies, a natural extension to her years of volunteering as an educator in the prison system where she worked both with the incarcerated and the corrections personnel responsible for them.

The granddaughter of a Naval master chief and wife of a veteran, Evan felt drawn to support the military community more directly which led her to consider the greater service opportunities licensure as a counselor would provide. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling for military and veterans and hopes to offer a nonpathological and strengths-based approach to treatment, working to reframe mental health care in terms of wellness.

An advocate at heart, she supports policy change that would expand access to evidence-based, non-traditional forms of treatment and would further opportunities for healing and for thriving. In 2023, Evan traveled to Rwanda to participate in a peace education training hosted by Aegis Trust, an international organization working to prevent genocide and mass atrocities around the globe. This experience ignited a passion for peace-building and a growing interest in exploring solutions for polarized communities here in the US and abroad. She is collaborating with Aegis Trust to further their message of reconciliation and hope throughout the world.

## Charlie Foster Receives the Inclusive Excellence Champion Award

During the Spring semester, W&M's Office of Diversity & Inclusion paused to recognize and celebrate W&M community members who were nominated to receive the Inclusive Excellence Champions Award for their leadership and innovation towards D&I initiatives. President Rowe and Provost Agouris shared in the celebration along with the nominators and supervisors of this year's recipients. Charlie Foster, Director of the Office for Student Veteran Engagement, was among the recipients for his leadership in the area of diversity and inclusion.



Pictured: President Katherine Rowe, Charlie Foster, Provost Peggy Agouris

# Military & Veteran Affairs Upcoming Events

## W&M VET Dates to Remember

**September 23rd:** 3:30 pm: William & Mary Football vs Maine - **Military Appreciation Day** with 1:30 pm Tailgate hosted by Association of 1775 and Military & Veteran Affairs

**November 2nd** at 12:00 pm: **Green Zone Training** enables participants to learn more about military and veteran students, their challenges, and what they bring to the Tribe. Please join us for a discussion with student veterans, faculty, and staff. The event will consist of a facilitated discussion among a panel of military and veteran students, faculty, and staff who will reflect on their experiences as they transitioned from the military to the university. Participants will have the opportunity to watch several short videos to prepare for the session, and then will interact with veteran students and staff on a number of case studies and situational examples. Training will take place at the Mason School of Business.

**November 8th** from 6:00 -8:00 pm: W&M Military & Veteran Affairs and W&M Libraries are co-hosting a **Veterans Day Book Talk with Brian Morra '78**. The book talk will be followed by a reception and SCRC open house with select military collections on display. More info on how to register coming soon!



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

**GIVE HERE**