

[IAVA Members Witness History at 58th Inauguration Events](#)

NEW YORK, NY (January 20, 2017) – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) members from across the country will take part in numerous activities around the 58th Inauguration of the President of the United States. IAVA member veterans will be present at both the Inauguration ceremony to swear Donald J. Trump into office, the Inaugural parade following, as well as the Salute to the Armed Services Inauguration Ball at the National Building Museum.

“Our members are the what make IAVA great. Their commitment to country isn’t just evident in their military service, but their recognition of such a historic day like today,” **said Anthony Pike, IAVA Chief Programs Officer and Iraq War Veteran.** “We are proud to have such a diverse and proud contingent of our members to represent IAVA at the Inauguration of our new Commander-in-Chief. These same committed citizens are leaders in their communities across the country and will be the voices fighting in the halls of Congress on behalf of our nation’s 22 million veterans this spring.”

What’s next for IAVA and America? Many across the nation are extremely optimistic. Many are deeply concerned. And in our lifetime, our nation has never been more divided. [See today’s message from our Founder and CEO, Paul Rieckhoff, here.](#)

The IAVA members in Washington, DC today represent diverse backgrounds and hail from California to Massachusetts to Maryland. Read more information on our members attending events today [here.](#)



Jennifer Burch is a six-year Air Force veteran. She served at several bases around the world before medically retiring at Buckley Air Force Base in Colorado. While deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, she served as a volunteer

medic at NATO Role 3. Upon leaving Afghanistan, she was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal. She now works for Mountain Time Media as the Special Projects officer and as a Veteran advocate on Capitol Hill.



Matthew Butler is the Director of Military and Veterans' Services at Fordham University. He retired from the Marine Corps with over 20 years of active duty service in October of 2014. He served as combat correspondent in the Horn of Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan. His last assignment was the senior enlisted noncommissioned officer for the Headquarters Marine Corps Public Affairs Office in New York City. He graduated in 2016 with a BA in Organizational Leadership with a minor in Communications from Fordham. Matt has been actively involved with IAVA's initiative to support student veterans on campus and in the community.



Shah Chowdhury currently works in finance and is an MBA student at the Smith School of Business, University of Maryland. Shah has been active with IAVA on Capitol Hill on veterans' issues such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill and veterans suicide. He has been interviewed on MSNBC and Fox-5 DC on several occasions as well as quoted in newspapers such as the Washington Post and The Guardian. Shah served four years as a US Army Field Artillery Officer with a 15-month deployment to Baghdad. In his spare time, Shah actively trains in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.



Alvin Diguangco enlisted in the Navy in 1986 as an Aviation Storekeeper and was assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk CV-63. After four years of active duty, he left to pursue employment in the private industry. In 2001, Alvin returned to join the Selected Reserves in the Navy. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he was mobilized in 2004 with Naval Expeditionary Logistics Group as Customs and Border Control Agent. Alvin is currently a reservist with a Naval Mobile Construction Battalion in Port Hueneme, California. He works for the County of Los Angeles Treasurer & Tax Collector Department as a Deputy Public Administrator.



Born in Stamford and raised in Bethel, CT, Josh Hubbard joined the Army right out of high school in the summer of 2001, joining the 10th Mountain Division. Josh served two overseas deployments, one each in Afghanistan and Iraq, supporting combat operations by providing short and long range communication capabilities in forward operating bases during both deployments. After a 15-month stop-loss, Josh separated from Active Duty in 2006, joining the CT National Guard as a member of the 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment in New Haven, serving 2 years training soldiers for combat deployments. Since separation from the National Guard in 2008, Josh has been living in Waterbury, CT with his wife and 2 daughters. Josh graduated from Post University in 2015 with a BS in Business Administration with a concentration in Management.



Shane Kruchten left for boot camp with the United States Marine Corps three days after turning 17. In April 2003, in service in Iraq, he became a Purple Heart recipient, turning 18 only a few months later in June. Shane returned to Iraq once more, before being wounded again and was medically released from the Marine Corps. In the wake of a storm of survivors guilt, depression and addiction, a life-changing event brought Shane back to his brothers and allowed him to bounce back towards a successful path as a professional fighter and veteran advocate. Now with over 15 professional bouts in the World Series of Fighting, Shane has been able to use his skills as a catalyst for veterans recovery and donates portions of every check to disabled veterans.



Andy McCarty is the Director of Northeastern University's Center for the Advancement of Veterans and Servicemembers, serving student veterans online and at campuses in Boston, Charlotte and Seattle. He is also an Air Force veteran (2000-2004) with two deployments to Africa and the Middle East and is the founder and staff advisor for the NU Student Veterans Organization. Andy serves on the board of the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators.



Elizabeth Meyers is a twelve-year veteran hailing from New York. She joined the Marine Corps right out of high school to serve her country and accomplish something meaningful. She was honorably discharged in 1998, then re-joined after September 11, this time for the Army. After serving three years in the Army, she joined the New Jersey National Guard. After serving, she decided to go back to school full-time to finish her BA degree in psychology. Her next goal is to obtain a masters degree in rehabilitation counseling.



Max Spahn enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 2008 and served four years as a radio operator with 5th Battalion 11th Marines. During that time he deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan and achieved the rank of Sergeant. After the Marine Corps, Max returned to school to finish his undergraduate studies. He completed his Bachelors of Science in Psychology with a minor in Behavioral Neuroscience in December of 2016 at Northeastern University. Currently, Max works as a Veteran Services Specialist at Northeastern's Center for the Advancement of Veterans and Servicemembers. He is also the founding member and Post Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post# 12158, the second VFW post in the nation to be opened and run by Post-9/11 Veterans.



Kate van Auken served in the Army Reserve for 25 years, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) and has mobilized or deployed over 8 years including: Iraq (2003-2005, 2010) and Afghanistan (2008-2009, 2011), Pentagon/NSA Security (2001-2002, Pentagon Army Operations Center (2005-2006), OSD-Defense POW & MIA Office (2010-2012), OSD-Joint IED Defeat Organization (20012-2013). In 2013, she adopted a four-legged veteran, a black Labrador Retriever named Sergeant Rey (Retired Marine IED Detection Dog with multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan). Currently, they volunteer with a Veteran Service Dog training program (Dog T.A.G.S.) to help alleviate symptoms for servicemembers suffering from PTSD, TBI or MST.