Welcome!

Do you want to...

...Network with other veterans and military personnel at Cornell?
...Participate in campus veteran's events?
...Influence veteran's practices on campus?
...Connect with the over 400 veterans and military personnel at Cornell?
...Access the New York State Veteran's Affairs Counselor for our region?

(video slideshow of various VCNG activities, gatherings, and events)

Sign Up for the Veterans CNG

[tabs]

Events
A CELEBRATION OF VETERANS DAY

WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL JOSEPH BIEHLER

SPEAKING ON "THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN SUPPORTING STATE CRISIS"

The military has been a very visible component of the government's response to natural disasters and the current pandemic crisis. The General will share his insight into the military’s role in supporting these events.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2021

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM

11:00 AM, ANABEL TAYLOR HALL, AUDITORIUM 230

Watch livestream November 11, 11:00AM

Click Here for More Details

Ways To Get Involved

Attend a VCNG event!

Join the listserv VETERANSANDMILITARYPERSONNEL-L. Contact us at veterans@cornell.edu.

Contribute to a discussion on LinkedIn.

Sweat with a Vet! Join our Team Red White and Blue - Ithaca Community for updates on weekly exercise opportunities and monthly events.

Access Cornell’s Military Community page for veteran-specific resources.

Discover Cornell’s military history through a tour of campus Veterans Memorials. View them online, join Team RWB on a scheduled run or tour them at your own pace.

Mission & Vision

Our Mission

Raise the awareness of veteran and military personnel issues here at the University; provide a forum for veteran's and their supporters to meet to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern; and to support the University’s recruitment and retention of veterans and military personnel at Cornell University.
**Our Vision**

There are over 400 veterans who work or go to school at Cornell and we aim to connect with them all.

**Leadership**

Current VCNG Executive Members:

- **CHAIR**: Debra Howell dhowell@cornell.edu
- **VICE CHAIR**: Randi Rainbow randi.rainbow@cornell.edu
- **HISTORIAN**: Emily A. Franco eaf11@cornell.edu
- **TEAM RWB LEAD**: Jase Baese jbb23@cornell.edu
- **MEMBER-AT-LARGE**: Dave Juers dwj36@cornell.edu
- **MEMBER-AT-LARGE**: Rick Roper rmr43@cornell.edu
- **MEMBER-AT-LARGE**: Craig Wiggers cww67@cornell.edu

Executive and Ex-Officio Members:

- **EXECUTIVE SPONSOR**: Open
- **ROTC LIAISON**: CPT. Tony Roach acr266@cornell.edu
- **VETERAN REP. for EA**: Debra Howell dhowell@cornell.edu
- **STUDENT VETERAN COORDINATOR**: Mary Fisk mmf248@cornell.edu

**Chair and Veterans Rep for the EA:**

Debra Howell – I am currently Chair of the VCNG. I served in the U.S. Army Reserves as a medic from 1993—2001 and am a proud mom of a U.S. Army Ranger. I am committed to representing and advocating for our veterans community. At Cornell, I am the Director of Information Technology Operations for the University Libraries. I have an extensive background in facilitation, organizational change, teambuilding, and leadership. I received my Master of Industrial and Labor Relations degree from Cornell University in 2006. I'm also a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), an Office of the Secretary of Defense certified Master Trainer, and I serve as the Information Officer on the Board of the NYS American Council on Education Women’s Network. My great joys are my grandsons, traveling, cooking, and reading. Feel free to contact me with questions or ideas at dhowell@cornell.edu!
Vice Chair:

Randi Rainbow has been the Director of Information Technology for the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University since 2006. His focus is on the development and deployment of technology services supporting the unique nature of the human-involved physical and social sciences of the college and their instructional, research and outreach missions. Prior to this, he was an Information Technology Area Manager in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, also at Cornell University. His military service spans a decade, from 1986-1996, starting with Army National Guard service as a DAAS3 computer systems operator, followed by two active duty Air Force tours as an Applications Developer/Systems Administrator with the Air Intelligence Agency (AIA) and Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in EUCOM. He served one combat tour in Bosnia-Herzegovina in support of the NATO mission and IFOR/SFOR. He followed military service with contract support for the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and Army Special Operations Command (ASOC) prior to moving to New York and Cornell. Randi is a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE), has a degree from the Community College of the Air Force in Information Systems.

Historian:

Emily Franco: Following her graduation from Cornell University in 1992, Emily Franco was commissioned in the Army Quartermaster Corps and, after her Officer Basic Course, became Rigger Certified. She served tours in Korea and Germany, coordinating the logistics of troop movement and managing supply and maintenance warehouses. She left the Army as a Captain and returned to the US to work with Deloitte and Touche, LLC, consulting on corporate relocations and economic development projects. In 1998, Emily returned to her hometown of Ithaca to become the General Manager of The Rose Inn, a luxurious country inn with 23 guest rooms and a restaurant. Then she was drawn back to Cornell and the logistics field as the Purchasing Manager for Campus Life. In addition to routine purchasing requirements, she managed procurement of furnishings for the new residence halls of the Cornell West Campus Initiative and the opening requirements for five new Cornell Dining units. In her current role she manages the relationship between The Culinary Institute of America and the School of Hotel Administration and promotes their joint collaborative degree program.

Team RWB (Red, White and Blue) Lead:

Jase Baese was born and raised in New Braunfels, Texas. After graduating from Trinity University in San Antonio in 1994 with a B.S. in Business Administration, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Ordnance Branch of the U.S. Army. Jase served a three year assignment in Germany, including six months in Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of IFOR/SFOR. Jase has worked at Cornell University and lived in Lansing since 1998, he is currently an Information Technology professional in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. Jase has been the captain for the Ithaca Team Red, White and Blue community since February of 2014 and encourages anyone interested in health and fitness, no matter what level you are at, to join Team RWB, find out about local Team RWB events and connect with us @TeamRWB ithaca.

Members at Large:

Rick Roper: Rick served in the US Marine Corps from 1985-1994, as a Basic Field Electrician/Generator Mechanic. He met his wife, Jinhee, while serving at the American Embassy in Seoul South Korea, and received an Honorable Discharge after nine years of service, in March of 1994. His awards include the Navy Achievement Medal, and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in Somalia, Operation Restore Hope. After discharge, he received an Associate’s Degree from Herkimer Community College, and in 2006 he received his Bachelor’s Degree in Business Management from Empire State College. Rick has been employed with Cornell University for thirteen years, and is currently the Training Program Manager & Safety Manager for the Facilities Management Training Group (FMTG), within Infrastructure, Properties & Planning (IPP).

Craig Wren Wiggers: A retired Marine lieutenant colonel with 25 years of service, is director of administration for the physics department. Wiggers enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1990. After graduating from Auburn University, where he served in the Reserves, he was commissioned as second lieutenant. He did two tours of duty in Iraq and also served in Afghanistan. For his second tour in Iraq, he and a team of 18 Marines advised 800 soldiers in the Iraqi infantry, helping them become a self-sustaining fighting force. Prior to coming to Cornell he served NATO and supported the mission in Afghanistan and worked as a defense planner for Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia between 2009-12. When he returned to the United States, Wiggers took a position in ROTC at Cornell as professor of naval science, 2012-15, teaching amphibious warfare and leadership and management skills. After retiring from the Marines, he decided to stay at Cornell. He joined Infrastructure, Properties and Planning, managing trades and Student and Campus Life housing before landing his current position in physics.

ROTC Liaison:

Captain Anthony C. Roach, USN: Captain Tony Roach is a native of Lancaster, Pennsylvania and graduate of Temple University, where he received a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Civil/Construction Engineering Technology. He was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Pennsylvania. He reported to flight training in Corpus Christi, TX and Pensacola, FL, where he received his Wings of Gold in 1996. He received his Master of the Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies as well as his Joint Professional Military Education, Phase I and II from the Naval War College, College of Naval Warfare in 2008.
Student Veteran Coordinator:

Mary Fisk was born and raised in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania and is the Student Veteran Advisor & Program Manager for Cornell University. She joined the university in August 2019 after serving as the Coordinator for Veteran’s Outreach at The Pennsylvania State University. Mary retired from the Marine Corps in 2006 after serving 22 years on active duty as a Field Radio Operator, Communications Field Skills Instructor, Communications Systems Chief, Communications Chief, Drill Instructor (3 tours) and First Sergeant at duty stations all over the world: Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Kuwait; Iraq; El Toro, 29 Palms and Camp Pendleton in California; Quantico, VA; Okinawa, Japan; Parris Island, SC; and Camp Lejeune, NC. She received two Bachelor of Arts degrees in French & Francophone Studies and German Studies in spring 2015, and her Master of Education in Counselor Education in 2021, all from Penn State. Mary spends her free time visiting her daughter in Savannah, Georgia, her brothers and sisters in Pennsylvania, and lounging with her 3 pug dogs (Lady Angel, Sir Nigel & Lord Archibald) and senior kitty, Callie.
Executive Liaison:

Mary George Opperman serves as Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer for Cornell University, which employs approximately twenty thousand staff and faculty across several campuses, including Ithaca and Cornell Tech in New York City. Prior to joining Cornell in 1996, Mary spent 13 years in the human resource function at Harvard University.

At Cornell, Mary’s portfolio includes oversight of the Division of Human Resources, the Office of Diversity and Compliance, Title IX Compliance, and the Center for Regional Economic Advancement. She is co-chair of Commencement and served as co-chair of the Charter Day Operations committee for Cornell’s Sesquicentennial in April of 2015. Mary is a fellow of the National Academy of Human Resources. She is certified by the Society for Human Resource Management as a senior professional in human resources and is a graduate of SUNY Oneonta.

Cornell has received numerous workplace awards as a result of exceptional human resource programs under Mary’s leadership. These include being named AARP’s top U.S. employer for workers 50 and older two years in a row — making Cornell the first employer to receive this top billing more than once. Cornell has also been listed as a best employer for working mothers, prospective and adoptive parents, IT professionals, veterans, and women executives. In March 2015, Mary was selected by the editors of Human Resource Executive magazine as one of the 15 most influential women leaders in human resources.

Mary has also overseen development of Cornell’s innovative Center for Regional Economic Advancement, and partnered with Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College to found Rev: Ithaca Startup Works, a New York State-funded new business incubator in downtown Ithaca.

Mary describes her mission at Cornell as a commitment to promoting a values-driven culture that focuses on streamlined processes so that the university is socially, economically and environmentally responsive. She is particularly interested in creating meaningful growth opportunities for top talent, and advancing succession and development plans which address the retirement of key faculty and staff, while attracting and engaging employees who energize the university with new perspectives and expectations.

Mary is an active supporter of her community, and has served on numerous boards of local and national organizations, including the TIAA-CREF Advisory Council, Challenge Industries, the Tompkins Cortland Community College Foundation, the Community Dispute Resolution Center, the Workforce Investment Board, the Women’s Opportunity Center, and the United Way of Tompkins County. She served as the AAU-HR Institute Inaugural Board Chair. She is currently active on the boards of Kendal at Ithaca, Foodnet, Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes, Tompkins County Area Development, the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council, the Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County, the Paleontological Research Institution, as well as a member of the Governing Body for the New York HR Leadership Summit.