



# FIRST CALL

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## VETS 16: ALL ABOUT VALUE

*A message from NVSBC Executive Director, Scott Denniston*



This year marked the sixth annual 2016 Veteran Entrepreneur Training Symposium - the second year our conference for veteran small business owners was held at the Waterside Marriott in Norfolk. Our over 300 attendees networked, attended valuable learning sessions, and connected with prospective teaming partners and procurement officials. All in all, we received extremely positive feedback about the value of the conference, and we aim to make next year's event even better!

After our annual membership meeting, VETS 16 kicked off with a reception on the sixth floor rooftop patio overlooking the Norfolk harbor (featured above). The next day, we got down to business with our variety of events geared toward helping veteran-owned small businesses thrive in the federal marketplace. Our conference is one focused on *practical* value - what should you know as a veteran business owner?

Not only did we offer learning sessions on popular procurement topics, a large exhibit hall, and feature accomplished key note speakers, but we offered one-on-one business sessions where veteran businesses had the opportunity to discuss contracting opportunities with government and private supplies. These included - to name just a few - Booz Allen Hamilton, the U.S. Department of Labor, the General Services Administration, Logistics Health Incorporated, and Missile Defense Agency. We want our members and conference attendees to be educated on the opportunities out there, as this is the only way to receive new business!

If you would like more information on the many activities featured at VETS 16, check out our website at: <http://www.veterantrainingsymposium.com>. We hope to see you at the next one!

## CONTENTS

VETS 16: ALL ABOUT VALUE . . . 1

OPENING CEREMONY AND LUNCHESES (TOP)

GENERAL SESSIONS AND KEYNOTE SPEAKERS (BOTTOM) . . . . . 2

HONORING THOSE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE (TOP)

VETS CONNECT: ONE-ON-ONE BUSINESS SESSIONS (BOTTOM) . . . . . 3

VETS 16 TAKEAWAY . . . . . 4

*NVSBC's purpose is to transition veterans into business owners servicing the federal government.*

## Opening Ceremony and Lunches



Executive Director, Scott Denniston, greets Admiral John Harvey, Jr. (USN, Retired), the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs for the Commonwealth of Virginia, during the Opening Ceremony. Admiral Harvey updated us on his plans to enhance veteran programs in Virginia during one of our General Sessions.

Our conference attracts many notable speakers. Below, Kenya Wesley, the Director of the U.S. Department of Defense OSDBU, rouses the crowd with an inspiring speech during Wednesday's lunch.



In addition to our receptions, we hosted two scrumptious lunches where veterans rubbed elbows (literally) with procurement officials, awards were presented to agencies and prime contractors that met small business goals, and we dished about the monumental *Kingdomware* decision (and our role in the Supreme Court victory).

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## General Sessions and Keynote Speakers



(Above: Col. Lee Ellis, who is also an NVSBC member)

The NVSBC held general sessions during VETS16, each designed to maximize veteran business owners' abilities to capture federal work (topics including "Senior Thought Leaders Discussion in Acquisition" and "Impact of New Labor Laws on Businesses").

VETS 16 also featured illustrious keynote speakers, such as Major General Charles Bolden (USMC, Retired), the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administrator, who discussed the challenges he faced growing up in the segregated south and how he overcame them to become a Marine aviator, astronaut, and NASA administrator.

Award-winning author Colonel Lee Ellis (USAF, Retired) of Leadership Freedom, LLC presented business leadership lessons from his book, *Leading With Honor: Leadership Lessons from Hanoi Hilton*, as he shared anecdotes from his experience as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. His long-anticipated follow-up book, *Engage With Honor: Building a Culture of Courageous Accountability*, hits stores on September 7, 2016 and can be purchased on Amazon by clicking [here](#).

## Honoring Those Who Make a Difference



NVSBC is proud to honor those who contribute to the veteran small business community. During VETS 16, it presented its annual Gordon H. Mansfield Small Business Award to Mr. Shane Moore of Veterans Management Services, Inc. This award is given to one veteran small business owner who owns and operates a small business that gives back to the veteran community in a substantial and continuous way. Mr. Moore has a long history of giving back to veterans through his employment initiatives, fundraising, and mentoring of younger veterans.



The NVSBC was also proud to present to numerous representatives of federal agencies and large prime contractors awards denoting that their organizations had met their goals for awarding contract dollars to veteran-owned small businesses (pictured here: L-3 Communications Vertex Aerospace representatives Mr. Kelly Miller, Mr. Kevin Mitchell, and Mr. Tim Magnusson; NVSBC President Ms. Heidi Gerding). These awards not only show our appreciation of federal agencies and large prime contractors, but they are a symbol of the strong relationships NVSBC has forged with others in the federal government contract arena.

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## VETS Connect: One-on-One Business Sessions



One of our most popular activities during the conference, VETS Connect consisted of face-to-face meetings that are invaluable in forging alliances between VOSBs and SDVOSBs ("Suppliers") and government agencies, prime contractors, and large or medium-size businesses ("Buyers"). These meetings gave Suppliers the opportunity to: market their businesses; network with Buyers from federal agencies, large and prime contractors; and expand their business contracting opportunities. Prior to delving into these meetings, the NVSBC provided Buyers with valuable guidance for effective preparation.

These one-on-one sessions, which consisted of 15-minute slots, included opportunities in a number of product/service categories, including: engineering services, construction, environmental services, facilities support services, manufacturing, intel services, research and development, information technology, security services, and more. VETS 16 featured nearly three dozen suppliers, and we believe that given the grown and reputation of our conference, we will see an even bigger list of suppliers at VETS 17.

## TAKEAWAY FROM VETS 16

We at the NVSBC understand that some business owners come to our conference to learn more about federal procurement; some come to network with procurement officials and prospective teaming partners; and some come to hear intel on developments affecting VOSBs working on or pursuing federal contracts. As such, we gear our conference to ensure that each business owner walks away feeling that his mission is accomplished:

### Learning

- Our learning sessions - twelve this year - are on a variety of topics pertinent to VOSBs.
- Our conference is attended by numerous experts on procurement matters - whether government officials, consultants, or lawyers - who aren't shy about answering questions.

### Networking

- Our exhibit hall gives everyone a chance to network and learn about the different exhibitors (many of which are government agencies looking to award future contracts to VOSBs).
- Our VETS Connect one-on-one sessions provide "face time" between veteran business owners and procurement officials/large contractors.
- Our receptions and lunches allow plenty of time for networking and connecting with prospective teaming partners.

### Intel on Developments Affecting VOSBs

- Many of our keynote and general session speakers are those intimately involved with the procurement process, and they share rules and developments that may affect a VOSB's bottom line.
- Collectively, our members know a great deal about news and changes in procurement matters, and attending our conference is a great way to catch up on need-to-know-information.

We are honored that this year's conference was as well-attended and well-received as it was, and will strive to make next year's conference even better. Toward that end, please feel free to reach out to Executive Director, Scott Dennison, with any questions, issues or suggestions. Thank you for helping us make our conference a success!



(Above: conference-goers share contact information in the exhibit hall).

## FIRST CALL

The NVSBC is pleased to offer "First Call" to its members. In our active duty careers, "first call" was the notice to get up and get moving to usher in a new day. We will provide you with all the important information you need to get up and moving to success in the federal marketplace. This publication is prepared with the help of veteran advocate and attorney, Sarah Schauerte. Access her company website and blog at: <http://www.legalmeetspractical.com>.



### Ideas?

If you have ideas for future content for First Call, or how to maximize the benefit NVSBC offers to its members, we always welcome input. Please contact Scott Dennison with your comments at: [scott.denniston@nvsbc.org](mailto:scott.denniston@nvsbc.org).