

Take Point Initiative

Fellow Bios

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Sunday, January 18 – Monday, January 26,
2015

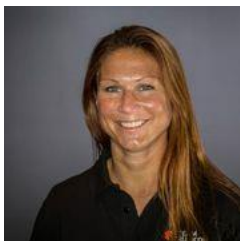
Atlantic Council Headquarters



Jayson Browder

Global Executive MPA Candidate, New York University and University College London
New York, NY

Jayson Browder is a Global Executive MPA candidate in Global Public Policy and Management at New York University and University College London. He is a multi-decorated U.S. Air Force and Iraq Veteran, a U.S. Fulbright Scholar (Turkey) and a current Carnegie New Leader at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Relations. While serving as a Fulbright Scholar, Jayson served as an adjunct academic faculty member at Bayburt University, where he taught English and conducted research on the Syrian conflict, Turkish and Iranian relations, and U.S. foreign policy. He previously served as a Military Legislative Assistant in the Office of Congressman Beto O'Rourke, an Adjunct Junior Fellow at the American Security Project, and as a Legislative and Correspondence Intern at The White House. His analysis on national security and foreign policy issues has been published in numerous media and think tank organizations such as Asia Times, NPR, Carnegie Council Foreign Policy Journal, Partnership for a Secure America, and Truman National Security Project. Jayson is originally from South Carolina and holds a BA in Sociology and Latin American and Latino Studies from Fordham University.



Amanda Burke

Deputy Director of Program Operations, Team Rubicon
El Segundo, CA

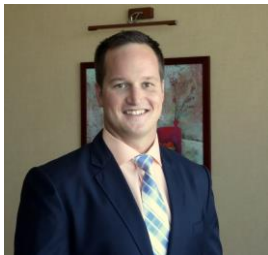
In her current position, Amanda is the Deputy Director of Program Operations at Team Rubicon, where she manages a team of 30 regional and state leaders, is responsible for the development and management of all mental health initiatives and national engagement strategies that prepare 20,000 volunteers for disaster response operations. Amanda served as a Captain in the United States Marine Corps from 2007-2011, where she was a Company Commander at Second Radio Battalion in Camp Lejeune, NC. She started working for Team Rubicon full time after volunteering for TR's disaster relief efforts in the Philippines, following the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan. Amanda also worked as an Operations Manager at Target Corporation and as a Senior Consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton. She received her BA in Political Science from Sonoma State University and claims Vacaville, California as her hometown.



Owen Casas

Independent Contractor
Rockport, ME

A native of Mid-Coast Maine, Owen Casas served in the United States Marine Corps from 2003-2007 as an Ammunition Technician, deployed to Fallujah, Iraq and separated Honorably as a Sergeant. During his time in the Marines, Owen was stationed at 29 Palms, California, Camp LeJeune, North Carolina, Camp Fallujah, Iraq and was attached to Support, Infantry, Recon and Amphibious Assault units. Since returning home to Maine, Owen has worked as a commercial scallop fisherman, diver, boat mooring tender, been a member of the Maine Stone Workers Guild as a professional mason, and run for a seat in the Main House of Representatives, earning over 32 percent of the vote as an independent candidate in a three-way race against a strong incumbent. He received his BS in Applied Science from the University of Maine Augusta, with a minor in Business. Owen is active in Veteran programs and foreign affairs discussions, including being a member of the Mid-Coast Forum on Foreign Relations and Camden Conference. Owen and his wife live in Rockport, Maine with their two children, dog and flock of chickens.



Matthew Keller

MALD Candidate, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University
Boston, MA

Matthew is pursuing a MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, with a concentration in International Security Studies and the United States. A former Surface Warfare Lieutenant in the United States Navy, his most recent assignment was as a Platoon Commander in Bahrain, overseeing 60 servicemembers and \$20 million of equipment. Prior to this deployment, Matthew served as a Team-Officer-in-Charge with US Marine Forces Southern Command, where he worked with Peruvian Marines and Guatemalan special forces to counter Narco-Terrorism; as an Assistant Officer-in-Charge with Riverine Squadron Three; and as a Watch Officer with Task Force 70, where he supported humanitarian assistance and multilateral operations in the Pacific. Matthew is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, where he received a BS in Systems Engineering.



Nickolaus W. Kesler

MBA Candidate, The College of William and Mary, Mason School of Business, Class of 2016
Williamsburg, VA

Nick is currently a MBA candidate at the College of William and Mary. Originally from Richmond, VA, he flew Seahawk helicopters as an officer in the U.S. Navy in support of operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM. Following his aviation tour, Nick served as the CNO's Africa Strategic Engagement Officer at the Pentagon, the Executive Assistant to the Director of Navy International Engagement, and as the Safety Officer onboard the USS KEARSARGE, which earned the Secretary of the Navy Safety Excellence Award for the safest ship in the Navy in 2013. Nick received his MA in Global Security Studies from Johns Hopkins University in 2012, and graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a BS in Political Science, with Honors, in 2003. At

the Mason School of Business he serves as the Founder and President of the Mason Military Association and Honor Representative for the Class of 2016. He has published award-winning articles in All Hands, U.S. Navy Proceedings, Florida Times-Union, and the New York Times.



Benjamin Kohlmann

*Founder and Chairman, Defense Entrepreneurs Forum
Norfolk, VA*

In 2013, Ben founded the Defense Entrepreneurs Forum to embed a lasting and dynamic culture of innovation within the national security ecosystem and leverage the ideas and expertise of junior leaders. An active duty officer in the United States Navy, he currently serves as the Speechwriter and Aide de Camp to the Commander, United States Fleet Forces. Ben is an F/A-18 pilot and has served with Strike Fighter Squadron Four One, serving 32 combat missions over Afghanistan and with Marine Strike Fighter Training Squadron 101. His track record of success and innovation earned him appointment as Officer-in-Charge and Founding Member of the Chief of Naval Operation's Rapid Innovation Cell, where he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for "reinvigorating the culture of innovation within the Navy" and successfully deployed the first 3D printer aboard a Navy ship. Ben received his BA in Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences and Political Science from Northwestern University.



Zachary McDonald

*Executive Director for Undergraduate Admissions, Service to School
New Haven, CT*

Zachary served as a paratrooper and infantry squad leader in the 82nd Airborne, deploying to Al Anbar, Iraq and Khost, Afghanistan, participating in ground combat, counterinsurgency and security force assistance missions. Currently, Zachary is the executive director for undergraduate admissions at Service to School, a startup nonprofit dedicated to assisting veterans in gaining entry to the graduate and undergraduate programs of their choice. Additionally, he works with Prologue Strategies, a veteran owned business providing strategic messaging solutions to national security problems. Zachary is from Chicago and will graduate from Yale University in the spring with a BA in political science. His thesis discussed changes to warfare in the information age.



Jared Smith

*Assistant Program Coordinator for Veterans Orientation, University of Oregon
Eugene, OR*

Jared is an Assistant Program Coordinator for Veterans Orientation at the University of Oregon, serving as the first point of contact for arriving veterans and advising the Dean of Nontraditional Students on developing veterans' orientation programming. A veteran of the United States Army, Jared served as an Army Ranger, deploying four times to Afghanistan where he completed numerous special operations mission. He is currently attending the University of Oregon, where he is pursuing his BS in Economics and History.



Adrienne Tatum-Yasuda

Policy and Research Associate, Tom Wolf for Governor
New York, NY

Adrienne is a Policy and Research Associate with Pennsylvania Governor-elect Tom Wolf's campaign, where she helped inform campaign policy through extensive research on renewable energy, agriculture, and education. Adrienne served in the United States Air Force from 2003-2009, working as a Communications Maintenance Staff Sergeant. She began her career maintaining, certifying, and installing ground-to-air communications systems, and because of her exceptional managerial and organizational skills, she was hand selected as a member of the Maintenance Control team. In this role, she coordinated and controlled manpower and materials for maintenance activities supporting NATO's largest multinational flying training program. Adrienne received her BA in Political Science and Asian Studies from Temple University's Japan Campus, and has studied at the Beijing Language and Cultural University in Beijing.



Matt Zeller

President, No One Left Behind
Vienna, VA

Matt is the Co-Founder and President of No One Left Behind, a nonprofit startup dedicated to assisting Afghan and Iraqi combat interpreters who served alongside US forces with resettlement in the United States. From 2002-2008, Matt served as an Intelligence Officer in the Army National Guard, deploying to Afghanistan in 2008-2009 as an Embedded Combat Advisor, where he managed assistance operations and professional development programs for over 4,000 Afghan police and soldiers. He founded No One Left Behind after leading a successful campaign to secure a visa and over \$30,000 in crowd-funded transition support for the Afghan translator who saved his life during a Taliban ambush in 2008. Matt previously worked at the Central Intelligence Agency, Deloitte, and ran for Congress in New York's 29th Congressional District. He received his MPA and MA in International Relations from The Maxwell School at Syracuse University and his BA in Government from Hamilton College. He has appeared on the BBC World News, Anderson Cooper 360, MSNBC, Fox News, and Al Jazeera, among numerous media appearances.