



PRESS RELEASE

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The Distinguished Service Awards Names ThunderCat Technologies Veteran Owned Business of the Year; James Schenck, CEO PenFed Credit Union, Lifetime Achievement Honoree

The Distinguished Service Awards honor service to veterans within the Greater Washington Business community

Tysons Corner, Virginia – [The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce](#) (Northern Virginia Chamber) has named **ThunderCat Technologies** the Veteran Owned Business of the Year, Established, **Forge Group LLC** the Veteran Owned Business of the Year, Maturing and **Phalanx**, Veteran Owned Business of the Year, Emerging, during this morning's 2023 [Distinguished Service Awards \(DSA\)](#) held at the Army Navy Country Club. [Dr. Linda Singh](#), Major General (Ret.), was the event's honored Keynote Speaker.

Created to honor individuals, companies, and non-profit organizations for their service to veterans in the Greater Washington business community, the DSA are presented in recognition of community stewardship and business leadership in the following categories: **Veteran-Owned Business of the Year** in 3 categories, **Veteran Service Organization of the Year**, and **Veteran Employee of the Year**. This year's DSA held an additional honor, the **Veteran Advocate of the Year Award**, which went to [Karen R. Lowe](#), Army Customer Relations, Northrop Grumman. This award honors someone who is known for helping veterans and their families yet are not a veteran him or herself.

"I am incredibly honored to be receiving this exceptionally special award. I have been reflecting on what this means to me and have realized that my passion for the military, veterans, and warfighters dates back to when I was in high school; I wore my Vietnam POW/MIA bracelet until it broke in half. My soldier is very sadly but most heroically on the Vietnam Memorial wall. My deep respect and desire to support our veterans dates back 50+ years," said Lowe.

This year's Lifetime Achievement Award winner was [James Schenck](#), President & CEO, PenFed Credit Union. Schenck, a U.S. Military Academy West Point graduate and, later, Harvard Business School graduate, flew Black



Hawk helicopters during his 13 years of service in the U.S. Army. He also trained other Army aviators and taught Economics and Finance at West Point. During his assignment to the Pentagon, James, by then a Major and working for the Secretary of the Army, received the Legion of Merit for his contributions.

“Northern Virginia’s veteran businesses have proven to be innovative, influential part of our our Greater Washington business community. The Chamber is honored to recognize this important group’s achievements and contributions through the 2023 Distinguished Service Awards. Congratulations to this year’s winners,” said **Julie Coons**, Chamber President and CEO.

Winners of the 2023 DSA:

Veteran Owned Business of the Year, Emerging: **Phalanx**

Veteran Owned Business of the Year, Maturing: **Forge Group LLC**

Veteran Owned Business of the Year, Established: **ThunderCat Technology**

Veteran Employee of the Year:

- **Danielle Applegate, IT Concepts**
- **Tom Downs, Booz Allen Hamilton**

Veteran Service Organization of the Year > Under \$1 Million Annual Budget: **NVSBC Education Foundation (NVSBC-EF)**

Veteran Service Organization of the Year > Over \$1 million Annual Budget: **Hope for the Warriors**

More information on the DSA can be found [here](#).

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About the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Originally founded in 1925 as a Fairfax county-focused business advocacy organization, the Northern Virginia Chamber has grown into the Region’s largest Chamber of Commerce, drawing members and impacting policy across the Greater Washington Region. Today, representing close to 500,000 employees, the diversity of our community is one of our greatest assets, offering opportunities to learn from one another and form personal connections that help guide lasting business growth.

The Chamber’s goal is to be considered not only a business partner but also an agent of change for our members. We do this through our work in government advocacy, education through events and programs, networking, promotion of member businesses, and recognition through awards. We are proud to have worked together over these many years to build a meaningful association that enriches our community and look forward to continuing that good work.

For more information, visit www.novachamber.org.