

Article

Ashley Kamrath, Servant Leader and OSD's Public Affairs Officer

The spirit of service is part of Ashley Kamrath's DNA. Generations of her family have served in the armed forces and a particularly strong influence in her life came from someone she'd never even met – her grandfather. Her mother's father, Lt. Larry D. Vose, was killed in a military jet crash in 1959, when her mother was only 2 years old. Though she'd never met the man, what lingered in Ashley's psyche was a deep respect and appreciation for his sacrifice, and the sacrifice of men and women like her grandfather who are willing to give their lives for our country.



Ashley knew that she, too, had received the call to serve, but her calling, her passion, took a slightly different path than her ancestors.

On September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked, Ashley was attending Texas State University. Two of her friends immediately deployed and Ashley found herself

feeling bad, maybe a little guilty, that she was still in school while her friends and others her age were risking their lives for our country. She knew she had to do something. But what? “I was young and broke. I didn’t know what to do. So, I did the only thing I could. I wrote letters to my friends every day of their deployment.” Later, these friends expressed how much they appreciated those letters and that connection to home.

Several years later, Ashley met Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Lt. Michael Thornton, one of the original Navy SEALs. Over the years, as their friendship and professional relationship grew, she was exposed to additional ways in which she could serve those who serve us.

Through years of volunteering with military-related organizations, Ashley’s network began to grow as did her awareness of the magnitude of the need for support for active-duty military personnel and veterans. “I realized that there was so much need out there that was not being met. I was determined to do something to help.” Ashley is especially concerned with the suicide rate for veterans, which is 22% higher than non-veteran U.S. citizens according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). She said, “It’s our duty to care for them when they get back home. Most scars are unseen.”

To help raise public awareness and give voice to the men and women who serve our country, Ashley turned to documentaries. In 2013, she won an Emmy Award for hosting the "Remembrance Rescue Project" documentary featuring Chicago Firefighters touring the country educating children, many of whom were born after 2001, on the significance of 9/11. In 2016, she won an Emmy Award for a documentary she produced entitled "Blood & Steel", while embedded with the her “adopted” 3rd Cavalry Regiment (Fort Hood, Texas) at the Fort Irwin National Training Center in California.

Today, Ashley travels extensively across the U.S. in support of the military organizations she serves:

- She’s on the board of directors for [Wish 4 Our Heroes](#).
- She’s part of the military advisory board for [The Comfort Crew for Military Kids](#).
- She is responsible for PR for [Honor Flight Austin](#).
- She’s on the military advisory committee for the [USO in Fort Hood](#).
- She’s the public affairs officer for OSD.

In addition, she hosts a TV show, "On the Job with Ashley Kamrath" on ATXN in Austin and she emcees and hosts events, galas, and golf tournaments. Her weekly radio show, "The Real Heroes," about military men & women who have extraordinary accomplishments is currently on hiatus. Keep your eyes and ears open for it on 104.9 "The Horn".



Despite all these accomplishments and the many hours of selfless service she gives to our troops, what may strike you the most about Ashley is her humility.

Her service truly is making an impact. OSD CEO & Executive Director Glenn Banton said, "It's an honor and a pleasure to serve our veteran and military community with Ashley on the OSD team. Her compassion for our military and humility place her as an example and inspiration to all. There is never a doubt as to if she'll be impactful, it's a matter of when and how much impact."

Ashley is a self-described "simple person" and "tomboy" who fishes, hunts, and might be found sitting at a campfire drinking beer, playing guitar, and singing country music (she loves Country greats such as Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings, and Tammy Wynette and often still listens to them on old vinyl records).

A sports enthusiast, she enjoys baseball and is gaining an appreciation for rugby, but she is "**obsessed** with football". She loves how much "their passion, teamwork, and camaraderie remind her of the military".

She is also a big fan of Tony Robbins because "He is focused on contribution and making a difference. This is how I try to live my life as well." I'm sure the military personnel (active duty and veterans) whose lives she has touched would agree that Ashley **is** making a difference.

Official article published for Operation Supply Drop 3 Sep 2018 ([link](#))