

AMVETS National Executive Director Joseph R. Chenelly

Joe was appointed national executive director of the nation's fourth largest veterans service organization in May 2016. In this capacity, he administers the policies of AMVETS, supervises its national headquarters operations and provides direction, as needed, to state and local components. Joe previously served as AMVETS' national communications director.

Joe Chenelly is the first veteran of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq to lead one of the nation's four largest veterans service organizations' staffs.

A native of Rochester, N.Y., Joe enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1998, serving with the 1st Marine Division, and was honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant in April 2006. He is a combat veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, having served in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Kuwait, East Timor and the Horn of Africa.



Joe became a veterans advocate, a journalist, and a political adviser after his time in uniform. He covered military and veterans matters on staff with *Leatherneck* magazine, the *Military Time* newspapers, *USA TODAY* and Gannet News, reporting on operations in the Middle East, Southwest Asia, Africa, as well as disaster relief in the United States.

Joe was named one of the 100 "most influential journalists covering armed violence" by Action on Armed Violence in 2013. He was the first U.S. Marine combat correspondent to step into enemy territory after September 11, 2001, as a military reporter in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He also reported from the front-lines with American and allied forces in Kuwait and Iraq as that war began. He was on the ground for the start of both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Joe served as AMVETS' national communications director in 2005-2007, and for eight years as assistant national director for communications for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) in Washington, D.C., leading grassroots efforts through social networking and new media.

He has also served as president of Social Communications, LLC, and as a public affairs officer director for the Department of Navy. Joe is an alumni of Syracuse University and Central Texas College. He resides in Fairport, N.Y., with his wife Dawn, a service-connected disabled Air Force veteran, and their five children.