

SHAUN CASTLE

Deputy Executive Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America

Medically-retired Army Sergeant Shaun Castle is an accomplished college and professional wheelchair basketball player, and outspoken advocate for Paralyzed Veterans of America. Born in Elmira, N.Y. Castle enlisted in the Army in 2000. A military police officer with the U.S. Army stationed in Heidelberg, Germany, Castle served deployments to Kosovo, Macedonia and missions in support of the Global War on Terrorism. In 2002, he served as a protective services guard to two four-star Generals—Gen. Burwell B. Bell III and Gen. Montgomery Cunningham Meigs.

In 2003, Castle was injured during a training exercise in Heidelberg in which he suffered three herniated discs and two cracked vertebrae. While a lengthy prosthetics surgery enabled him to walk again and return to private sector police work, the weight of his duty belt over time caused further damage to his spinal cord. Not only was a second surgery unsuccessful, Castle learned while undergoing treatment at the VA medical center in Birmingham, Alabama, that he had a life-threatening allergy to all pain medications and muscle relaxers, a complication that nearly took his life and forced him to resort to natural methods of pain management.

In 2012, Castle embraced the healing power of adaptive sports. He began training six days per week became a team member for the University of Alabama's men's wheelchair basketball team. Castle went on to play professional wheelchair basketball in Lyon, France.

Castle also pursued a degree in Communications with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership, graduating summa cum laude from the University of Alabama in 2017. He intends to next pursue a master's degree in Global Business Management.

In 2016, Castle pioneered the construction of an arena dedicated solely to wheelchair basketball at the University of Alabama. He was later honored by the college for an award recognizing his contributions to veterans, adapted athletes and the disabled student body on campus.

In 2018 Castle was appointed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities.