

SHAUN CASTLE

Deputy Executive Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America

Medically retired Army Sergeant Shaun Castle was born in Elmira, N.Y. Castle enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2000 and became a military police officer stationed in Heidelberg, Germany. He served in Kosovo, Macedonia and missions in support of the Global War on Terrorism. In 2002, he served as a protective service guard to two four-star Generals.

In 2003, Castle was severely injured during a training exercise in Heidelberg. While a prosthetics surgery enabled him to walk again, he sustained further damage to his spinal cord. After a second spinal cord surgery which was unsuccessful, Castle learned during treatment at the Birmingham VA Medical Center in Alabama that he had a life-threatening allergy to all pain medications and muscle relaxers, a complication that nearly took his life.

Castle met the love of his life, Stephanie, in 2009. Since then, she has been his biggest champion. Stephanie is not only Castle's wife but is also his caregiver and provides physical and emotional support every day.

In 2012, during his rehabilitation, Castle became familiar with the Lakeshore Foundation, a rehab hospital and Olympic training center, in Birmingham, AL. He immediately developed a passion for adaptive sports and playing Wheelchair Basketball. He went on to play college Wheelchair Basketball at the University of Alabama and professional Wheelchair Basketball in Europe. Castle became a member of PVA in 2014.

While studying at the University of Alabama, he worked with the ADA Compliance Committee and sat on the Diversity Committee as a representative for students with disabilities and veterans. He gave numerous speeches across the country on ADA compliance, disability rights and veterans' issues, and was appointed to the Secretary of the Veterans Affairs Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities.

In 2017, Castle became PVA's deputy executive director. In his role, he has testified on Capitol Hill on key legislative priorities for the organization. The most significant lesson he has learned from working at PVA is "how critical our mission is to our members and their families, and to the men and women who benefit from the hard work that our organization does to support all people with disabilities."

Castle earned a bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership with an emphasis in communications as well as a Masters in Global Business Management from the University of Alabama. He is currently finishing his second Masters degree from Alabama in Advertising and Public Relations with a focus in Marketing Communications. After he plans to pursue his Doctorate in Public Administration.