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MeriTalk Names 2023 Cyber Defenders Award Winners

40 government and industry leaders recognized for their contributions to cyber programs in Federal IT

Alexandria, Va., May 8, 2023 – Today, MeriTalk announced the winners of the 2023 Cyber Defenders Awards. The awards recognize individuals in government and industry who drive innovation, advance our nation’s cybersecurity, and who have made significant contributions across cyber programs in Federal IT.

“These leaders are advancing security initiatives impacting our government – and our nation’s – cybersecurity,” said Caroline Boyd, principal, government programs at MeriTalk. “We’re pleased to be able to recognize their innovation, commitment, and outstanding achievements.”

This year’s winners are listed below.

Government:

- **Cesar Alzaga**, Technical Advisor, 834 Cyberspace Operations Squadron, U.S. Air Force
- **Hemant Baidwan**, Deputy Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Homeland Security
- **Al Bowden**, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Cyber Operations, Department of State
- **Sean Connelly**, TIC Program Manager and Senior Cybersecurity Architect, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
- **Ja’Nelle DeVore**, Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Agriculture
- **Leila Doumanis**, Commander, Combat Support Team, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command
- **Jennifer Franks**, Director of Information Technology and Cybersecurity, Government Accountability Office
- **Patrick Gould**, Director of Cyber and Telecommunications Portfolio, Defense Innovation Unit
- **Greg Hall**, Assistant Director of Information System Security and Chief Information Security Officer, Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, Department of Justice
- **Lilian Herrera**, Mobile Cybersecurity Shared Services, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
- **Ryan Higgins**, Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Commerce
- **Matt House**, Program Manager, Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
- **Clarice Kent**, Civilian Deputy for Endpoint and Customer Service Directorate, Defense Information Systems Agency
- **Russell Marsh**, Director of Cyber Operations, National Nuclear Security Administration
- **Jarrold Neely**, Cyber Readiness Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- **Randy Resnick**, Director of Zero Trust Portfolio Management Office, Department of Defense Chief Information Officer
- **Dr. Jay Ribeiro**, Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Transportation

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- **Antonino Scimemi**, Division Head, Enterprise Cybersecurity Assessments, Department of Homeland Security
- **Joseph Sharon**, Program Manager and Technical Director of Cybersecurity Continuous Diagnostic and Mitigation, Department of Homeland Security
- **Lynette Sherrill**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Security and Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs
- **Craig Taylor**, Chief Information Security Officer, Food and Drug Administration
- **Rosa Underwood**, Acting Senior Cybersecurity Advisor and Security Solutions Architect, General Services Administration
- **Michael Williams**, Chief, Network and Security Operations Branch, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Industry:

- **Will Ash**, Senior Director of U.S. Public Sector Security Sales, Cisco
- **Gary Barlet**, Federal Chief Technology Officer, Illumio
- **Frank Catucci**, Chief Technology Officer and Head of Security Research, Invicti
- **Cameron Chehreh**, Vice President and General Manager, Public Sector, Intel Corporation
- **Michelle Clays**, Senior Program Director, Peraton
- **Justin DePalmo**, Vice President and Chief Information Security Officer, General Dynamics Information Technology
- **Dave DeWalt**, Founder, Chief Executive Officer, and Managing Director, NightDragon
- **Drew Epperson**, Senior Director of Federal Engineering, Palo Alto Networks
- **Gregory Garrett**, Vice President, Cybersecurity, Peraton
- **Steve Hoffman**, President, Fortinet Federal
- **Tom Kennedy**, Vice President, Axonius Federal Systems
- **John Nemoto**, Vice President, CGI Federal
- **Bill Rucker**, President, Trustwave Government Solutions
- **Drew Schnabel**, General Manager, U.S. Government Solutions, Zscaler
- **Miguel Sian**, Senior Vice President, Technology, Merlin Cyber
- **Scott Smith**, Principal, Cybersecurity, EY
- **Michael Weigand**, Co-Founder and Chief Growth Officer, Shift5

Award winners will be recognized at MeriTalk's [Cyber Central](#) event on May 17 and [Cyber Smoke](#) event on May 18. For more information on the awards and winners, visit <https://www.meritalk.com/award/cyber-defenders-2023/>.

About MeriTalk

The voice of tomorrow's government today, MeriTalk is a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT. Our award-winning editorial team and world-class events and research staff produce unmatched news, analysis, and insight. The goal: a more efficient, responsive, and citizen-centric government. MeriTalk connects with an audience of 160,000 Federal community contacts. For more information, visit <https://www.meritalk.com/> or follow us on Twitter, @MeriTalk. MeriTalk is a [300Brand](#) organization.