



VETERANS

ENRICHING THE CAMPUS

Military veterans, as students, provide a valuable dimension and depth to a college campus.

By Kathy Punches '96
Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Military veterans have unique perspectives on learning and real-life situations that can enrich the learning environment for all students.

In turn, a successful college experience can give veterans a positive transition from active military service back into the citizen workforce.

Defiance College has a long tradition of welcoming military veterans as students of higher education. It offers a supportive environment for veterans, regardless of their age or how recent their military service. For several years, the College has had the designation of a Military Friendly School, and it participates in the Yellow Ribbon program.

The Yellow Ribbon program is available to veterans of the post-9/11 era through participating colleges. It guarantees free tuition to qualifying veterans, with private institutions and the Yellow Ribbon Program splitting costs that may exceed the established cap.

While most veterans have been able to access benefits through the traditional GI Bill, Yellow Ribbon bridges the difference in pricing and gives veterans the opportunity to choose an institution that best suits their area of interest.

According to registrar Mariah Orzolek, Defiance's enrollment of veterans has increased significantly since the inception of Yellow Ribbon in 2009. Her office has a VA-trained school certifying official, Carrie Relyea, to ensure that veterans receive all benefits to which they are entitled. There are currently nearly 25 veterans enrolled, and an additional 40 students are enrolled as dependents of veterans.

DC provides a veterans resource center in Defiance Hall. Veterans can also utilize services offered to all students, including counseling and academic advising. To recognize them for their service, there is an annual Veterans Day program in November and a Military Appreciation Day held at a home basketball game.

Veterans are recognized during commencement ceremonies with red, white and blue cords.

Veterans' academic interests cross all departments, from business to social work to digital forensics, says Cathy Mikula, coordinator of nontraditional student support. "Faculty love having them in class for the maturity they bring, the example they set for other students, and the experiences and perspective that they can share. The respect that they show to other students, to faculty, and to staff is noticeable."

As an Army infantryman, Tyson Bostelman, Wauseon, completed two tours of duty in Afghanistan. One tour was in the Korengal Valley, also known as the Valley of Death. His second tour was in the Pesh River Valley or Nangalam. He and his fellow soldiers experienced daily firefights. "My first tour, for most of it, we were in two to three firefights a day," he recalls. "We got mortared regularly, and I lost one of my best friends there, SPC Robert Donevski." He also lost another close friend in Afghanistan, SSG Brown. They are not forgotten, he says.

When Bostelman finished his military duty in September 2013, he decided to take advantage of his military education benefits to pursue his ultimate goal of working with the FBI or CIA. He enrolled at Defiance College because of its location and small size and is currently studying toward a degree in criminal justice.

For veteran Dennis English, Defiance, it was the DC staff that helped him make the decision to enroll and pursue a college diploma. "The Center for Adult Programs played a large role in my choosing and registering for Defiance College," he says. "Carrie Relyea was also incredibly helpful throughout

my time at Defiance College. These individuals really made it easy for me to focus on my schoolwork They were always on top of whatever needed to be done, and I could not have continued without their help."

English originally served four years in the Army, then re-enlisted in the Marine Corps. His tour of duty included the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

He graduated from DC in May 2014 with a degree

in art. "The professors were experts in their relevant field of study, and - let's be honest - who wouldn't find Doug Fiely to be entertaining in class?" he adds.

"A college degree offered opportunities I otherwise would not have been able to achieve. Education is important to my family, and I wanted to set a good example for my sons, showing them that you have to put in hard work in order to become successful."

Dr. Tim Rickabaugh, professor of exercise science, has experience both as veteran-turned-student and college professor. He served in the Army Reserves while in graduate school and recalls that it was often a challenge to align his summer Reserve training with his graduate coursework.

As a faculty member, he has an even greater appreciation for veterans in the classroom. "They most often are very focused and determined students who serve as great role models for all of our students," he says.

Defiance College works to make sure that veterans receive the support needed to transition to college life. "They are a great bunch of people. It is a privilege and a pleasure to serve them," says Mikula.

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Dennis English



Ericha Griep, center, with her family at a DC cross country event.

Calling herself “A PROUD AIR FORCE BRAT,” ERICHA GRIEP owes her college education to the military education benefits earned by her father who has been on active duty for more than 30 years.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill allows veterans to transfer their education benefits to a dependent. “I have been able to attend Defiance College ... and am aiming to graduate this December because of the Post 9/11 GI Bill and our school’s participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program,” says Ericha, who is majoring in multiple areas - athletic training, wellness and corporate fitness, physical education and health.

When Ericha’s parents, Jean and Stephen, graduated from high school, college wasn’t an option for them, so they joined the Air Force. “After meeting in Basic Training and eventually getting married, my mom made my dad promise that no matter what, they would put the education of their children first. They wanted to help the four of us get the traditional college education that neither of them could,” she says.

Now in her final semester as an undergraduate, Ericha says her primary career goal is to find a job. “Ultimately, I want to find a good balance between athletic training and teaching, and I would like to do that in a setting that allows me to give back to my military community.” While growing up, she and her family spent seven years overseas. “My dream job would be to become a Department of Defense Dependents Schools teacher and athletic trainer. In that setting I would be able to relate to my students on a level most teachers cannot. It would be my way of saying thank you to our service members and their families in a very hands-on and rewarding way.”

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Ericha Griep

Ericha reflects on the sacrifices her parents have made for country and family.

“My dad has been active duty for over 30 years now, and even though we have been through a lot, none of us would go back and change it. I am the second of four, my parents are happily married and have all four kids in college. I was lucky enough to have parents who always put education above almost everything, houses, money, and even my dad’s career.”

And, she knows that an important part of her life story occurred in Defiance, Ohio. “Defiance College is the only place that could have made my last four and a half years not only possible but wonderful as well.”

By Michele Tinker, Director of Annual Giving

Dr. Mark Lee '92, a native of Sherwood, Ohio, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps through the Delayed Entry Program in 1984.

"I was only 17 years old and my father, Cork, had to sign my initial contract enlisting me for active duty on June 2, 1985, 14 hours after graduating high school," Lee explains.

As Lee tells his story, "My classmates from high school went to college, and I went off to the Marine Corps to form my leadership skills and my manhood. Also, of note, I was accepted in the Marine Corps Warrant Officer program at the end of my first enlistment, but I wanted to go to Defiance College to earn my bachelor's degree and try out the USMC Reserves. I did, but the military and the 'esprit de corps' never left me - veterans know what I mean. It's an addiction that once it enters your bones, it never truly ever leaves."

"I have been lucky to have served in the active USMC, USMC Reserves, Army National Guard, U.S. Army Reserves and active duty Army. I have never run into anyone who has done this in my 30 years in the service except me," he says. Lee rose from the enlisted ranks to achieve the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army.

"I am what the military calls a 'Mustang,' a prior service enlisted man who rose up through the ranks as an officer. There are very few of us, and only a handful in the military who have as much education as I have earned."

Mark's assignments span 30 years and took him to California, North Carolina, Virginia, Kansas, Washington, among others here in the states, and South Korea, Japan, Kuwait, and Afghanistan.

He is a qualified Air Defense Officer, Civil Affairs Officer (Special Operations), Special Forces Officer, and a functional area Comptroller. He has been a member in the military of all wars for his generation: Desert Storm/Desert Shield, Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq/Kuwait), and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan twice).

Lee used his service time to acquire his education, taking his first college class at Central Texas College in the fall of 1985. "My platoon sergeant gave me grief about it until the day I PCS (permanent change of station) out to Okinawa, Japan. Well, Sarge, I have earned a B.S. in mathematics (from Defiance College), an M.Ed. in educational administration/leadership (USC), Ph.D. in higher educational administration/leadership (USC), Juris Doctorate (JD) or law degree, and an MBA with a concentration in public administration - all paid for by the military. I have been truly blessed and lucky," he says.

Looking back, Lee considers his best assignment was when he was an ROTC instructor at UCLA, with his Ft. Jackson and Ft. Bliss tours running a close second. He also has great fondness for the Tampa Bay area around MacDill Air Force Base and the surrounding communities of Tampa, Clearwater, and St. Petersburg.

He shares some of his insights about the Army and life:

"The first thing I learned about the Army is 'hooah.' There are 1,000 or 10,000 or 100,000 different ways to say 'hooah.' But I learned that it is more than just a battle cry - it's a way of life. It says that you will never quit, never surrender, never leave

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Dr. Mark Lee '92

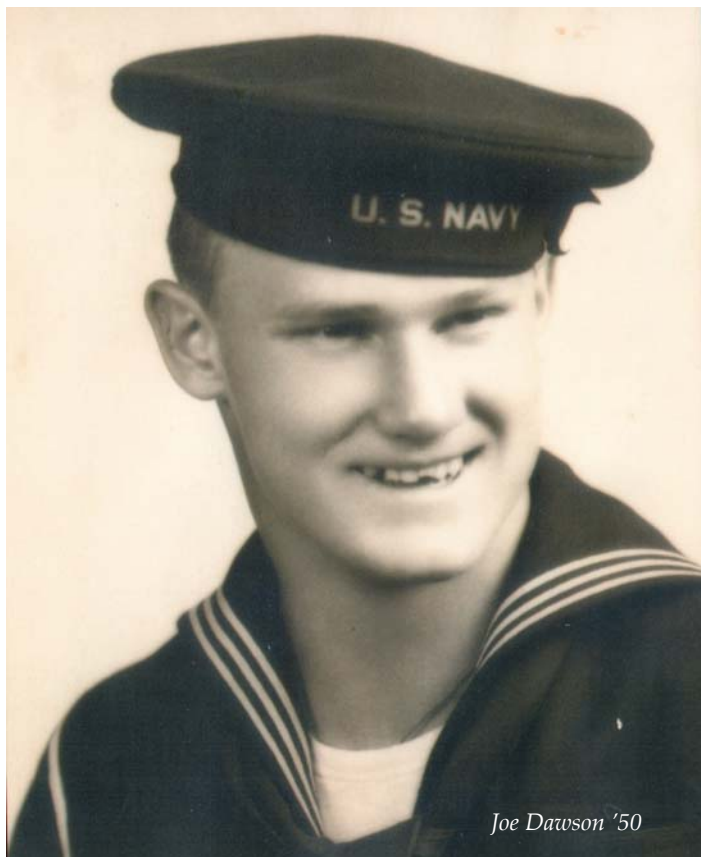
your buddy behind. It says that you are proud of the hardships you have endured because there is deep meaning in every one of them."

"I have learned that the Army, above all, is a learning organization. From rapid development and adaptation of doctrine, to command organization, to movement of brigade combat teams and modular headquarters, to the way people are promoted, the Army is constantly changing and adapting to meet the challenges of the day. As General George Marshall once punned, 'Soldiers are intelligent. Give them a bare tree; let them supply the leaves.'

"We often forget the impact of war on those who were alongside our fallen. That loss impacts them for the rest of their lives, including me. I have lost 52 men that served under or beside me in OIF and OEF."

Mark and his wife, Cynthia, who is also an LTC/05 in the Army with almost 24 years of service, will be retiring soon and plan to make their home in the St. Petersburg area.

SALUTING DEFIANCE COLLEGE VETERANS ★ THROUGH THE DECADES ★



Joe Dawson '50



Fran Carley '61

World War II was a grim time and college enrollment hit an all-time low, but the end of the war saw a revitalization here at DC as well as throughout the country. Hundreds of veterans arrived on campus using the GI Bill to achieve their educations.

The college quickly expanded to meet their needs – in housing, classrooms and classes. The Hickory Hut, Tin Town and the Sessions Hall Annex were quickly constructed. Athletics, fraternities and other activities were revived. Since then, veterans have been a proud part of the history of Defiance College, and we take this time to honor their service to our country, as represented in these vignettes of DC alumni veterans through the decades.

JOE DAWSON '50 served in the U.S. Navy during WWII, stationed in the Southwest Pacific as a radio man, taking code and messages. He especially remembers being on board when the ship was in a tornado in the Philippines in 1945.

“The Government treated me fine,” Joe says, and he attended Defiance College on his GI benefits after he was discharged. Joe and wife Cathy reside in Pinckneyville, Ill.

JIM MOATS '59 served in the U.S. Air Force 1951-1955 during the Korean War. Jim trained in bases in Texas, Wyoming and Illinois and attended Cryptology School. He was shipped to the UK/European Theaters in December 1951 and was stationed at SAC (Strategic Air Command) bases in England and French Morocco, North Africa. He also spent two months at the Tule Air Force Base in northern Greenland. He achieved the rank of Sergeant 1st Class.

Jim remembers spending Christmas Day 1951 doing KP and serving “giblet gravy” to seasick GIs in the midst of a big North Atlantic storm. Other memories of his time in service include being in England for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and encountering his Defiance recruiting sergeant while at Nouasseur Air Force Base in French Morocco. Jim and his wife Barbara reside in Chesterfield, Mo.

After graduating from Defiance College, **FRAN CARLEY '61** joined the U. S. Marine Corps, and attended Officers Candidate School in Quantico, Va. He served as an infantry officer, a platoon commander as 2nd Lieutenant, and company commander in Vietnam for a company called Suicide Charley (Charlie Company 1st Battalion 7th Marine). Fran states that his biggest challenge was “fighting the politics while trying to fight the war.”

Fran’s duty tours also included serving in the second division on a Mediterranean cruise with the Sixth Fleet during the Cuban missile crisis, being stationed at Guantanamo Bay, and on Okinawa before going to Vietnam in 1966. He was discharged in 1967. Fran and his wife, Susan, reside in Fort Myers, Fla.



SUSAN D. BARNES '78 enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1983 and served for 25 years, achieving the rank of Chief Master Sergeant. She served at Charleston Air Force Base in South Carolina, Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, Maxwell Gunter AFB in Alabama, and spent two years at Sembach Air Base in Germany. She identified her biggest accomplishments as managing the flight/inspection scheduling and performance analysis of C-17 aircraft at Charleston, one of the busiest Air Force bases during the aftermath of 9/11, and achieving the top enlisted rank (only one percent of the enlisted force may serve in the CMSgt rank). Her biggest challenge: combating sexist attitudes in the service. Now retired, Susan resides in Navarre, Fla.

MAJOR DAVID IKE '00 is currently serving on active duty with the U.S. Army. He joined the Army as an enlisted soldier in January 2000, right after he finished at Defiance College in December. He completed Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as an officer in October 2002. David has served in eight locations stateside and completed three tours in Iraq and one in Egypt. He is currently in the School of Advanced Military Studies in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

"I believe my biggest challenge is yet to come," writes Ike. "I will spend 2015 as an operational planner for the Joint Command in Afghanistan. I have never worked at that level and it has a myriad of dynamics. But the Army wouldn't assign me there if I couldn't handle it."

Major Ike went on to say he finds service as rewarding as it is demanding, and has learned more than he ever could have imagined. "I credit my experience at DC with setting the foundation for it all," he concludes.



DC Needs YOU!

The Alumni Office is seeking to update their records on **DC alumni who have served, or who are currently serving**, our great country in the armed forces. Please send us a quick note via e-mail or traditional mail identifying your name, year of graduation from DC, and the branch(es) of the armed forces in which you served.

You can contact Sue Dumire (sdumire@defiance.edu) 419-783-2371 in Advancement Services to share your specific information with us.

Thank you for your service to our country!

