



USI STUDENT

VETERAN

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024

EDITION #2025-1

STAY INFORMED - USI SVA ON FACEBOOK



Are you following us on FaceBook? Scan the QRC to learn about updates and events we have with our student veterans!

COMPLETE YOUR SBRF TODAY!

Remember to submit your Semester Benefit Request Form **EACH** semester you want to file a claim for educational benefits. You can do so online at usi.edu/veterans.

NEXT SVA MEETING: SEPTEMBER 26 - STUDENT VETERAN LOUNGE (ED0114)

Meetings for the Student Veteran Association are held the first Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m.. Veterans, current serving and dependents of veterans are all welcome!



Captain Jennifer Vella (USAF) with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency presents to the veteran community and distinguished guests on the recovery operations of more than 83,000 service members that remain unaccounted for. The presentation was held on September 7, 2024 in the Griffin Center. This event was in coordination with Rolling Thunder, Indiana Chapter 6 and the USI Student Veteran Association.

WELCOME BACK STUDENT VETERANS

As the new fall term begins I want to welcome you to or back to USI. Each year we encounter students that are uncertain about the term "Student Veteran" and who that applies to on campus. The answer is simple, if you are military-connected be it yourself or a parent, you are part of our veteran campus community! Our lounge and any activity we do on campus includes you and we welcome your participation.

The Veteran Military and Family Resource Center lounge is located in the Education Center in room EC 0114. This space offers all of our students an opportunity to relax, study and be around those with similar experiences. The space offers four (4) computer workstations, coffee, microwave refrigerator, and free printing if you are a VA education benefit recipient.

Our Student Veteran Association promotes Veteran activities and programs for the campus. It is a local chapter of the national organization and is the voice for student concerns on campus. There are many programs and activities on campus to help you gain the camaraderie you shared in uniform. Time commitment to these are minimal, but without support, they will go away and with it goes the voice for veteran concerns and initiatives. Please consider joining today.

SVA HOSTS FAMILY DAY AT USI - SEPT 29

IUSI SVA in coordination with Rolling Thunder, Indiana Chapter 6 and the Evansville Vet Center will host it's annual family day at the newly remodeled RFWC on September 29,th from 10 a.m. - 2p.m.

This will be the first event in the indoor swimming pool and the rock wall and lake will be available as well.

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SVA RETURNS FROM SUMMER RIVER TRIP

The USI Student Veterans Association took an end-of-year summer canoe trip to Missouri to celebrate a banner year of accomplishments.

The 18-mile float was completed in July and served as a much needed break from the books.

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www.usi.edu/veterans

 USI STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

USI VETERAN TEAM SUPPORTS STUDENT VETERANS

When the University of Southern Indiana first developed its veteran program, it was important to place staff that could understand what it was like to be a student, parent, advisor and be service-connected.

Over the last 10-years since the inception of the Veteran Military and Family Resource Center, our staff has been service-connected. This is something we are very happy with as we assist our veteran community in navigating their educational mission.

JOEL MATHERLY - Director

Joel Matherly (MAJ, ret) served in the U.S. Army for 28-years and recently retired from a Mobilization Augmentee role with the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) as a Major. He started his Army career in 1995 as an enlisted soldier, then earned his commission through Officer Candidacy School. He served in Operation Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom.

JAMIE BANDY - Military Services Coordinator VA Education Benefits

Jamie Bandy (SFC, ret) joined our team after retiring from the U.S. Army after a 23-year career last serving in the role of a Career Counselor with the rank of Sergeant First-Class. She was the "Backbone of the Army", and now serves our students as the backbone of our program.

She continually works to improve processes within our system and is currently working on her Masters of Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing. Jamie works with students under the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) educational benefit programs.

DEBORAH BAILEY - Military Services Coordinator Tuition Assistance / Army ROTC Personnel

Deborah Bailey served in the U.S. Army for eight (8) years. She is a spouse of a recently retired First-Sergeant and mother of three (3).

Debbie works with our students under the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program(s) and assists the USI Army ROTC office in administrative functions.

USI SVA TO HOST FAMILY DAY ON CAMPUS SEPTEMBER 29

The Veteran Military and Family Resource Center at the University of Southern Indiana along with the Evansville Vet Center is hosting a Veteran Family Day event on Sunday, September 29, 2024 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. for all community Veterans and families of all eras!

Bring your family out to enjoy a day of fishing, swimming, and rock wall climbing.* Staff and other personnel will be on hand to assist you and your families with every aspect of this day.

The Evansville Vet Center will be on hand with instruction for fly fishing. They will provide the equipment and training. If you'd rather fish with a regular rod and reel, bring out your gear and cast a line!

Afterwards, cool off with a swim at the USI Recreation, Fitness and Wellness Center or climb the rock wall and get a birds-eye view of the facility.

Food will be provided for all that attend. All parts of this event are subject to availability and served on a first-come, first served basis while supplies last. All facilities are handicapped accessible and accommodations can be requested in advance if needed.

A graphic for the USI Student Veteran Association meetings. It features the text "STUDENT" in blue above "VETERAN ASSOCIATION" in white on a blue background, which is above "VETERAN" in red on a white background. Below this is a red banner with "MEETINGS:" in white, flanked by two white stars. At the bottom, in bold black text, it says "FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH", "1:30 PM (1330)", and "VETERANS LOUNGE - ED0114".

USI STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

USI STUDENT VETERAN ASSOCIATION ROLLS ON THE RIVER



"This was the most active any SVA has been since it's inception in 2013" said Joel Matherly, Director of the USI Veteran Military and Family Resource Center. "We have never had a trip with the SVA, but completed one with ROTC in 2007 down the New River Gorge." The trip was planned by the SVA leadership and sent for approval within the USI leadership.

USI Student Veteran Association took to the Current River on July 27th to celebrate the end of a successful academic year.

"It was a process, but well worth the effort from both the students and university to celebrate the accomplishments of the organization", said Matherly.

SVA members were treated to the trip due to their campus and community involvement to help and support USI or Evansville veteran organizations and events.

They arrived on Friday and explored the cabin and area. Then Saturday, they braved a morning downpour and started their 18-mile journey down the river never meeting a stranger on the way.

To be eligible for future trips such as these depends on your participation in SVA activities and events. See Chapter President, Zach Holder for more information.

USI STUDENT VETERAN ASSOCIATION - WHY MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT

The USI Student Veteran Association (SVA) is a Student Organization dedicated to providing educational, professional, service, and social support to the University's student Veterans, their families, and the community, as well as advocating for student Veterans within the University.

Active duty, guard and reserve, veterans, and supporters are all welcome to join. The USI SVA is associated with the National chapter of the Student Veterans Association. We are an organization of Veterans with the goal of assisting our fellow Veterans, service members, and their families make a successful and enjoyable transition to higher education and civilian life. We regularly hold meetings to hear and address the questions and concerns of our members, and host social events to support camaraderie amongst our members.

You can contact our office in ED 0114 at any time to get more information or attend one of our regular

meetings which are held the first Thursday of each month at 1:30p.m. Remote meeting attendance is available via Zoom if you are off campus during that time.

Celebrate with Service Members of All Eras



VETERAN FAMILY FUN DAY

Fishing



Rock Wall*



Swimming*



SEE YOU THERE!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2024

10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

RECREATION, FITNESS AND WELLNESS CENTER



- Assist military veterans and families in achieving their education and professional goals
- Promote and educate available entitlements and benefits available for veterans and their families
- Ensure that the needs and well-being of our student veterans and their families are being met
- Represent the interests and concerns of our veterans

Membership is not required to attend the events that we host. We invite our campus and community veterans to participate in any activity we are involved with.

CHAPTER 31 VA BENEFITS: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHAPTER 33 AND CHAPTER 31?

When it comes to veterans' benefits, understanding the differences between Chapter 31 and Chapter 33 can help you make the most of your entitlements.

Both of these programs serve unique purposes tailored to meet the needs of those who have served in the military, but they differ significantly in their focus and the types of support they provide.

What is the purpose of Chapter 31?

Chapter 31, also known as Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E), is designed to assist veterans and service members with service-connected disabilities that impact their ability to work.

This program aims to help veterans explore employment opportunities, address education or training needs, and, if necessary, retrain for a new career path.

Unlike traditional educational benefits, Chapter 31 focuses on helping veterans gain meaningful employment that accommodates their disabilities.

The VR&E program offers several tracks, each tailored to meet the specific needs of veterans. These include reemployment assistance, rapid access to employment, self-employment support, long-term services to pursue a new career, and independent living services for those with severe disabilities.

The program is highly personalized, providing individualized rehabilitation plans and ongoing support from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) to ensure veterans can achieve their career goals and live independently.

How does Chapter 33 differ from Chapter 31?

In contrast, Chapter 33, known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill®, primarily helps veterans pay for education and training costs.

This program is available to those who served on active duty after September 10, 2001, and offers benefits such as tuition and fees coverage, housing allowances, book and supply stipends, and even assistance with relocation expenses for veterans living in rural areas.

Chapter 33 is geared towards providing veterans with the financial support they need to pursue higher education or vocational training, without the direct focus on addressing service-connected disabilities seen in Chapter 31.

While both programs offer invaluable support, the key difference lies in their focus. Chapter 31 is centered around vocational rehabilitation and employment, specifically for veterans with service-connected disabilities, while Chapter 33 provides broader educational benefits to help veterans transition into civilian life through education and training.

For more information on these and other benefit programs, please visit www.usi.edu/veterans or make an appointment to discuss your options at 812-464-1857.

Please note: GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.

SOLDIERS WHO DIDN'T RECEIVE TUITION ASSISTANCE DUE TO TECH SNAFU MAY BE REIMBURSED BY ARMY

- Rachel S. Cohen, *Military Times*, Aug 2024

The Army said Friday it will reimburse soldiers who may need to foot the bill for college courses this fall as glitches in the service's tuition-assistance portal have kept hundreds of troops from accessing those funds.

Army IgnitED, which connects soldiers with federal funds to cover the cost of college courses and other credentialing programs, has been plagued by technical difficulties for years. Now, an effort to connect the online portal to the Army's personnel files appears to have created a new slew of problems for troops in the weeks leading up to the fall semester.

The hurdles could force soldiers to postpone their education or to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket to move forward with their classes. Some schools may opt to hold off on requiring payment until the Army can make good on its funding.

Soldiers who opt to pay their tuition out of pocket can request tuition assistance payments through their education centers, Army spokesperson Heather Hagan said Aug. 16.

"Education services officers at the education centers are prepared to support soldiers with these requests," she said.

About 200 help desk tickets related to system access or data accuracy have been filed since Army IgnitED and the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army, or IPPS-A, were connected on July 16, Hagan said. That's out of nearly 30,000 tuition assistance and 5,000 credentialing assistance applications processed since the integration, or less than 1%, she said.

The number of troops affected could be higher if others have run into problems but not submitted help desk tickets.

The Army hoped that integrating IPPS-A and Army IgnitED servicewide would streamline the process of applying for tuition assistance by allowing the portal to pull accurate, current personnel data directly from IPPS-A, Hagan explained. "The integration increases the frequency of Army IgnitED system updates from once a day to multiple times a day, allowing same-day updates to take effect for all soldiers," she said.

About 100,000 beneficiaries use the Army's tuition-assistance program each year. The initiative -- seen as a key recruitment and retention tool because it helps reduce the cost of higher education and curb the need for student loans -- offers soldiers up to \$250 per semester hour, capped at \$4,000 per year.

Troops seeking credentialing assistance to obtain professional certifications, such as commercial driver's licenses or pursue other short-term programs, also use Army IgnitED for financial aid. While 64,000 soldiers have used those funds since the initiative launched in 2020, the service is considering paring the program back to curb its ballooning costs.

Army IgnitED replaced its predecessor, GoArmyEd, with a disastrous rollout in 2021. Myriad glitches that made it difficult for soldiers to access their education benefits took two years to fix, catching the attention of congressional lawmakers and putting service leaders on the spot to provide answers.

In December 2021, Congress in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act pressed Army officials to reveal their projection for when Army IgnitED would be fully functional, as well as when troops and schools would be reimbursed for expenses caused by the system's errors. The Army estimated that date would come in late 2023, according to Army Times.

IPPS-A has also been fraught with technical difficulties since its phased launch began in 2019. The system aimed to consolidate the Army's administrative software into one platform but so far has failed to remain reliable for soldiers, plaguing troops with shoddy records management and significant health insurance problems.

Those who are encountering problems with Army IgnitED should contact the help desk at 276-231-0938 or army@bamtech.net

USI STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE USI CAMPUS AND VETERAN COMMUNITY

USI ENROLLMENT CONTINUES TO GROW

For the second year in a row, USI has seen an increase in its overall enrollment and first-time freshmen enrollment, as well as record graduate enrollment. Information sent to employees, and the community, on Monday, September 16 provided all the details released from this year's census data.

USI MULTICULTURAL CENTER TO CELEBRATE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OCTOBER 25-27

The Multicultural Center (MCC) is excited to host its 30th Anniversary Celebration, happening Friday, October 25 through Sunday, October 27.



OKTOBERFEST: ART & HORSES (AND BRATS!)

For Veterans, Service Members, & Military-Connected Populations

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5TH
11:30 AM - 2:00 PM
7644 W. LAWREN ROAD, BLOOMINGTON, IN 47403

In honor of your service to our nation, we invite you to a free wellness experience with art and horses. This event is open to veterans and those currently serving in active duty, the national guard, or the reserves.

Celebrate Oktoberfest with us and enjoy grilled brats served with sauerkraut, soft Bavarian pretzels, and non-alcoholic beer. Please bring a friend, your spouse, or an adult family member.

ADMISSION IS FREE // NON-RIDING EXPERIENCE WEAR CLOSED-TOE SHOES// RAIN OR SHINE

REGISTER
BITLY/4E3XLYW

CONTACT US
ASHLEY@PALSTHERAPY.ORG



2024 STAND DOWN HOMELESS VETERAN RESOURCE FAIR
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024, 11:00 am-2:00 pm
C.K.N EWSOME ENTER, R EC. 80M
100E.WALNUT ST, E VANSVILLE, IN 47713

SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- ✓ Employment, Housing, Legal Services, and more!
- ✓ Free haircuts for Veterans!
- ✓ Lunch will be provided

STAND DOWN: Offering a Hand Up, Not a Hand Out

The Veterans Sub-Committee of the Indiana Region 12 Homeless Services Council and Operation STAND DOWN will host the 2024 STAND DOWN on September 25th. This yearly event brings together community providers and Veterans in one place for camaraderie, food, clothing, medical, and other essential services.

Proof of Veteran status is required


SPONSORED BY:

ECHO HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This weekend will bring together alumni, current students and the community to honor the MCC's impact on campus. The celebration will include events such as Live at the Apollo, a family fun day and cookout, alumni recognition and much more. All events are open to current and former USI students, employees and the public.

ANNUAL WELLNESS FAIR ON SEPTEMBER 25 IN CARTER HALL

Mark your calendars! The annual Wellness Fair will kick off at 9 a.m. Wednesday, September 25 in Carter Hall. Students and employees are invited to come visit vendors and learn more about being healthy.



Veterans Food-Bank of America™
Division of Henager Museum
A Non-Profit Institution

8837 SOUTH STATE ROAD 57
ELSERFELD, IN 47613
Located @ Buckskin, Indiana

Phone 812-795-2230 & 795-2237

Attn: Veterans

The Veterans Food-Bank of America has a food-pantry located on Hwy 57, 2 miles South of the junction of Hwy 168 & 57 or 2 ½ miles North of the junction 68 & 57 at Buckskin, IN in Gibson County.

"By Appointment only"

(approximately 20min. from the Evansville VA Clinic)
What is needed from you (first time coming)
1. Proof of having served in our military (one time only)
2. Proof of income (once a year)
Call: 812-795-2230



TALKING HISTORY IN NEW HARMONY

Take a drive out to New Harmony, Indiana, as Historic New Harmony hosts a free Talking History event at 10 a.m. Thursday, September 19 at the Schnee-Ribeyre-Elliott House.

The idea behind Talking History is to provide opportunities for individuals to share and discuss memories and stories related to the town of New Harmony.



ARMY ROTC