



# USI STUDENT

# VETERAN

MARCH 2025

## NEWSLETTER

EDITION #2025-6

### 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](http://usi.edu/veterans).

### NEXT SVA MEETING: MARCH 6 @ 1 PM - STUDENT VETERAN LOUNGE (ED0114)

Meetings for the Student Veteran Association are held the first Friday of each month. Veterans, current serving and dependents of veterans are all welcome!



**INVETS**

USI SVA celebrates in the suite in the Liberty Arena during the 2025 Hoops for Troops - Military Appreciation Basketball game. Picture by Mick Hetman, Hetman Design LLC, Jan 18, 2025

### PRIORITY REGISTRATION FOR VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS BEGIN MARCH 31 AT NOON

Recently, students under the DVA Educational Benefit programs received an email concerning priority registration for Fall 2025.

Priority registration for the fall 2025 will begin on Monday, March 31st at noon. No special time periods will be available prior to the aforementioned date and time.

Once you have registered for your classes, complete your [NEW Semester Educational Benefit Request Form \(For ALL VA\)](#) which is found on our webpage or by clicking the link. This ensures you do not forget to submit it AND we can process your claim when we begin that term.

PLEASE DO NOT SCHEDULE COURSES THEN MAKE NUMOROUS SCHEDULE CHANGES. The purpose of Priority Registration is so you get the classes you want the first time. Understand that each time you make course changes, we must undo every administrative action we have made, then re-submit it. This takes a lot of time away from other students and daily operations. Use this time to get the schedule you want. This is why priority registration is so important. Please take advantage of this period and have your schedule completed.

### THE VA IS RETROACTIVELY INCREASING GI BILL BENEFITS

Veterans who earned both Montgomery GI Bill and [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) benefits while completing two separate periods of military service may now receive 12 additional months of educational assistance.

Do you qualify?

### Read More - Page 4 and 5

### 2025 HONORING WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE HOSTED AT USI

The USI will host the Tri-State Women Veteran's Honoring Women Veteran Conference on May 31, 2025 at the Conference Center in the University Center - East.

See the article inside to find out how to register for this year's celebration.

### Read More - Page 2

## USI STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

## USI TO HOST THE ANNUAL 'HONORING WOMEN VETERANS' CONFERENCE MAY 31ST IN THE CONFERENCE CENTER

USI in collaboration with the Veteran Military and Family Resource Center will host the Tri-State Women Veterans' annual 'Honoring Women Veteran Conference' on May 31, 2025 in a new location. This year's conference will be held in the Conference Center in the University Center, East.

"We are honored to be selected to host this annual conference for our area women veterans," said Joel Matherly, Director of the Veteran Military and Family Resource Center. "I can not think of a more dedicated organization than the Tri-State Women Veterans who serve to ensure that resources and service of our women service members and veterans are honored,

not just on this day, but 365 days."

This FREE conference for service women of all eras will include Sheila Corcoran as the featured guest speaker

She is the first female Commander of the Department of Indiana, Veterans of Foreign Wars. She supported Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Civil Affairs Officer in charge of a Civil Military Operations Center.

Come join us using the QRC in the advertisement below for a day of camaraderie, breakout sessions, pampering and free breakfast and lunch!

### PERSONALIZED CAREER PLANNING AND GUIDANCE: FREE EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER COUNSELING

Any student who is eligible for GI Bill benefits is also eligible for Personalized Career Planning and Guidance, a free benefit that provides:

- Career counseling to help students decide which civilian or military jobs they want.
- Educational counseling to help them find a training program or field of study.
- Academic and adjustment counseling to help students address issues or barriers that get in the way of their success.
- Resume support and goal planning.
- 

Students can use this benefit more than once. Please share this information with students and any relevant academic advising offices as you see fit. If students need more information about [Personalized Career Planning and Guidance](#), or want to apply, you can share our webpage on [the benefit](#)

### GUIDES TO HELP STUDENTS USE THEIR BENEFITS

Regardless of where your students are in their education journey, VA has a useful resource that can help them make decisions about what to do next. It's a three-part guide, "Building Your Future with the GI Bill":

- [Part One: A Guide to Choosing Your Education Pathway](#)
- [Part Two: A Guide to Understanding Your Benefits](#)
- [Part Three: A Guide to Furthering Your Career](#)

**2025 Honoring Women Veterans Conference**

**FREE FOR WOMEN VETERANS OF ALL ERAS**

- Registration open at 8 a.m. followed by FREE breakfast!
- Includes Complimentary lunch and an afternoon of pampering (hair, nails, hand massages, painting and beading), prizes and more!
- Breakout Sessions for added informational purposes
- Meet fellow women veterans of all eras and branches of service!

**SHEILA CORCORAN - PAST STATE COMMANDER**

Sheila Corcoran served as the Indiana Department Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars. Sheila is proud to be the first female Commander of the Department of Indiana, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

She enlisted into the Army in 1984 and earned her eligibility for the VFW by serving in Baghdad, Iraq in 2006-2008. There she supported Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Civil Affairs Officer in charge of a Civil Military Operations Center. After returning home from war, she retired from the Army Reserve after 24 years of service.

**5.31.25**  
8:00 a.m.  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA  
CONFERENCE CENTER

REGISTER TODAY BY THE QR CODE OR BY VISITING EVENTBRITE  
SEARCH: 2025 HONORING WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE  
For more information please call (812) 589-8992 or melissa\_gill12@yahoo.com

**STUDENT VETERAN ASSOCIATION**

**MEETINGS:**  
FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
1:30 PM (1330)  
VETERANS LOUNGE - ED0114



## USI STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

**PIONEER IN COMMUNITY VETERAN RELATIONS AND SERVICES PASSES AWAY AT 59**

The veteran community mourned the loss of a valuable person and supporter of veteran relations.

Kurt Harris served as the liaison for the Student Veterans on the Ivy Tech - Evansville campus for many years. He championed community events and collaboration between the campuses and assisted many students transition from their 2-year program at Ivy Tech into 4-year programs at the University of Southern Indiana and the University of Evansville.

The following is an excerpt from his obituary, but even that could not totally encapsulate his greatness or loss to the veteran community.

“Kurt Alan Harris, 59, of Evansville, passed away Sunday, January 12, 2025.

Kurt worked hard and put himself through college and received a degree in accounting from the University of Southern Indiana. Kurt, most recently, was the Assistant Director of the Financial Aid and the Veterans & Military Benefits Coordinator at Ivy Tech where he worked for 19 years. Throughout his 19 years at Ivy Tech, he touched hundreds, if not thousands, of students’ lives. He was proud to support veteran’s and their families, and his greatest work joy was attending Ivy Tech’s annual graduation ceremony. He was proud to be the Student Organization Advisor to My Brothers Keeper and was a member of the Black Men Achieve Initiative with Ivy Tech. As one of his co-workers shared, “I could go on and on about the quiet acts of kindness and support I witnessed from Kurt over the years and tell you how beloved he is at Ivy Tech.” He was awarded the Ivy Tech Staff Award for Excellence in 2011, nominated by his peers.

Kurt was a kind and soft-spoken man always willing to stop and take time to talk with people or simply wave and offer his smile. He was faith-filled and an active member of St. Benedict Cathedral. He enjoyed golfing, exercising, jazz music, Kentucky football, and he never passed up a chocolate chip cookie.

Kurt is survived by his wife of 18 years, Molly (McConnell) Harris, whom he met while they both volunteered as Bigs through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters. He is also survived by a son, Isaac and daughter, Isabelle, who made his dream come true of becoming a Dad. Kurt was a kind and thoughtful spouse and an attentive and loving Dad. His pride and joy was his family striving every day to be the very best Dad and husband he could be by tackling math homework, finding new recipes for dinner, coming up

with little surprises for the kids, and sharing his love of music and sports with his children.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Isaac and Isabelle Education Fund with checks made payable to Isaac or Isabelle Harris at Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, 7300 Eagle Crest Boulevard, Evansville, IN 47715, Attn: Meredith Connors.”



*Kurt Harris attended many veteran community events. He is at the resource fair during the annual Honoring Women Veterans Conference in 2023 at USI. Tragically, Kurt passed away on January 12, 2025.*

Join us for an afternoon of bowling, delicious food and drinks, and great company. Show off your skills on the lanes and compete for the highest score.

**WEDNESDAY**  
**20 MARCH**

**11:30**  
**-2:30 PM**

**FRANKLIN**  
**LANES**

## **THE VA IS RETROACTIVELY INCREASING GI BILL BENEFITS FOR A MILLION VETERANS. HERE'S HOW TO CLAIM THEM** -AMANDA MILLER, MILITARY.COM, FEB 2025

Veterans who earned both Montgomery GI Bill and [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) benefits while completing two separate periods of military service may now receive 12 additional months of educational assistance.

The expansion follows a 2024 U.S. Supreme Court [decision](#) ruling that the VA had previously administered an aspect of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in violation of preexisting law.

The VA's website implies that it has already contacted beneficiaries who might benefit from the 12 additional months. If you haven't received an email about it but think your service might qualify, here's what we know:

### **Why Are So Many Veterans Getting Additional GI Bill Benefits?**

When the Post-9/11 GI Bill became law in 2008, many service members had already paid their \$1,200 contribution to the existing, but less generous, Montgomery GI Bill. Both laws provide 36 total months of education benefits.

A separate, preexisting law already said that when a service member earned entitlements under two different GI Bills, they could then receive 48 total months of education benefits but no more.

However, in the case of veterans who first earned Montgomery GI Bill benefits then later qualified for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the VA thought it locked in the 36-month limit when it required these troops to make an "election" to swap to the newer benefit, according to [the 2024 Supreme Court ruling](#). As justification, the VA cited a part of the Post-9/11 GI Bill intended to "coordinate" the benefits of troops who earned entitlements to both.

The Supreme Court ultimately agreed with the plaintiff, [Army](#) veteran James Rudisill, however, that because he served separate periods of service, he technically earned separate entitlements to benefits -- and because he earned separate entitlements, the requirement to make the "election," which the VA said limited him to 36 months, never should have applied to him. "Because Rudisill is already entitled to two separate benefits, he has no need to coordinate any entitlement," according to the court.

### **Who Is Now Eligible for Up to 12 More Months of GI Bill Benefits?**

Veterans who earned both Montgomery GI Bill benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits while completing two separate periods of service may be eligible to receive those 12 additional months of educational assistance. The VA created a ["decision tree"](#) to help veterans figure out whether they satisfy the criteria:

- Did you pay into Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (Chapter 30)?
- Have you previously applied for the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)?
- Do you have separate periods of service?

Veterans who answer "yes" to all three likely qualify for the additional 12 months.

### **How Does the VA Define Separate Periods of Service?**

A veteran's two periods of service can be continuous, such as via a reenlistment, and still count as separate periods of service, earning the veteran two separate entitlements, according to the VA. Serving first in one service branch, then later in another branch also counts as separate periods, as does being recalled to active duty from the Individual Ready Reserve. However: A single period of service extended involuntarily doesn't count, such as through stop-loss orders or another extension.

### **How Do I Find Out if I Officially Qualify for 12 More Months of GI Bill Benefits?**

The [VA says](#) it will automatically review the prior claims of some veterans who likely qualify, depending on when the veteran last received a decision on an education claim:

- Eligible veterans who last received a claim decision for VA education benefits before Aug. 15, 2018, must file a new claim by submitting [VA Form 22-1995](#).
- The VA will automatically readjudicate the claims of eligible veterans who last received a decision on or after Aug. 15, 2018. The VA said it will notify these recipients by email.

If you think you should have received an email but haven't, contact the VA at 800-698-2411.

## USI STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

## THE VA IS RETROACTIVELY INCREASING GI BILL BENEFITS FOR A MILLION VETERANS. HERE'S HOW TO CLAIM THEM -CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

### Do the Additional Benefits Expire?

Whether or not veterans have a deadline by which they must use their additional benefits depends on the date of their last day of military service, which is true for all Post-9/11 GI Bill users:

- Veterans whose last period of service ended before Jan. 1, 2013, have only up until their "delimiting date" 15 years later to use their benefits. The VA will extend their delimiting date based on the day they submit their new benefits application. The deadline to apply and receive a new delimiting date is Oct. 1, 2030. After that, the old delimiting calculation will apply.
- The benefits of veterans whose last period of service ended on or after Jan. 1, 2013, don't expire, so these veterans don't have a delimiting date.

### Are the Additional Benefits Transferable?

Veterans' ability to transfer benefits, determined by the Defense Department while they were still on active duty, remains the same as before: Their previous election still applies.

Those who received approval to transfer their benefits in the past will still need to actually transfer these new benefits by [following the VA's instructions](#) to do so.

The instructions also work for veterans who want to return their previously transferred benefits to themselves. Keep Up With Your Education Benefits

Whether you need a guide on how to use your GI Bill, want to take advantage of [tuition assistance](#) and scholarships, or get the lowdown on education benefits available for your family, Military.com can help.

Remember  
the

27 FEBRUARY  
**2025**  
10:00 a.m. - 11 p.m.

DATE



**RIVER CITY**  
VETERAN RESOURCE  
GROUP



**USI**  
Griffin Center  
(next to Reflection Lake)  
Enter on the 2nd Floor  
Take Elevators to the 1st Floor



1. ENTER CAMPUS AND TURN RIGHT AT THE TRAFFIC CIRCLE
2. FOLLOW BENT TWIG AROUND CAMPUS TO REFLECTION LAKE
3. TURN RIGHT AT REFLECTION LAKE TO CROSS THE CAUSEWAY
4. TURN RIGHT INTO THE GRIFFIN CENTER PARKING IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING



**VETERAN OUTPOST  
CAR SHOW**  
Supporting  
Tri-State Women Veterans

**Saturday, May 17, 2025**  
**9AM-3PM**

**Location: Christian Fellowship Church**  
4100 Millersburg Rd., Evansville, IN 47725

**Registration: 9AM to 12PM • Awards at 2:00PM**

- Car show entry fee: \$10 each vehicle
- All proceeds go to Tri-State Women Veterans Inc.
- Dash Plaques-Top 25 - 7 Best of Categories
- Club Participation Trophy • Best of Show Award
- Door prizes - Music - Food - Cake Walk
- Vintage Military Vehicles • Special Guests

**\*Rain Date: Sunday, May 18, 2025, 2:00-6:00PM\***

**Contacts: David B. Hale 812-319-7052 • Melissa West 812-589-8992**  
CFC Church Parking Lot • 225 Spots Available in the Main Show Lot



**CHRISTIAN  
FELLOWSHIP CHURCH** 4100 Millersburg Rd.  
Evansville, IN 47725  
812.867.6464 onlineCFC.com



## LOCAL VETERAN ORGANIZATION ACHIEVES IMPACT AWARD

Rally Point Events started out as an idea to bring a new, fresh set of events to the tri-state area for a replacement to the local circus act and thunder boat racing; both of which were experiencing loss of community participation, revenue and protest.

After these ideas were rejected by the sponsor organization, Rally Point came to life and took on the mission of not only bringing these events to our area, but then giving back to those same communities through charitable donations.

Initially founded as a veteran give-back, Lance Yearby, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, expanded his opportunities, not only in the types of events that his organization hosted, but also the charitable means he could support. From an idea to fruition, Lance Yearby and Rally Point Events have brought everything from outside music festivals such as the SALUTE and Red, White and Braun Music Festivals, to Professional Bull Riding (otherwise known as PBR), to The Wizard of Oz ice show. So what is the impact? Aside from the impact on the local tourist economy, venue rentals, and contracts with local employers and food vendors, his organization has provided countless pairs of shoes for children in our area; over 5,000 this past year alone with over 17,000 by the end of 2022 through the Evansville Police Department’s “Kicks 4 Kids”. Rally Point has developed other programs with it’s partnership with Shoe Sensation, like the “Combat Boots to Work Boots” program where industry standard work boots and shoes are given to veterans.

This 501(c)3 has a board that works directly with local veteran’s outreach programs to prioritize funds, scholarship awards, and other charitable donations, with over \$800K in total donations in 4 years! Though it was a surprise to Lance, it’s not surprising that Rally Point was selected as this year’s recipient for the Kentucky Flag of Learning and Liberty Award.

This award is administered through the Kentucky School Public Relations Association (KYSPRA) and reviews nominations that are submitted through a group or organization. Presented annually to a person, group or corporation outside the education field who have made a significant contribution to public education in Kentucky. The PR contact for Owensboro School System nominated Lance and Rally Point Events after watching the “Kicks 4 Kids” program the last few years. This contact stated, “thank you for making a difference in the lives of thousands of children in the Tri-state. Growing up as a kid who received shoes from programs like this. I know the importance of the Kicks for Kids program what it provides for Kids in need.”

This award will be presented to Rally Point at a ceremony in March. For more information about Rally Point Events, please visit their web page at: <https://rallypointevents.org/> or one of their events below.



---

 USI STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION
 

---

## CHAPTER 31 VA BENEFITS: WHAT ARE VA CHAPTER 31 BENEFITS AND HOW YOU CAN GET THEM?

Life as a Veteran after serving in the United States Armed Forces can be tough, especially if you are unable to work as a result of your service.

However, there are a number of benefits available, with the Chapter 31 program helping you to explore employment opportunities or, if needed, other services to assist you.

If you have a service-connected disability that limits your ability to work or prevents you from working, Veteran Readiness and Employment (formerly called Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment) can help.

### How do I get approved for Chapter 31 VA benefits?

There is a 12-year basic period of eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services, and a VA Veteran who is eligible under Chapter 31 must first apply for services along with visiting a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC).

The VRC will work with the Veteran to determine if an employment handicap exists as a result of his or her service connected disability. If an employment handicap is established and the Veteran is found entitled to services, the VRC and the Veteran will continue counseling to select a track of services and jointly develop a plan to address their rehabilitation and employment needs.

This will specify an employment or independent living goal, identify intermediate goals, and outline services and resources that VA will provide to assist the Veteran to achieve these.

### What happens if I am not eligible?

You need to satisfy the eligibility criteria to receive Chapter 31 benefits, which relate to whether:

- You have received a charge that is other than dishonorable
- You have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10 per cent or a memorandum rating of 20 per cent or more from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)
- You have applied for VR&E VetSuccess services

If a Veteran is deemed not to be entitled to services, the VRC will help them locate other resources to address any rehabilitation and employment needs identified during the evaluation.

## VETERAN COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CALENDAR

Date	Event	Location	POC
4/19/25	Wizard of Oz on Ice	Owensboro, KY	Lance Yearby- Rally Point Events lance.d.yearby@gmail.com
5/9/25	USI Army ROTC Commissioning Ceremony	University of Southern Indiana - TBD	Joel Matherly - USI jsmatherly@usi.edu
5/17/25	Tri-State Women Veterans Outpost Car Show	Christian Fellowship Church	Barb Kortz – Tri-State Women Veterans 812-550-0552 tristatewomenvet@aol.com
5/24/25	Professional Bull Riders	Ford Center	Lance Yearby- Rally Point Events lance.d.yearby@gmail.com
5/31/25	Honoring Women Veterans Conference	University of Southern Indiana – Conference Center (NEW LOCATION)	Barb Kortz – Tri-State Women Veterans 812-550-0552 tristatewomenvet@aol.com
8/23/25	Red White and Brauen Music Festival	League Stadium, Huntingburg, IN	Lance Yearby- Rally Point Events lance.d.yearby@gmail.com
9/17/25	Veteran, First-Responder and Health Care Professional Mental Health Summit	University of Southern Indiana - Carter Hall	Joel Matherly - USI Veterans jsmatherly@usi.edu
TBD	Home of the Brave Military Ball	University of Southern Indiana - TBD	Lance Yearby- Rally Point Events lance.d.yearby@gmail.com
11/15/25	ECHO Housing Gala	TBD	Savannah Whicker savannah.whicker@echohousing.org