

# EAGLE STUDENT VETERAN NEWSLETTER

812-464-1857



USI.EDU/VETERANS



www.facebook.com/studentvetsatusi



## Stay Informed

Find out about events involving the Student Veteran campus community by following us on GroupMe, Facebook and Engage!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Monthly SVA Meeting

October 6, 1:30 pm

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

### Veterans Oktoberfest

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Jasper, Indiana - blending of traditional Oktoberfest festivities with a deeper mission: to support veterans

### River City Veterans Resource

Thursday, October 30

USI Campus - Griffin Center 10:00  
This month's presenter is on VA Home Loans

### Patriot Gala

Saturday, November 1, 2025

C.K. Newsome Center - Presented by ECHO Housing and Community Development, this benefit event will feature a host of fun featuring casino games, dinner and cash bar, dancing and a special guest appearance by Mayor Terry.



Program Spotlight

## Welcome Back!

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.

VA Chapters 33, 30, and 1606 must verify their enrollment EACH month via text or phone methods.

REMEMBER: If you make schedule changes, but are still enrolled, you do not need to report changes when you call. When you report changes, the VA assumes you have withdrawn totally. Only report that if you have officially withdrawn from all of your courses.



## Staff Feature

## Meet the Staff – Veterans Serving 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 retired from 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.

***"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way"***

—John C. Maxwell



Club & Activity Corner

## USI Student Veteran Association Membership

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.

The USI SVA is associated with the National chapter of the Student Veterans Association. 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 Monday of each month from 12 -1p.m. in the Veterans Lounge ED 0114.

## Get Involved!

Interested in joining the SVA and our events? Join us in the Veteran Lounge the first Monday of EACH month and check out our page on USI Engage at <https://engage.usi.edu/organization/sva>.

## Scholarship Opportunity

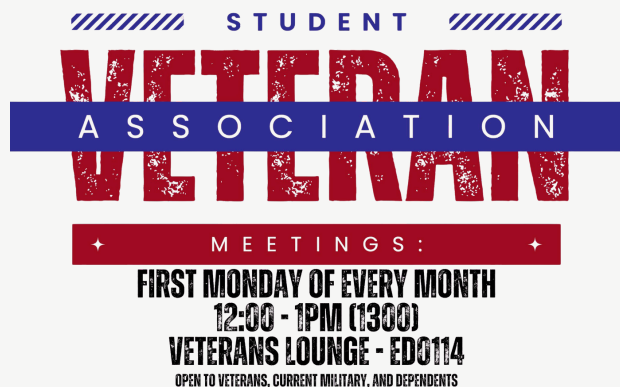
## 2025 Cincinnati Bengals Military Scholarship Contest

The Cincinnati Bengals are once again partnering with Ohio CAT to host our annual Military Scholarship Essay Contest. This contest offers the opportunity for two (2) deserving military members to win a \$5,000 scholarship and four (4) tickets to the Salute to Service game on Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

As of this morning, submissions are officially open! The contest will consist of submitting a 1,000-word (or less) essay on how their military service has prepared them to excel in academics. Essays will be graded based on the following criteria:

- Originality and communication (40%). Essay should be original, establish a main point, provide supporting detail and be easy for the reader to follow.
- Content (40%). Essay should include Entrant's service time, current goals and how Entrant is actively working to accomplish those goals.
- Writing Mechanics (20%). Essay should meet the word requirement with minimal spelling, capitalization, punctuation and grammar errors.

This contest is open to active, reserve, or retired military personnel (current ROTC is the only group not eligible). All veterans who are pursuing higher education are eligible, regardless of length of service. The form to enter is available via the link [here](#). Submissions will close at 11:59pm on Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>



## Local Veteran News

## Sanctuary on the Hill groundbreaking, \$6.7M for veteran support

Zorah Cole, 14 News, Mar 2025

WARRICK CO., Ind. (WFIE) - Organizers say the groundbreaking of the Sanctuary on the Hill is a unique endeavor aimed at providing holistic support and a renewed sense of purpose for those who have bravely served our nation.

Vice President of Mission First, Sean Georges, says the vision is to create more than just a facility; they aim to build a comprehensive haven where veterans can find not just support, but a renewed sense of purpose and belonging.

"That's why we're here, were finally getting this thing right," Georges says. "It always was our collaborative community responsibility to bring the military veterans back into the fold."

Officials emphasize that the facility will offer a multi-faceted approach, addressing the physical, emotional and social challenges faced by veterans returning to civilian life.

Shawn Smith says he's served in the army for five years, deploying to Iraq two times, and he's witnessed firsthand the profound challenges veterans encounter.

Smith says many of veterans who have served have faced significant hurdles in our transition back to civilian life.

He says to see a project like this, a sanctuary designed specifically to address not just their unique needs but veteran families as well, finally coming to fruition, is deeply moving.

The Sanctuary on the Hill is envisioned as a vibrant community hub, a place where veterans can connect with each other, share their experiences and receive specialized care tailored to their individual needs.

"There needs to be a new model, and it starts with a place and this is the place, this magical place and these incredible human beings both military and civilian and a community that has the resources and the heart and that's what I love about our chances to get this right," Georges says.

As construction progresses, the community eagerly anticipates the transformative impact the Sanctuary on the Hill will have on the lives of those who have dedicated themselves to serving our country.

## National News

## Senators Banks, Hassan Introduce the Veterans Opportunity Act of 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Last week, Senators Jim Banks (R-Ind.) and Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) introduced the Veterans Opportunity Act to streamline VA programs that help veterans achieve economic success after serving in the U.S. military by establishing an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition. The Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration would reorganize existing VA employees and programs, not expand the size or scope of VA. It would manage employment, vocational rehabilitation, educational assistance, home loan, transition, and other economic opportunity programs formerly housed in the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Senator Jim Banks (R-Ind.): “From their years of service, veterans bring leadership, discipline, and highly transferable skills to civilian employment, they’re ready to succeed from day one. This bill helps veterans transition into civilian life and ensures our heroes have access to the educational and financial resources they’ve earned.”

Senator Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.): “Veterans have made tremendous sacrifices to keep our country safe, secure, and free. One of the ways we can recognize their service is to ensure that veterans are able to access good, high-paying jobs after their service. This bipartisan bill will help the VA provide greater focus on support services for veterans who are transitioning back into the workforce and will help grow our economy as well.”

Jared Lyon, National President, and CEO, Student Veterans of America: “Economic opportunity is a key pillar of a successful transition and long-term well-being for veterans. We thank Senators Banks and Hassan for their continued leadership and urge the advancement of this important legislation. Veterans deserve a VA that champions their full potential, and this bill is a vital step in that direction.”

### Key Provisions of the Veterans Opportunity Act:

- Reorganizes VA to create a new Administration led by a Senate-confirmed Under Secretary dedicated to economic opportunity and transition programs.
- Moves key programs like vocational rehabilitation, GI Bill education benefits, VA home loans, and the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) under one roof.
- Requires annual reporting to Congress on performance metrics like claim volume, processing times, and outcomes.
- Includes safeguards that the reorganization will not increase bureaucracy or reduce services to veterans.

Full bill text can be found [here](#).

## Managing Depression: Support For Veterans

USI graduates continue to serve our university and nation. Below are a few student veterans who were selected for promotion:

First Lieutenant CHRISTIAN ROSSGONZALEZ was promoted to Captain in October 2024. Christian graduated in 2024.

Second Lieutenant Erica Rozenboom was promoted to First Lieutenant in June 2025. Erica graduated 2021.

Captain Matthew Whitacre was promoted to Major in December 2024. Matthew graduated in 2013.

## Going Back to School? Here's What to Know

Whether you're still in uniform, already out or a family member who qualifies—this episode of the SITREP does a deep-dive into your GI Bill benefit. From how to apply to avoiding costly mistakes, be prepared and click this link:

[VA GI Bill\(r\) Information](#)

**ECHO HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT'S**  
**1st Annual Patriot Gala**  
 PRESENTED BY **BCS**  
 BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTIONS

**COMING HOME TO CASABLANCA**

Join us for an unforgettable evening as we honor the Veterans and First Responders who selflessly serve our community. Step into the elegance and charm of Casablanca, where you'll enjoy a delightful dinner, thrilling casino games, a silent auction, inspiring awards, music, and dancing. Don't miss this night of celebration, gratitude, and glamour—all in support of those who have given so much. Here's to you, our Heroes!

**Saturday, November 1, 2025**  
**CK Newsome Center**

VIP TICKETS	STANDARD TICKETS
Entry @ 4:30pm	Entry @ 5:30 pm
\$150 / person	\$100 / person
\$225 / couple	\$175 / couple
\$800 / table of 6	\$500 / table of 6

Casino | Cash Bar | Dancing | Special Guest: The Honorable Mayor Stephanie Terry | Raffle | Dinner | Awards

**NOMINATE A HERO**

★ Valor ★ Unity  
 ★ Honor ★ Patriot

Scan QR Code to Nominate:

**SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE**

TRY YOUR HAND @ THE CASINO

★ Poker ★ Craps  
 ★ Blackjack ★ Roulette

Questions? Contact Kim at kim.armstrong@echohousing.org







**RIVER CITY**  
VETERAN RESOURCE  
GROUP

# LENDING A HAND

UNDERSTANDING VA HOME LOANS

VA loans are mortgage options backed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for eligible service members, Veterans, and surviving spouses. These loans typically offer benefits like no down payment, no Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI), and lower interest rates compared to conventional loans.

Learn how to navigate this process to secure a home for your family!

**September 25, 10a.m. - 11a.m.**

**LOCATION**  
University of Southern Indiana  
Griffin Center  
8600 University Boulevard  
Evansville, IN 47712



**2025 STAND DOWN**  
HOMELESS VETERAN RESOURCE FAIR

**Wed. September 24, 2025**  
11am - 2pm  
**CK Newsome Center**  
100 E. Walnut St. Evansville, IN 47713

**SERVICES AVAILABLE:**

- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Legal Services
- ✓ Free Haircuts for Vets
- ✓ Free Lunch
- ✓ Healthcare
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Much More

**PROOF OF VETERAN STATUS IS REQUIRED**

**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 2025 STAND DOWN on September 24th. This yearly event brings together community providers and Veterans in one place for camaraderie, food, clothing, medical, and other essential services.

**YOU CAN HELP!**  
Turn the page for sponsorship opportunities

Proudly brought to you by








**EVANSVILLE THUNDERBOLTS**

# MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

PRESENTED BY **VETHELP**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7 @ 7:00 PM FORD CEN**

Join the Evansville Thunderbolts for a night to honor all branches of the military for their hard work! A discounted ticket of (goal zone) or \$17 (center ice) will be available for purchase. Military personnel & up to 5 people with proof of identification. SCAN BELOW FOR TICKET DEAL





**GIVE US A CALL AT 812-422-BOLT (26)**

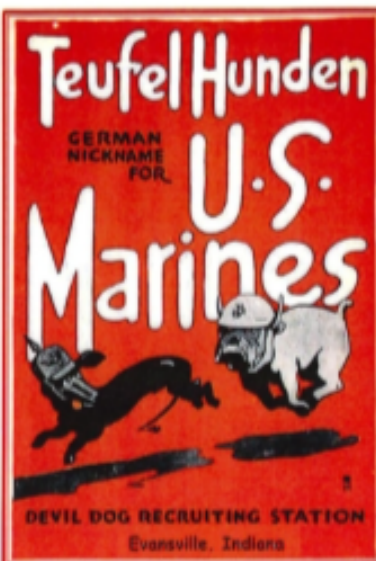
## 250<sup>th</sup> Marine Corps Birthday Ball

Legend has it that on 10 November 1775 Samuel Nicholas was commissioned by the new government of the fledgling United States to "stand up two battalions of Marines" to serve onboard US Navy ships. Nicholas went to Tun Tavern in Philadelphia and organized the first 100 of the "few good men" who became Marines. Our Birthday Ball in Evansville celebrates the birth of our Corps. For 250 years young people have stood up, raised their right hands and sworn to defend our nation against all enemies.

**Saturday, November 8, 2025**  
**Evansville Country Club**  
(3810 Stringtown Road)  
**5:30 until Midnight Dinner, Dancing, Cash Bar**

**Special Guest Speaker**      **Major**  
**David Westmeyer**      **Marine**  
**Helicopter Pilot**

**Tickets \$50/person**  
(Table sponsorships available see website address below)




**Join us for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of the United States Marine Corps.**


**For more information or to purchase your tickets contact:**

**David Jones – office (812) 802-5807**  
**or cell (812) 483-1276**

**Or go to [www.mclivercities1090.com](http://www.mclivercities1090.com)**



**Requested attire:  
Semi-formal  
to Formal**



**VMS**  
VANDERBURGH HUMANE SOCIETY

## HELP FOR HEROES

The Vanderburgh Humane Society's newest program offers assistance to veterans with pets in the Evansville region. Pets enrich our lives and benefit our mental health, and we're here to help veterans and their pets stay happy & healthy - together at home!

**AVAILABLE SERVICES:**

- Dog & cat distemper vaccines
- Flea & tick prevention
- Spay/neuter assistance
- Microchip with national registration
- Pet food assistance
- Assistance with appointment scheduling, forms, & transport when available, etc.

**CONTACT INFO:**

Wende McKinney  
Director of Operations  
[w.mckinney@vhsilifesaver.org](mailto:w.mckinney@vhsilifesaver.org)  
(812) 426-2563 ext. 220

Leave a voicemail for a call back.

**SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFO!**

