The new veterans are called the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Exactly one year has passed since the new GI Bill, entitled the 9/11 GI Bill, became active on August 1st 2009. Many attend school in higher education to use their educational benefits for a leg up on getting back into a career that complements their learned skills from military experience. These veterans have an average age of about twenty-six years old, and many have part-time jobs, even with their benefits, to make ends meet. Their work leaves them less time to study than is desirable, but judging by their marks, they rank as high as the average civilian student, and in many cases, higher. This is probably due to the fact that they are older and more mature and take their lecture hours and study time more seriously than the average student.

The veterans are highly in favor of an accelerated program, mainly because they want to finish college quickly and get back on their life’s mission. Along with finishing college quickly, they are not in favor of the fraternity and sorority system, but they do favor social groups such as the veterans’ organizations on their campus. Their chief dissatisfaction has been with regard to finances, living conditions, and unsatisfactory classroom methods. The major complaint of veterans living at home is their lives seem to slow down to a normal and dull everyday routine too suddenly. Those living neither at home nor on the campus are finding living arrangements unsatisfactory because of the high cost of living and crowded conditions, intensified with a university situated in a highly congested area.

Last but not least, the general opinion of the soldiers is that the teaching staff is not up to the standards expected. Some believe the lecture material is poorly organized and the lectures ineffectively presented. Colleges, on the whole, seemed to be uninterested in improving their standards and methods of instruction and wasted students’ time and effort by requiring too many courses that had no direct bearing on their major studies.

This is our new veteran today. How do we serve, support and graduate a successful veteran? It will take a whole campus village to raise our men and women veterans returning home from the present wars. Let’s work together. They deserve our best as they gave their best.
Chapter 35 of the Montgomery GI Bill is also known as Survivors’ & Dependents’ Educational Assistance (DEA). You will find the exact wording of the Chapter under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations. DEA provides educational and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition. It also provides these educational benefits to eligible dependents of veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition.

According to the Veterans Administration (VA) Pamphlet 22-73-3, to be eligible, dependents must be a spouse, son, or daughter (including stepchild or adopted child), of a veteran who meets the following requirements.

- Veteran is permanently and totally disabled as the result of, or dies of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of or be aggravated by active duty.
- Veteran with a permanent and total service-connected disability dies from any cause.
- Service member is missing in action or is captured in line of duty and is currently being held by a hostile force.
- Service member is currently forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- Service member is hospitalized or receiving outpatient care for a VA determined service-connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged or released from service for this service-connected disability. Dependents may be eligible under this provision.

The maximum number of months to receive these educational benefits is 45.

The eligibility period is different for a current spouse than for a surviving spouse, so read the pamphlet carefully. With these benefits, you may pursue a degree or certificate program, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and special restorative or vocational training. Eligible spouses may take a correspondence course.

For more information, read the DEA Program pamphlet (online at http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH35/CH35_Pamphlet.pdf) and go to the following VA website: http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm#DEA. You may also call one of the following numbers.

1-800-827-1000
1-888-GI-BILL-1 or
1-888-442-4551
This fall semester, the UH Community will engage in sensitivity training for students, faculty, and staff. Veterans have been very vocal about issues that concern their experiences. Through informal discussions at the Veterans’ Services Office, we found out that veterans need to be understood, and here are some things to think about when communicating or teaching a veteran.

First, treat veterans as you would any other student. Do not single them out for special attention. Remember that the average veteran has proven his or her ability to adapt to strange surroundings and to navigate his or her way through a more complicated bureaucracy than the average academic could endure.

Second, do not thank veterans you don’t know for their service. Most people who served had mixed motives for enlisting in the first place. Complicated feelings about the experience, especially in combat, could be misconstrued.

Third, do not shy away from any political or social issues appropriate to your class. While they may have conformed to military discipline long enough and well enough to earn honorable discharges, veterans are not monolithic in their attitudes, ideals, and values. Expect them to be just as open-minded and diverse in their opinions and viewpoints as any other group of today’s students. Conversely, expect them to resent unfounded assumptions about their politics and personal beliefs. By the same token, if you have never been in the military, do not assume that you really know what it is like and what it is all about. Do not approach today’s veterans as “people who were lost and now are found.”

Fourth, when it comes to what they did in the war, don’t ask; wait for them to decide if and when they want to tell. The experience of combat is largely ineffable. It cannot be adequately expressed or shared with people who have not experienced it, and most who have are conflicted about it. If they do choose to share, do not judge. Remember that those who have not been there do not share the same frame of reference. In general, veterans prefer to let other veterans do the listening. They know they’ll understand.

Finally, expect veterans to do well. Just as the expectation that someone will behave badly can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, greeting someone with the expectation that he or she will excel can achieve the desired result. And, with older students in general, instructors always need to guard against appearing to be patronizing or condescending.

By Allen Grundy
WHAT WE OFFER
OUR UH VETERANS

- Referrals for credit evaluation of military training
- Referrals for VA health benefits.
- Assistance with transition and adjustment to civilian life
- Unlimited, free access to computers, local telephone calls, and facsimile transmittals
- 200 photocopies or computer print-outs per month
- A quiet study room

268 University Center
Houston, Texas 77204-4024
Phone: 713-743-5490
Fax:713-743-0680
vets@mail.uh.edu

"Veterans Helping Veterans"

www.uh.edu/veterans

Program Director:
Allen Grundy
713-743-5493
agrundy@mail.uh.edu

Editor: Sandra Glass

Graduating Veterans & Veterans' Dependents

We’d like to help you celebrate this milestone in your life. If you’re graduating this semester, let us know so that we can recognize you in the next issue of The Reveille. In addition, do you have words of wisdom that you’d like to pass on to the student-veterans you leave behind? If so, let us know in 300 words or less. The following are a few examples for a topic:
- How UH Prepared Me for My New Job (or Career)
- What I Learned in the Military That Helped in College (or Civilian Life)
- The Importance of the UH Veterans’ Services Office While I Was a Student
- My College Experience As the Dependent of a Military Veteran

Keep in touch with the VSO after graduation. We want to know how you’re progressing with your career so that we can spotlight your successes and use them to encourage others. To be considered for inclusion in any issue, submit an article at least three weeks prior to the first day of the scheduled publication month. Read above for publication months. The article should be in MS Word format and sent to vets@mail.uh.edu, Subject: The Reveille.