Message From the Program Coordinator

After twenty-two years of serving my country in the Air Force and Army, I left military service as a Disabled Retired E-6. I have been Program Coordinator for the Veterans' Services Office at the University of Houston (UH) for a year and a half. It has been my pleasure and honor to serve the student-veterans and their dependents on campus. We have come a long way in our pursuit of excellence in our services and programming for these deserving students. With a new theme, “Boots to Books,” we intend to aid the university in attracting newly discharged veterans as they transition from military to civilian status and begin the procedure of enrollment at UH.

With about 1,719,700 veterans from the Texas area alone, this could mean a large flow of student population enrollment to help lead our university to Tier I status in higher education.

I want to thank Student Affairs and the university for all of their support as we move forward into 2007 and beyond with improved facilities, improved student attendance, and increased support from staff and faculty alike. Most of all, I want to thank my staff for all of their hard work and extended dedication to such a program. It can only be said from all of us to all of you, “We serve.”

We look forward to communicating with you in the next issue of the newsletter. Until then...

Office Renovations - In With the New

The Veterans’ Services Office began renovations on December 18 of last year. While under construction, the temporary location has been next door in the UC Cactus Room 270. Changes entail extra computer stations (including two that adapt to wheelchairs) and a designated quiet room for study.

Until we move into the new office, there is limited computer use and no use of the fax machine.

However, you are welcome to bring your laptop computer.

Your Veterans’ Services Office is working hard to provide a convenient, comfortable, and reliable study area. The survival of these facilities depends on your continued use of them. So please, HELP US HELP YOU.
The term ‘veteran’ means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Spotlight on Veteran Tiffany Tuncle

Tiffany is a retired U. S. Navy veteran and served at Naval Air Station Coronado near San Diego, California. She was an air traffic controller and is a Chapter 31 (vocational rehabilitation) recipient.

The student-veteran will graduate Magna Cum Laude in May with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication Disorders. She chose this career because it seemed interesting, and she wanted to help all kinds of people as she did in the military.

In addition, Tiffany is a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society; National Society of Collegiate Scholars; National Student Speech, Language, and Hearing Association; and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Her plans are to go to graduate school, get a Master’s Degree in Communication Disorders, and open her own office and business.

What is a Veteran?

Do you know anyone who has served in the active armed forces and has never taken advantage of his or her veteran military benefits? Unfortunately, too many people are of the mistaken opinion that if they never spent time overseas, never spent time in a combat zone, or never spent time in actual combat, they are not veterans.

According to 38 U.S.C. 101, “The term ‘veteran’ means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.”

Because of this lack of information, many veterans are losing out on benefits that they have rightfully earned. These benefits include extra consideration given to veterans on federal job applications (called points), business opportunities, housing loans, vocational rehabilitation, and life insurance. Assistance also includes access to burial, pharmacy, health, and educational benefits, as well as benefits for the dependents of soldiers who died of war related injuries.

If you (or a veteran you know) are not taking full advantage of your veteran’s benefits and would like to know more about them, go to the following website.

http://www.va.gov

You may also call or visit the Veterans Administration Regional Office nearest you to speak to a counselor. In Houston, the address and phone number are:

6900 Almeda Road
Houston, Texas 77030
1-800-827-1000
The Veterans, Troops, and Family Support (VTAFS) coalition held its first meeting on January 29, 2007 at the UH Veterans’ Services Office. The coalition formed out of a need to provide support to current student-veterans, as well as those who will soon be returning from war to the UH campus. VTAFS also wants to extend this support to the families of those serving in military war zones.

The first event of VTAFS was a free luncheon for veterans, troops, and their families on February 20 to show appreciation for their military service. Held at the A. D. Bruce Religion Center, the gathering was a forum to get an idea of the kinds of support the honorees need.

Sponsors of the luncheon were the UH Staff Council and the VTAFS coalition, which comprises the UH Veterans’ Services Office, The Campus Ministers Association, the Center for Students with Disabilities, Counseling & Psychological Services, and University Career Services.

Valentine’s Day Jog With the Troops To Support the Troops

The University of Houston Air Force and Army ROTC detachments, with the San Jacinto Chapter of the Air Force Association and the University of Houston Veterans’ Services Office, hosted a 5k jog around the UH campus. The 3-mile run occurred on February 14, 2007, from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m. to support our troops and veterans. Participation was extended to the public, as well as active duty, veterans, reservists, national guard, and retired military. The jog began and ended in the Garrison Hall parking lot at 3855 Holman street and attracted about 150 participants. The following day, ROTC cadets and active duty Air Force and Army officers presented signed valentines, cakes, and other gifts to veterans at DeBakey VA Medical Center and the DeGeorge at Union Station home for veterans.

Salute to UH’s Student-Veterans

Freedom is not free. Never has been. Never will be.

Many times, we are so busy trying to fulfill our dreams that we take for granted the rights and privileges we enjoy, never taking the time to ponder how fortunate we are to live in this great country. All families enjoy the fruits of freedom in this country and there are few families that are not touched personally by someone who has served in the armed forces.

The U.S. military actually predates the nation itself, having been created one year before the colonists declared independence in 1776. Since that time, America has relied on the military to stand in defense for the nation’s vital interests. This call to duty is exemplified by the over 1000 student-veterans presently enrolled at UH today as well as by the many veterans who cannot be with us to enjoy what they have courageously underwritten. It began in the spring of 1775 on Lexington Green. On that day, Captain Jonas Parker and 75 armed Minutemen stood up in the face of over six hundred hardened British Regulars. Those first Colonial soldiers who died at Lexington made the ultimate sacrifice for an idea – the idea that they could form their own nation. These citizen-soldiers displayed the values that are central to all that we do and all that we are now.

At the University of Houston, we continue a tradition of service to our student-veterans. The U.S. military is now spending a half billion dollars a year in tuition assistance for the members of its active duty force, more than double the amount spent just four years ago. Veterans who choose the University of Houston will discover a broad array of services. The VSO, under inspired leadership and with newly-enhanced facilities, continues to achieve its mission of assisting student-veterans in obtaining well-earned government benefits, in transitioning to the civilian and collegiate environment, and assisting veterans in realizing their educational goals.

Here’s a salute to UH’s student-veterans for reminding us that freedom is not free.

David B. Small
Associate Vice President for Student Services
University of Houston
We'd like to help you celebrate this milestone in your life. If you're graduating this Spring 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 are leaving behind? If so, let us know in 100 words or less. Suggested topics:

- If I Knew Then What I Know Now
- What I Learned in the Military That Has Helped in College and Civilian Life
- How the UH Veterans' Services Office Has Assisted Me

Keep in touch with the VSO after graduation. We'd like to know how you're progressing with your career so that we can spotlight your successes and use that to encourage others.