President’s Voice
Kevin F. Leszczynski, VetNet President

On February 16th, 2012, we went to the Soldier’s Home in Holyoke, MA for our Martin Luther King Day of service in collaboration with the Franklin County Technical High School.

After signing in we were instructed to head up to the canteen area where we would be interacting with the veterans. As we walked through the door, we could feel the eyes of these veterans fall upon us with curiosity. After a brief introduction, we were welcomed among them.

In the corner, near a window with the sun shining on his back, I saw a gentlemen sitting in his wheelchair alone. I approached the man and introduced myself. His name is Stanley “Stoch” Steec and is 94 years old. He told me of his story about when he was drafted back in 1941 shortly before Pearl Harbor. As I listened to him speak with such clarity of names, dates and events, I thought, “wow! How can he remember all of this information as if it were yesterday?” He continued to tell me how he met his wife, went a.w.o.l for a week, went on patrol only to be mortared and showed me the after effects on his scarred hands. He went on about his son who was a math teacher at Greenfield High and how he had passed away.

After about an hour, out of the blue he made a dismal comment about how he “would be in this place til I go out in a pine box!” I asked what made him say that and he replied that he had come to accept his fate and was ready when the good Lord felt it was his time but he’d like to outlive his mother and sister who both passed at 95.

Hearing him say this made me realize these brave men and women faced death once before with fear and are now facing death again. As I was thinking this, a bell tone played over the intercom. Immediately the atmosphere changed. It fell silent and the only sounds were the names of a recently deceased veteran read over the speaker and then the sound of TAPS playing. Afterwards, the mood again changed back to the same mediocre tone.

I looked around to see the kids from FCTS interacting with these unsung heroes and being genuinely interested. It was such a great feeling to see people other than veterans, other than adults who actually cared for veterans.

To see these kids put a smile on the faces of men and women who from the sounds of it haven’t smiled in a while was amazing!

The sounds of laughter could be heard coming from a few of the tables and my heart was for a brief moment at ease with the world around me.

Finally, it was time for us to depart and we said our goodbyes. We were all touched in some way by at least one of these people and have taken something away from it. We all agreed that we look forward to going back again.

Respectfully,

Kevin F. Leszczynski

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“When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on a little longer.”

–Eleanor Roosevelt
CAMPUS BEST PRACTICES

Class Attendance Policies

Some veterans have standing and long awaited appointments with the Veterans Administration - often months in advance. Changing these appointments may mean having to wait many more months, denial of benefit examinations or treatment.

While most veterans do not wish to miss class, sometimes it is inevitable to do so. Flexibility in this area is appreciated. The VA Medical Center in Leeds and other veteran service providers have begun to offer limited after hours appointments for veterans who work or attend school. This however remains very limited.

Also, it is important to remember that the mere act of going to the VA hospital for appointments may be very stressful, involve working on war trauma issues, or treatment for wounds and injuries which themselves often represent stored memories of war trauma. In other words, your willingness to be understanding of these issues will likely create a veteran – professor/instructor relationship that will be much stronger and success oriented.

Classroom Seating

Consider random (self-selected) rather than assigned classroom seating. Many veterans who have served in a war zone prefer to sit in the back of the classroom with their back against the wall. This seating choice allows the veteran-student the best method of attending and learning to class content. The reason for this is that most war veterans require a higher level of environmental control, and seeing everyone in the room from the back, permits there to be no surprises. Respecting this adaptive pattern is important.

DID YOU KNOW?

How far is a click?

In many military-related movies and television shows, characters describe distances in terms of “clicks,” causing many people to wonder what a “click” is.

This term is shorthand/slang for a “kilometer”. We found its’ definition in several on-line glossaries, including the Glossary of Words used by CAP Marines in Vietnam and the Language of War page from the PBS website for their “Vietnam Online” Program.

Finally, it is also worth noting that the book War Slang by Paul Dickson (London: Pocket Books, 1994) indicates that “click” originated in the Vietnam war and also give a second definition as “a short distance.”

“Before we pass judgment on others, we need to look in the mirror and face our own demons, and then decide if we are fit to pass judgment on others.”
– MSGT Joe Young
GCC Student

THE LOOP
Stay Connected

2012 Elections
VetNet Officers

Kevin Leszczyński
President

Michael Lewis
Vice President

Chris Rose
Vice President

Will Collins
Treasurer

Aaron Suddaby
Secretary

Chris Howe
Sergeant at Arms

Mike Linnehan
Sergeant at Arms

2.16.12
Veterans Information Fair
1:00-4:00 pm
Dining Commons
Open to all

3.14.12
Family Movie Night
6:30-9:00 pm
Dining Commons
Feature: Dolphin Tale
Open to all

GCC VET ALLIES
With Gratitude

This month’s edition of the Scuttlebutt is dedicated to two individuals that have been instrumental in creating, developing, and launching the Veterans Resource page on the GCC website.

The following GCC members have been nominated by the GCC student veterans as having gone ‘above & beyond’ in their own individual ways to encourage the efforts of student veterans on campus. Both individuals have been committed to promoting student veteran access and resources at GCC.

DON ALEXANDER
GCC Class of 2009

ERICA GOLEMAN
GCC Webmaster

Tough Mudder has already raised more than $2 million for the Wounded Warrior Project

SAVE THE DATE
7.14.12

Check out Resources for Veterans on the GCC website: http://web.gcc.mass.edu/veterans