



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Military and Veteran Services**

*Division of Student Affairs*

# THE HUSKIE FOXTROT

**Military and Veteran Services**

**October 2023**

Thank you to all that came out to the office open house in September. We will be holding more events this year including the annual Veteran's Week, as well as tabling events to answer questions and talk to students in Holmes Student Center and in some college buildings, including the College of Business.

**Veteran's Day** at NIU will be celebrated on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Altgeld Auditorium at 11am. Please come and fellowship with those that served and people who support. The Warriors Brunch immediately follows the ceremony. Catch some of the staff out around campus at this event or others!

As a reminder, if you have not yet filled out the Enrollment Certification Form on our website and want to use your benefits, please complete that form as soon as possible. All those that have submitted their forms have been certified as long as we have all the required paperwork. If you are still waiting for a certification, please check your email in case we have requested any documents. We will start looking for Spring forms next month!

This publication was started in 2016 by Emily Schiro. She was a graduate assistant in the Military Services Office. Since just before COVID there has not been a newsletter sent out, but we are starting again! We plan to include many topics and would love suggestions and interests from across campus! Please reach out to [mss@niu.edu](mailto:mss@niu.edu) with any questions, suggestions, comments, and/or concerns.

## Looking for a campus job?

The Office of Military and Veteran Services in partnership with the Disability Resource Center has created a work study opportunity for students utilizing the G.I. Bill. For additional information, please email [mss@niu.edu](mailto:mss@niu.edu) or stop by the MVS Lounge in PCLB room 160. The position is for front desk duties and the salary is the state of Illinois minimum wage (not taxed).

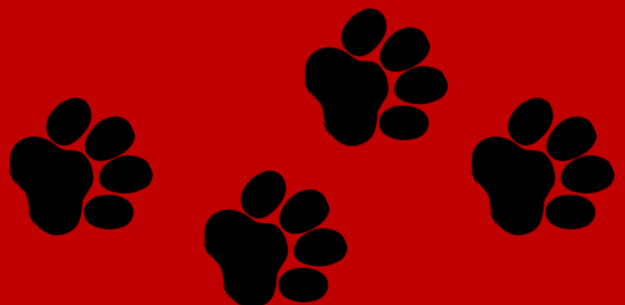
## Join the Student Veterans Association!

The Student Veterans Association is working on expanding since the pandemic. If you are interested in getting involved please contact the club President, Danielle Merlo, at [Z1913773@students.niu.edu](mailto:Z1913773@students.niu.edu). Or, log on to Huskie Hub and join! Their next meeting is November 1st at 4:30pm online



**IN THIS EDITION**

- ⇒ Meet the Team
- ⇒ Featured Resource: VITAL
- ⇒ Tough Mudder
- ⇒ Who We Serve Interviews



# Meet the Team!



The Military and Veteran Service Team resides in the Peter's Campus Life building room 160. This has been the location since they moved in 2019. The office is open from 8am to 4:30pm for military connected students to come visit, ask questions, or work on homework. The lounge is open for your use as a nice spot to hangout between classes, somewhere to meet with a group, or anything else.

Front Row: Shelby Davis, Jorie O'Brien, Joci Hasson, Keegan Curtis, Eric Armstrong. Back Row: Jason Keith, Eric Carlson, Martin Aster, Eugene Johnson. Not pictured: Nancy Vazquez.

Eric Armstrong served in the US Marine Corps from 1999-2003. He has worked in higher education for 18 years in different roles, mainly working with student veterans. His fun fact is that he is an avid fan of sports, especially football.

Jorie O'Brien worked at NIU in the financial aid office and now in the MVS office. She worked as a certifying official for 6 years at a community college before working as one now. She has not served, but is a dependent of a Vietnam Veteran. Her fun fact is she is left handed and is crafty. She is also an avid sports fan, especially of baseball.



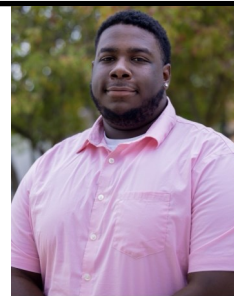
Martin Aster: I'm a Junior pursuing Geography. I'm a Dependent and my father was in the Army. I prefer real food like Capri-Suns.



I am a second year Physical Therapy graduate student from Arizona. My stepdad and fiancé are in the Army. I hope to work with the VA after graduation.



Jason Keith: I am a retired Navy Chief pursuing a degree in Speech Language Pathology. I bring the fun! I like to ring the office bell.



Eugene Johnson: I am VP of ACM and am on the SGA senate. My father is a US Army Vet. I am a junior right now in Health Sciences.



Joci Hasson: I'm a Sophomore double major in Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, Nonprofit major. I'm currently in the Army National Guard 12W Carpentry Masonry Specialist.



Keegan Curtis: I am a marketing major. I was a 13B in the Army, now I am in the reserves and going to Drill Sergeant School.



Eric Carlson: I am senior Nursing student. I am an Air Force veteran. I served as an active duty avionics tech on the B-52.



Nancy Vazquez: I am a sophomore majoring in Accounting. I am currently serving in the Army Reserves. I am fluent in Spanish.



## Important Dates & Deadlines

October 27, 2023

**Halloween Dodgeball Tournament** hosted by SVA and DPTSA in the Rec Center 1-5pm.

November 1, 2023

How to Build a Resume Workshop from 3-4:30pm. Respond to the email to RSVP for a spot!

SVA Meeting at 4:30pm

November 3, 2023

Recognizing, Preventing, and Combating Human Trafficking Seminar over zoom 9am-1:30pm. Contact [nsalimi@niu.edu](mailto:nsalimi@niu.edu) for more information.

November 6, 2023

NIU Esports Troopa Koopa Tournament 5-7pm in Altgeld Hall 100

Veterans can register for classes early starting today!

November 8, 2023

Family Bowling and Pool Night at the Huskie Den from 5-7pm

November 10, 2023

NIU Veteran's Day Ceremony at 11am at Altgeld Auditorium. Warriors Breakfast will follow.

November 15, 2023

My Scholarships open so apply through the NIU portal.

November 17, 2023

Open Enrollment begins, you can now fill out Enrollment Certification Forms this day for next semester!

November 22-26, 2023

Thanksgiving Break

## FEATURED RESOURCE: **VITAL**

VITAL stands for Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership. VITAL is the VA's approach to reaching out to Student Veterans to help facilitate the transition from Service Member to student. VITAL aims to enhance academic retention and success by supporting and assisting Veterans and active-duty service members with planning for and completing college and vocational education. VITAL collaborates with colleges and universities, local VA hospitals and medical centers, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and community organizations to link Veterans to appropriate resources and services. VITAL can help with identifying and meeting educational goals by providing school and/or vocational training opportunities, resources for tutoring services or GED prep, and guidance on receiving academic accommodations. VITAL can also assist Veteran students with enrolling in VA healthcare, scheduling medical and mental health appointments, navigating eBenefits and MyHealtheVet, and coordinating care.

Twice a month, started Wednesday, October 11th from 9am to 1pm, a dedicated counselor, Krystal Gilewski, will be in the Peters Campus Life Building, Room 160 (Military and Veterans Lounge) to engage with our community and set up times to talk.

## **TOUGH MUDDER**



At the end of the summer semester, the Military and Veteran Services office offered to sponsor military connected students that wanted to participate in the Tough Mudder competition. These seven students took us up on the offer and went to compete the weekend before the fall semester started.

"The tough mudder was a lot of fun! I enjoyed running as a group because many of the obstacles were about teamwork and pushing each other both mentally and physically!" said Lucas Milan, a veteran and graduate student here at NIU.

All of finished the course together as a team. They celebrated with the group picture above. If there is an event like this that you want to get involved in or have gotten involved in, then tells us about it at [mss@niu.edu](mailto:mss@niu.edu)!

# WHO WE **SERVE**

Share your story in next months issue of the Huskie Foxtrot! Stop by the office or email us if you are interested! We would love to hear and share the variety of experiences everyone across campus has had.

The office would also like to feature a picture wall for service members to bring in a picture from when they served. Show off those dress uniforms from every branch! Dependents are also welcome to bring in pictures of parents and spouses, especially if you are in the picture with them! Please make sure there are no weapons showing in order to follow school policies.

## **Veteran**

Name: Pensalon (Penny) Williams

Major: Public Health Administrations

Year: Senior

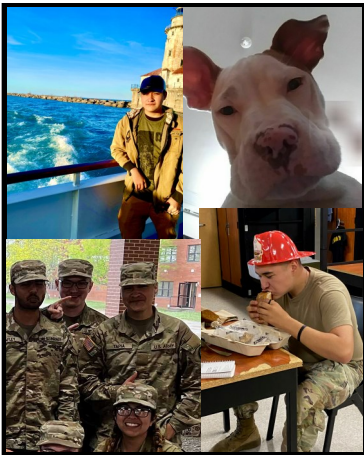
Benefit: Vocational Rehabilitation CH 33

Service: Army 1980-1986 and returned to serve in Kuwait for two tours, Medical Supply and Medical Assistant. She was also in an ROTC program before joining.

Comments: "The office is very welcoming. Eric and Martin always made sure I had my paper-work finished."



## **National Guard/Reserves**



Name: Brian Tapia

Major: Nursing

Year: Sophomore

Benefit: Using the National Guard Grant and Chapter 1606

Service: National Guard since May 21, 2021 92W— Water Purification Specialist

Comments: The office is a nice place, its quiet. If you need assistance with the form they are right there. The workers here are very efficient, and they processed my guard grant in less than a week.

Fun Fact: "I like water, I guess. I like playing with my dog."

## **Dependent**

Name: Shelby Davis

Major: Physical Therapy

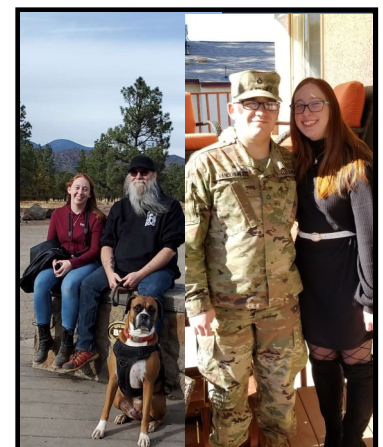
Year: 2nd year Graduate student

Benefit: Chapter 35 Dependent's Educational Assistance

Who has served: "My step-father served in the Army during Desert Storm as a Medic. Also my fiancé is currently in the Army, serving as a 12T—Technical Engineer."

Comments: "This office has one of the easiest ways to use benefits that I have seen, and is the office is a great environment to visit and work in."

Fun Fact: "I would like to work with on a base with a Holistic Health and Fitness unit."





## GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK!

To ensure this newsletter is tailored to your wants and needs— send us your feedback on this issue! Questions to consider:

1. Is there anything else I'd like to see included in the newsletter?
2. Did I think information provided was relevant to me?
3. Will this be something I read through in the future?
4. Can I provide any suggestions on improving the newsletter?
5. Do I want to have my club, event, project included?

### Sending Newsletter Feedback:

Contact [MSS@NIU.EDU](mailto:MSS@NIU.EDU) and in the subject line of your email, put Newsletter Feedback. Note: This is also the main email for the department, so your feedback will be seen and saved by the staff. Although any benefits related questions should not have the same subject line in case the staff sorts feedback and does not see the benefits question.

## Contact Us

### Military and Veteran Services

- CLB 160
- (815) 753-0691
- [mss@niu.edu](mailto:mss@niu.edu)
- <http://www.niu.edu/military-veteran>
- Hours: 8am-4:30pm M-F





# **HALLOWEEN DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT**

**1-5PM OCTOBER 27TH, 2023 @ NIU REC CENTER  
ENTRY FEE \$50 FOR TEAM OF 6**



**REGISTER ON HUSKIE HUB  
COSTUME CONTEST - SPECTATORS WELCOME**

**HOSTED BY**

**DPT STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
& THE STUDENT VETERANS  
ASSOCIATION**

# Veteran's Week Events

November 6, 2023

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Veterans' **Early Registration** Begins. Make sure you have your classes picked out or have talked to your advisor about your plan for the Spring. Then complete your benefit enrollment certification form.

November 6, 2023

5-7pm

The **NIU Esports Program** would like to host Veterans for a Mario kart competition in the Esports Arena, in Altgeld Hall Room 100. Come race your friends, collect coins and items to gain an edge and the top 3 winners will take a home an exclusive prize! There will also be drawings for prizes from NIU Esports and Military and Veteran Services Community. Please RSVP for the event at <http://go.niu.edu/TroopaTournament>

November 8, 2023

5pm to 7pm

**Family Bowling and Pool Night** at the Huskie Den from 5-7pm.

November 10, 2023

11 am

**NIU Veteran's Day Ceremony** will be celebrated on Friday, November 10th at the Altgeld Auditorium at 11am. Please come and fellowship with those that served and people who support. The **Warriors Brunch** immediately follows the ceremony.



**HONORING ALL WHO SERVED**

**VETERANS DAY**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA







NIU Esports Arena  
Altgeld Hall  
Northern Illinois University  
Questions? [esports@niu.edu](mailto:esports@niu.edu)

# Troopa Cup

**Open Play & Mario Kart Tournament**

**Monday, Nov. 6, 5 - 7 p.m.**

**Cost: Free**

**Snacks and refreshments will be provided.**

**Drawings will be held for MVS and NIU Esports merch.**

**Prizing for Top 3 Tournament finishers.**



**Register by Nov. 6, 12 p.m. at  
this QR code**

## TROOPA KOOPA TOURNAMENT!

During this veterans week come on over to the NIU Esports Arena to celebrate our fellow classmates, ROTC members, active duty students, and veterans in a friendly competition of Mario Kart. Race your friends, collect coins and items to gain an edge and the top 3 winners will take a home an exclusive prize! There will also be drawings for prizes from NIU Esports and Military and Veteran Services Community!

**This event will take place Monday, November 6th, in Altgeld Hall 100 (NIU Esports Arena) from 5PM-7PM!**

Please RSVP for the event below. Hope to see you there! <http://go.niu.edu/TroopaTournament>