honoring service
by ensuring success

ASU Veterans Education Fund
coming home

“Going to war, engaging the enemy in combat — that’s not the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” says retired Marine Lt. Col. Jay Kopelman, “nor is it for many veterans. The hardest thing is coming home.”

After military service, veterans return to a civilian society that continued to evolve without them. The challenges can seem overwhelming. In addition to emotional and physical hurdles they may face, many returning veterans are ill-prepared to compete in an already-stressed job market.

Arizona State University is working to ease that transition with efforts such as the Pat Tillman Veterans Center on the Tempe campus. ASU President Michael Crow says, “The Tillman Center honors the legacy of its namesake by providing a quality resource where our Sun Devil veterans can gather, find assistance, and receive the support necessary to ensure their success within the ASU community.” ASU’s initiatives on behalf of vets have earned G.I. Jobs magazine’s "Military Friendly School" designation for five consecutive years, and a top-50 ranking among "Best for Vets" schools by Military Times Edge magazine.

ASU Veterans Education Fund

In 2012, a group of anonymous donors established the ASU Veterans Education Fund within the Tillman Center to help veterans successfully complete their educations at ASU. The VEF began by providing hardship help, based on expiration of benefits and physical disability or family issues. The following year the fund expanded to include competitive scholarships that fill the gap between veterans benefits and college costs. In its first full year, the VEF provided 48 awards on the basis of hardship or scholarship.

The Veterans Education Fund helps ensure that veterans do not need to choose between family or other obligations and their studies. The value of that assurance is evident in increasing demand for VEF help. In fall 2013, 69 veterans applied for scholarship assistance. Funding was available to help only 26. And with the ongoing return of troops to civilian life, the number of applications to the fund will only increase. More veterans will seek out the VEF, hoping to build a future for themselves and their young families.

More funding is needed.

“We must all continue our efforts to ensure that these talented men and women who would be an asset to any company have every opportunity to succeed after they serve our nation.”

— President Barack Obama
they gave, and they give back

Perhaps it is because they shared part of their lives in service that these student veterans appreciate so much what donors to the fund have shared with them. They say, “When I finish my degree, I want to give back to the fund,” and “I want to give others the opportunity I was given.” “I'll strive …,” “I'll share …,” “I can bless others ….”

These student-veterans aren't looking for a reward for serving their country. They're looking for a path to education and a career that will allow them to continue to serve. Your investment in them will provide a return for all of us.

Evan Benson — Sgt., USMC Reserve (infantry — Iraq, Afghanistan); Bachelor of Science in geotechnical engineering ('14) “As a veteran, I'm much older than many of my ASU peers; an independent undergraduate responsible for paying bills without support from my family. The VEF helped subsidize my education so I can continue to succeed academically (3.81 GPA) without financial stress holding me back. I'm forever grateful to the donors who provide funds for student veterans like myself and I'll strive to someday pay that favor back through donations to the VEF.”

Kiernan Wimmer — Sgt., USMC (special ops, recon — Iraq, Afghanistan); master's in management, W. P. Carey School of Business ('15) “I reached the end of my G.I. Bill benefits this semester and the remaining account balance prevented my finances from being in good standing. The VEF has been a great help as I transition from undergraduate to a graduate program here at ASU. I had a balance on my account which the scholarship entirely covered. The VEF lifted a heavy burden from my shoulders and I am ready to start my graduate career with a clean slate.”

John Reeher — Petty Officer 2nd Class, USN (Iraq, Qatar); Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering systems ('16) “My wife and I are very responsible with our money. We have just enough to make it month to month. A scholarship from the VEF helped us get ahead of the curve, pay down debt and be prepared for any unexpected costs. Finishing school debt-free will allow me to make the best career choices after graduation. I can work reasonable hours at a job that I enjoy, and my wife and I can bless others with our extra time and finances.”

“These scholarships help veterans transitioning out of the military by bridging the gap in their finances as they pursue civilian career goals and dreams. It allows them to invest in their abilities so they can become positive impact makers and leaders in the community.”

— Efraim Ruthenberg, Pat Tillman Scholar, MBA program, W. P. Carey School of Business
they stand ready

Enrollment for the next semester at ASU will soon be open. Veterans are already penciling in rows of figures, looking at bank account balances, estimating next year’s expenses. Some simply won’t be able to make it work without help from the ASU Veterans Education Fund — without help from you.

Your gift is a tribute to the young men and women who served to protect our freedom. You can make their dreams come true.

To learn more about the ASU Veterans Education Fund, including how you can help a veteran succeed, contact:

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