Veterans at the Monterey Institute: A World of Opportunity

The campus community at the Monterey Institute of International Studies includes students from all over the world, future translators and interpreters and diplomats and business people and non-profit leaders, as well as past and future Peace Corps volunteers. What many don’t realize is that this diverse campus community also includes a large contingent of military veterans—for example, in fall 2012 more than 51 veterans of the U.S. armed forces were enrolled at the Institute, making up more than six percent of the student body. Veterans are enrolled in almost every degree program at the Institute.

"MIIS is an excellent school and a good fit for veterans, not only because of its international focus but also because of its participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program."

Rebecca Allen, spouse of an Air Force veteran and MATESOL student

The substantial population of veterans at the Institute reflects the school’s strong partnership with the federal Yellow Ribbon program. The school adds institutional scholarship dollars to Yellow Ribbon funding to cover 100 percent of tuition costs for qualifying veterans and their spouses, one of the few graduate institutions in the nation to do so. The Institute has participated in the Yellow Ribbon program—part of the “Post-9/11 New GI Bill” benefits available to veterans who served after September 10, 2001—since 2009. To date, the Institute has provided more than $600,000 in tuition discounts to 94 veterans as part of its participation in the Yellow Ribbon program.

The Institute’s consistent support for veterans has resulted in it being named a Military Friendly School® by G.I. Jobs for three consecutive years, signifying that it ranks in the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace America’s military service members, veterans, and spouses as students and ensure their success on campus. The Institute also focuses on veterans’ transition from military to civilian life, especially in preparing for a civilian career—in the past three years, MIIS has twice hosted Project Hired’s Wounded Warrior Workforce Conference and Career Fair.

Veterans and their families are a vital part of the fabric of the Monterey Institute campus community, and benefit from a variety of resources and services designed to help them be successful at the Monterey Institute.

Marcos Medina
U.S. Army veteran, Iraq conflict

- Joined the U.S. Army after completing high school in Salinas, California, and was stationed in Texas and Georgia before his deployment to Iraq.
- After returning to the U.S., completed his undergraduate education at the University of California, Berkeley and enrolled in the Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies program at the Monterey Institute. “I felt like MIIS would be the perfect fit for me, and it has been.”
- Says the diversity of ages, ethnicities and life experiences at the Institute means that for many veterans, “it becomes easier to fit in.”
- Co-founded the student Veterans Organization at the Monterey Institute with the goal of “helping each other get through the difficult transition to civilian life, making everyone aware of the services offered to us in the area and encouraging each other to share experiences in the classroom.”

“I was a soldier in Afghanistan and now I have classmates from Afghanistan. I really can’t think of any other school in the world where I could have gone to be part of such an international community.”

Ross Belliveau, U.S. Army veteran and International Policy Studies student
Financial Aid for Veterans
Student veterans at the Monterey Institute may qualify for financial aid through the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post 9/11 GI Bill/Yellow Ribbon Program. Details on both programs are available online at go.miis.edu/veterans.

The Monterey Institute has agreed to provide contributions to eligible individuals who apply for the Yellow Ribbon Program on a first-come first-served basis, regardless of the rate at which the individual is pursuing training in any given academic year, and guaranteed funding for up to 75 veterans for the 2013-14 academic year. A veteran may be eligible for Yellow Ribbon program benefits if s/he served an aggregate period of active duty after September 10, 2001, of at least 36 months; s/he was honorably discharged from active duty for a service connected disability and they served 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001; or if s/he is a dependant eligible for Transfer of Entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on a veteran’s service under these eligibility criteria.

Veterans Scholarship Fund
In recognition of the reality that benefits such as the Yellow Ribbon program are subject to future cuts or phase-outs, the Monterey Institute of International Studies recently launched the Veterans Scholarship Fund. This dedicated fund is designed to succeed the Yellow Ribbon Program by providing partial tuition support to future veterans and their dependents. An ambitious multi-year fundraising campaign will raise money for an endowed fund with the capacity to support veterans at MIIS in the years to come.

For additional information about financial aid for veterans, visit go.miis.edu/veterans.

Student Veterans Organization & Other Services
The Monterey Institute has an active student Veterans Organization that works to ensure that all veterans in the MIIS community are utilizing all resources available to them to assist them in reaching their educational and professional goals. The group “strives to take a holistic approach to the educational experience of veterans, and works in a variety of areas to enhance the learning atmosphere at MIIS.”

The Veterans Organization also periodically hosts public panels featuring student veterans, and benefits from the mentorship of faculty advisor and U.S. Army veteran Professor Ed Laurance.

In addition, the Institute’s website offers a variety of online resources for veterans (see go.miis.edu/veteransresources) as well as career resources offered specially for veterans (see go.miis.edu/veteranscareers).

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Rebecca Allen
Spouse of active duty Air Force veteran

- Relocated to Monterey while husband attends the Naval Postgraduate School and the Defense Language Institute.
- Working on her Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MAESOL) degree
- “Though the coursework and academic requirements are rigorous, the school creates a very supportive environment to help students succeed. Classes are small so students get to know each other well and create a cooperative network; faculty members are approachable and accessible.”
- “With the education benefits the military grants, I would highly encourage soldiers about to transition back to civilian life to consider graduate school. An advanced degree will only make you more competitive in the marketplace. MIIS is an excellent school and a good fit for veterans, not only because of its international focus, but also because of its participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program.”

Ross Belliveau
U.S. Army veteran, Afghanistan

- Served active duty with the U.S. Army for six years, including a year in Afghanistan.
- Returned to the U.S. with the desire to understand the roots of regional conflicts, and is pursuing a master’s degree in International Policy Studies.
- “I think the school recognizes that veterans have a lot to offer. They bring a very different skill set to the table, and I think being so active in recruiting them is a giant decision for MIIS and an amazing opportunity for veterans as well.”
- “I was a soldier in Afghanistan and now I have classmates from Afghanistan. I really can’t think of any other school in the world I could have gone to be part of such an international community.”