Veterans at the Monterey Institute: A World of Opportunity

The campus community at the Monterey Institute of International Studies includes international 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 2013 more than 47 veterans of the U.S. armed forces and their dependents were enrolled at the Institute, making up more than five percent of the student body. Veterans are enrolled in almost every degree program at the Institute.

“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

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 or dependents, 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 $1 million in tuition discounts to 92 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 four 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.
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 2014-15 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; or 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 dependent 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.

Office of Student Services, Student Veterans Organization & Other Services

The Monterey Institute’s Office of Student Services (including its Veterans Services Graduate Assistant) and the student Veterans Organization work together to provide support and resources, as well as hosting activities each semester for the veteran student community. For example, in recent years the Veterans Organization has hosted a Veterans Day panel discussing issues surrounding the transition to civilian life.

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).

go.miis.edu/miisveterans

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 (MATESOL) 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.”

Angel Quintanilla

U.S. Army veteran

- Enlisted in the Army in late 2000, on active duty much of the next 14 years; still in the reserves as of fall 2014.
- Deployments to Iraq in 2004 where he served in Mosul, and to Afghanistan in 2008 and 2012, where he served as part of a Provincial Reconstruction Team working in Ghazni province and in Kandahar province where he participated in Village Stability Operations.
- Combined community college units with credits based on experience for 70 undergraduate credits when accepted.
- Finished his BA in International Studies at MIIS in May ’14 and is enrolled in the MA in Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies program.
- Wants to become a diplomat and raves about the unique opportunity he had while attending MIIS to meet Ambassador Alfredo Alejandro Labbé of Chile. “My classmate and I asked him if we could speak with him outside of class, and he spent two hours talking with us afterwards!”
- Says the financial aid staff at MIIS “really know their stuff and know how to help veterans tap into our benefits. A lot of veterans don’t pursue a graduate degree because they don’t know how to navigate the process; MIIS makes it easy.” Appreciates the events MIIS hosts for veterans, saying “it’s nice to have that solidarity with people who have had the same kinds of experiences.”