

# TROOPS TO TEACHERS

September 2011

CENTRAL STATES

Vol. 6-11



## Getting Started with Troops to Teachers

Now that you have decided you want to teach as a second career, how do you get there? Even if you have a couple of years before you retire/separate from the military, now is the time to get prepared. Many certification programs can take as long as two years to complete. Plan ahead and start now.

### Find out if you really want to be a teacher

- If you have not been in a public school classroom within the past few years, you might not know what you are getting into. Spend time in a classroom to see if you "fit" by visiting, volunteering or teaching on an informal basis.
- Many websites offer suggestions about how to be an effective substitute teacher. Search for *substitute teachers* to locate helpful ideas and tips.
- Meet with a school principal and request a working relationship with a teacher in a specific subject area. Once you have tested your resolve in an actual classroom setting and have found that teaching is for you, refine your goal into a definite plan of action.

### Decide which state you want to live and teach in

- At the very least, narrow your decision down to two states. Remember that certification programs and requirements vary from state to state.

### Decide which city or town you want to live in

- Consider your personal preferences as to population density (urban vs. suburban vs. rural). Find out what school districts and learning institutions are available in your new home. Check out driving distances – at some point you will have to take classes to complete certification requirements.

### Consider practical/personal issues

- Availability of teacher-preparation programs: Some states have programs requiring less credit and time in the classroom.
- State residency: You might have to pay out-of-state tuition rates for college credit.
- Financial support: Some states offer free tuition for returning military who are residents.
- Availability of jobs: Not just teaching jobs for you but job opportunities for your spouse.

### Decide what you want to teach

- Select a subject area. Remember that math, science and special education are in high demand. Also, select a teaching level (elementary, middle school or high school).
- Teaching certificates are issued by states generally by subject area and level (high school math, middle school science or grades K-6). A general decision is sufficient at first, such

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TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GI BILL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS, CALL 888-442-4551.

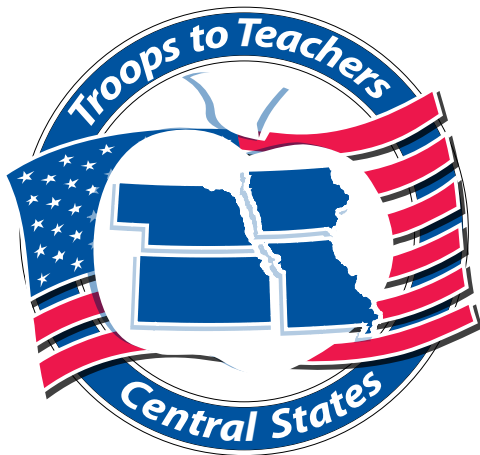
## Football Coaches' Mentoring Challenge Expands

For the past three years, Kansas State University's head football coach, Bill Snyder, and Tom Osborne, the University of Nebraska's former head football coach, have engaged in a friendly wager to see which state – Kansas or Nebraska – could recruit the most new mentors during the football season. Last year, the University of Kansas' head football coach, Turner Gill, joined "Team Kansas."

Raising the stakes for the 2011 Coaches' Challenge is the state of Iowa, which is throwing its hat in the ring – making this year a three-state competition among Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa. Last year, Kansas was crowned the winner for the third year in a row, recruiting more than 4,000 new mentors.

The 2011 Coaches' Challenge runs from Aug. 1 to Nov. 21. The winning team will be announced on Dec. 2 at the Kansas State vs. Iowa State game in Manhattan, Kan.

The challenge is hosted by Kansas Mentors, Nebraska's TeamMates Mentoring Program and the Iowa Mentoring Partnership. For more information, visit [www.kansasmentors.org](http://www.kansasmentors.org) or call 785-296-8447.



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*The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or Relay Missouri 800-735-2966.*

## Getting Started with Troops to Teachers

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as math at the high school level. However, this might need to be refined further, such as calculus in grades 11-12.

- Depending on your educational background, job experience and a district's needs, you might be able to obtain emergency certification to teach while you work on permanent certification. Do not underestimate your qualifications. If you worked in a technical specialty during your previous career, you might consider certification in a vocational field. Requirements for this type of teaching are based more on skill levels than college degrees.

## VA Medical Centers in Missouri

### COLUMBIA

800 Hospital Drive  
573-814-6000

### KANSAS CITY

4801 Linwood Blvd.  
816-861-4700 or  
800-525-1483

### POPLAR BLUFF

1500 N. Westwood Blvd.  
573-686-4151

### ST. LOUIS

Jefferson Barracks  
Jefferson Barracks Drive  
314-652-4100 or  
800-228-5459

### ST. LOUIS

John Cochran Division  
915 N. Grand Blvd.  
314-652-4100 or  
800-228-5459

The national **Troops to Teachers** website is located at [proudtoserveagain.com](http://proudtoserveagain.com).

### Teacher Certification Contact Information

#### Iowa

Geri McMahan

Phone: 515-281-8323

E-mail: [geri.mcmahan@iowa.gov](mailto:geri.mcmahan@iowa.gov)

#### Missouri

Debbie Butcher

Phone: 573-751-7863

E-mail: [debbie.butcher@dese.mo.gov](mailto:debbie.butcher@dese.mo.gov)



In order to qualify for the Troops to Teachers program, a veteran must have at least six years of military service. Most have much more than that. Often, a TTT veteran is a retiree with at least 20 years of service. This gives the school administrator a dependable teacher for today's challenging school environment.

# VETERANS EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTION

September 2011

MISSOURI STATE  
APPROVING AGENCY

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## Special Points of Interest

- The Department of Veterans Affairs wants all veterans to know about recent changes made to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- There are various ways to determine eligible benefits.

The **Missouri State Approving Agency Directory** features all schools and colleges approved for the GI Bill. Request a copy by calling **877-530-2765**.

## VA Reaches Out to Veterans to Explain Upcoming Changes to the GI Bill

The Department of Veterans Affairs is reaching out to inform veterans of recent changes made by Congress to the Post-9/11 GI Bill that take effect in 2011.

"The Post-9/11 GI Bill is incredibly important because it reduces the financial burdens of higher education so that veterans have an opportunity to achieve their education goals," said Gen. Allison Hickey, under secretary for benefits. "(The) VA believes it is important for veterans to be aware of changes to the GI Bill this year and learn more about how these changes may affect them."

Hickey said that more than 537,000 students have received more than \$11.5 billion in GI Bill benefits to help them take charge of their future.

Changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill effective Aug. 1 include paying the actual net cost of all public in-state tuition and fees rather than basing payments on the highest in-state tuition and fee rates for every state.

Another change involves capping private and foreign tuition at \$17,500 per academic year, as well as ending payments during certain school breaks to preserve veterans' entitlements for future academic semesters.

Additionally, certain students attending private schools in select states can now continue to receive benefits at the same rate payable during the previous academic year.

Beginning Oct. 1, eligible individuals will be able to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for programs such as non-college degrees, on-the-job training and correspondence courses. They will also be eligible to receive a portion of the national monthly housing allowance rate when enrolled only in distance-learning courses.

The VA is implementing the latest round of changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill and has already begun processing fall 2011 enrollment certifications.

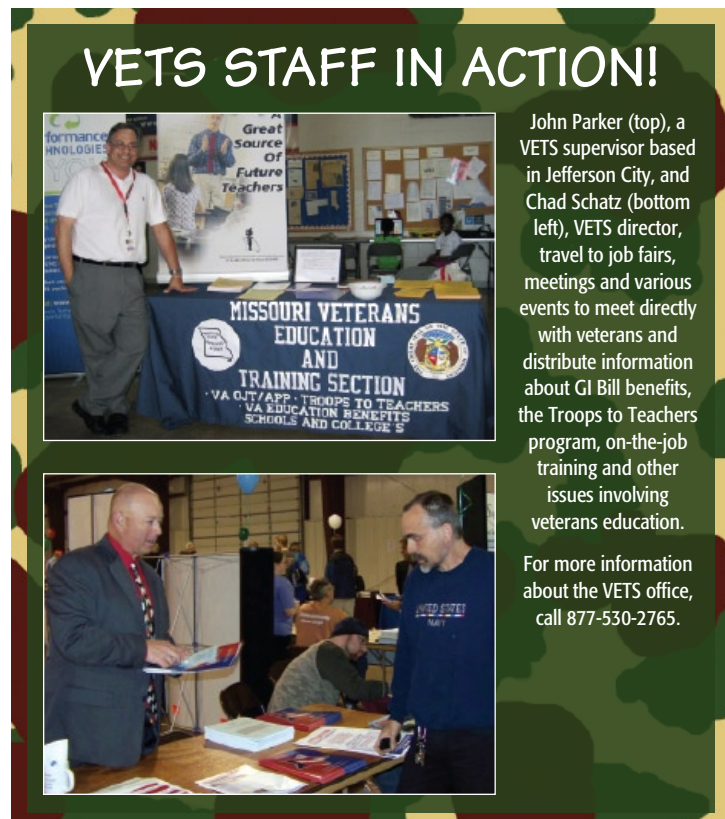


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## VA Reaches Out to Veterans to Explain Upcoming Changes to the GI Bill *(Continued)*

Outreach by the VA has helped to increase participation by colleges and universities in the Yellow Ribbon program, which helps students avoid out-of-pocket costs that might exceed the benefit. Today, more than 2,600 schools are participating in the Yellow Ribbon program.

"VA is committed to ensuring veterans have the information and tools they need to succeed," Hickey said.



**VETS STAFF IN ACTION!**

John Parker (top), a VETS supervisor based in Jefferson City, and Chad Schatz (bottom left), VETS director, travel to job fairs, meetings and various events to meet directly with veterans and distribute information about GI Bill benefits, the Troops to Teachers program, on-the-job training and other issues involving veterans education.

For more information about the VETS office, call 877-530-2765.

## Do You Need to Find Out Exactly What Your Benefits Are?

Because you have periods of different types of service (active duty and reserve components), your situation might be complicated.

However, you can always ask the VA what your status is using the following methods:

- Complete information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill is available at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov).
- The VA's phone number for education information is 888-GIBILL-1 (888-442-4551).
- For ongoing benefit information, veterans and service members can log in to the VA's eBenefits website at [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov).
- Additional VA contact information is available at [www.va.gov/landing2\\_contact.htm](http://www.va.gov/landing2_contact.htm). To ask a specific question, go to <https://www.gibill2.va.gov/cgi-bin/vba.cfg/php/nduser/ask.php>. (If you are using Microsoft Internet Explorer 8.0, click the *compatibility* view button at the top of the browser to ensure the page works properly.)

**TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS, OR TO SEE HOW MUCH YOUR ENTITLEMENT IS, CALL 888-442-4551.**



# TROOPS TO TEACHERS

## CENTRAL STATES MONTHLY UPDATE

### Iowa Success Stories

**Lt. Col. Richard H. Keilig Jr.** (retired) is a participant in the TTT program as a biology teacher in the Centerville Community School District. Prior to joining the district, Keilig served in the U.S. Army and spent most of his 29-year military career in the Medical Service Corps as a clinical microbiologist. His military assignments included service in Germany as a medical platoon leader and culminated with his posting to Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio as chief of microbiology.

"It was a great honor to serve in our nation's armed forces," Keilig said. "Many thousands of Americans served well during the Cold War period. I am proud to have had a part with many others in preserving freedom."

Upon his military retirement, Keilig came to Iowa with his family as part of the TTT program. He now teaches biology to grades 9-12 at Centerville High School. In 2009, Keilig's son, Jeffrey, elected to continue the family tradition of military service and enlisted in the Marines. Jeffrey has graduated from basic training and is now serving the Marines in motor transport.

After 22 years in the U.S. Air Force, including service in Africa during Operation Enduring Freedom, veteran **Kyle Teeselink** decided he wanted to take on another adventure – teaching Iowa high school students.

In 2009, Teeselink was honored as the state's first Teacher of the Year for the Troops to Teachers program. The Iowa Department of Education recognized Teeselink during the Manson Memorial Day Celebration.

Teeselink is a business instructor at Manson Northwest Webster High School, where he teaches students in grades 9-12. He received his bachelor's degree in management and human resources from Park University in Parkville, Mo., and his business education endorsement from Buena Vista University in Iowa.

Upon retiring from the Air Force in 2006, Teeselink pursued a second career in education because the service aspect of teaching appealed to him. The Troops to Teachers program provided financial assistance to help him obtain an Iowa teaching certificate.

### Missouri Success Stories

**Isiah McHellen** is a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) instructor for Roosevelt High School in St. Louis. He served for 22 years in the U.S. Marines.

When asked for his thoughts about teaching, McHellen said, "The experience in leadership gained from military service has greatly assisted me in my transition, and I would hope TTT (Troops to Teachers) continues to thrive because of the benefit it provides to high-needs school districts."

**Jerry Herndon** handles his Waynesville Middle School classroom with ease, and his students seem to warm to his care. He attributes his classroom success to his military experience and the Missouri Troops to Teachers program.

"When I was getting ready to retire from the Marine



Detachment (at) Fort Leonard Wood, I knew I wanted to stay in the teaching field, and the easiest way of doing that was with Troops to Teachers," said Herndon, who was the senior instructor for the motor-transport school. "I love it. The military provided a great foundation for doing this sort of job, and it is absolutely well worth it."

After teaching for less than a year in the public school system, Herndon had already achieved great success – he was named 2009 Troops to Teachers Teacher of the Year.

Herndon said for service members looking to make a difference after retiring, teaching could be their answer.

"The whole time that somebody is in the military, the more senior you get, you become a teacher without even knowing it," Herndon said. "We call it mentorship, and doing this (teaching) is just a progression of that. It's not the military, but now you are (working) with younger students and instilling some of the discipline and life skills we have developed. We are passing it on to the younger kids now."

## Kansas Success Stories

**Kurt Herrel:** I served a combined 21 years in the Air Force and the Air Force Reserve as an avionics technician. When I left active duty, I became involved with the Troops to Teachers program as a way to transition into a teaching career.

While I already had my bachelor's and master's degrees, I did not have a valid teaching license. The financial assistance that TTT provided helped me to overcome the financial burden of obtaining my license.

I am currently teaching multiple K-12 subjects at a psychiatric residential treatment facility in Newton. The students I teach have social and emotional issues, and most have been placed into the custody of the state. I love the challenges that I face every day. Most of the teaching that I do is "real world," and I try to let my students know that someone actually cares about them. I am currently completing my building-level endorsement. By spring 2012, I should be able to start looking for a position that will allow me to use more of the leadership skills I learned in the Air Force as a senior noncommissioned officer.



**David T. Dennis** has had a distinguished career as a military leader and an educator. Throughout his 29 years of military service, he worked his way up through the ranks of airman to colonel and received many awards for his leadership and outstanding achievements.

Following his retirement from the military, Dennis completed the requirements for his teaching certificate at Wichita State University and began teaching at Wichita North High School in 1999 as a part of the Troops to Teachers program. He served as a teacher, department chair and data leader for the school.

Dennis was elected to the Kansas State Board of Education in November 2008 and was elected as the chairman of the state board in January 2011. He was also elected to the board of directors for the National Association of State Boards of Education in October 2010 and to the executive board of directors for the Kansas State High School Activities Association in June 2010. Dennis received the Excellence in Public Service Award from the Wichita Public Schools in 2008 for his extensive community service.



## Nebraska Success Stories

**Thelma Bell:** Becoming bored with teaching and later working for corporate America, I wanted something more. I wanted to serve my country, and I joined the Army 30 days before my 35th birthday. I chose the food service, which proved quite successful for me. Involvement in the culinary arts expanded my knowledge and extended my travels and experiences.

Returning to civilian life wasn't easy. I became a cake decorator for a catering business. The pay was horrible, and the sanitation practices were worse. I knew about Troops to Teachers and knew I could return to teaching. The TTT program gave me the financial support I needed to return to the classroom by providing for recertification and additional courses. Without TTT, I couldn't have afforded it.

Employed with the Omaha Public Schools, I teach special education in a low-income area for high-risk high school students. I share experiences in the arts, develop historical knowledge and take them on field trips beyond the neighborhood. I bring them hope of a brighter future through education, one of the greatest feelings there is



**Robert D. Tobin:** I wanted to be that teacher who is remembered for the lasting effect he has on someone. The goal of becoming a teacher was placed on the back burner when I completed the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and started my career in the U.S. Army. I retired from the army after serving as an adjutant general officer in a variety of assignments, ranging from personnel officer to recruiting officer to serving as an ROTC instructor at the University of New Mexico. That reinforced my desire to become a teacher.

I teach at Omaha Northwest High Magnet School. I am the senior army instructor and teach grades 9-12 in a variety of subjects. Troops to Teachers assisted me in my transition from the military to becoming a high school teacher with various educational and financial resources.

While I have been honored with the U.S. Army Cadet Command Gold Instructor Award, the best reward is when students return years later and thank you.

Teaching is demanding and rewarding. You have a direct effect on the future of the world. I challenge you to become a life-changer by becoming a teacher. Troops to Teachers is an excellent program that will ease the transition from the military to teaching. You will be rewarded by the positive changes you make in the life of a young person.