

# TROOPS TO TEACHERS

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MISSOURI/IOWA CONSORTIUM

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## Why You Should See A Veterans Service Officer

By Daniel Bell, Public Information, Missouri Veterans Commission

One of the key messages of the Missouri Veterans Commission to veterans and the military is to see a veterans service officer.



A veterans service officer, or VSO, is a highly trained individual who has been accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to work with veterans on applying for federal and state benefits. A VSO will assist you in filling out forms, making sure you have all the documentation necessary to receive benefits and submitting the claims application. A VSO is also available for any follow-up work if you are denied.

Often, veterans believe they do not qualify for any benefits due to perfect health or their income level. Even if you believe this to be the case, you should still see a VSO if for no other reason than to get official confirmation of your status.

Another more important reason is that your available benefits might have changed. There could be new presumptive conditions that would qualify you for benefits. For example, Vietnam veterans have had three new presumptive conditions added to the list; Gulf War veterans also have new presumptive conditions being added. It never hurts to check with a VSO.

A VSO can also put you in touch with state benefits such as specialized license plates, educational assistance, small-business assistance, and special tax incentives and credits.

The Missouri Veterans Commission has 42 VSOs around the state. To contact your nearest VSO, call 866-VETINFO or go to <http://mvc.dps.mo.gov>.

There are an additional 38 VSOs through the veterans service organizations of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America and Vietnam Veterans of America. Contact any one of their posts to get in touch with a VSO.

Many veterans believe that these benefits equate to a handout. Nothing is further from the truth. These are benefits you have earned and are being returned to you from a grateful nation, whose citizens value your service. Please see a VSO to begin receiving what is owed.

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



## Meet JROTC Teacher Isiah McHellen

By John Hose, Assistant Director, Veterans Education and Training Section, DESE

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."



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The national **Troops to Teachers Web site** is located at <http://proudtoserveagain.com>.

### Teacher Certification Contact Information

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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.

*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), 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or Relay Missouri 800-735-2966.*

# VETERANS EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTION

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MISSOURI STATE  
APPROVING AGENCY

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## Special Points of Interest

- The National Association of State Approving Agencies provides training for individuals employed by programs that work with veterans.
- More and more veterans are being recruited for positions of leadership in the world of big business.
- The Wall That Heals, a 250-foot replica of the Vietnam Memorial, will visit Blue Springs this year.

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

## TRAINING IS THE KEY



Steve Nelle (standing) of the Veterans Education and Training Section at DESE instructs a class on OJT/apprenticeships at the National Training Institute in Kansas City.

The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization comprised of 57 state approving agencies around the United States. There are more than 50 because some states separate the approval of education programs for veterans from approval for OJT/apprenticeships for veterans. In either case, people entering this specialized profession need training in the *how to* of implementing the VA's approval regulations.

NASAA developed a national training curriculum more than 20 years ago, and the curriculum is now in its third iteration. More than 60 new professionals and agency directors recently attended the three-day National Training Institute session in Kansas City. The meeting was split between the Hyatt Plaza and the Drury Inn.

The Missouri State Approving Agency and the Veterans Education and Training Section (VETS) at DESE were proud to host the event, contribute their staff as faculty and facilitate the trainees' needs. NASAA is in its 63rd year of providing services to veterans by partnering with the VA to ensure that education and training programs are of good quality and to promote the use of the GI Bill.

## Veterans Find Success in the Business World

On March 22, Fortune magazine ran an article titled "Meet the New Face of Business Leadership," which recognized the leadership potential of utilizing the military and in recruiting Junior Military Officers (JMOs) ranked captain and lieutenant who had recently led combat soldiers on the front lines. Given the JMOs' experiences while serving in the military, many big-box retailers and other corporations (Walmart, Home Depot, AT&T, State Farm Insurance and more) have been tapping them for leadership positions within their companies. The success of these recruiting efforts is exceeding expectations. The future for JMOs might be with big business if this trend continues.

# New MU Education Center Dedicated

By John Hose, Assistant Director, Veterans Education and Training Section, DESE

Now it's Mizzou in blue – Blue Springs that is!

The University of Missouri recently dedicated a new branch of its system in Blue Springs. The dedication was part of a seminar on education resources for veterans on May 18 at the Adams Pointe Conference Center at the Courtyard by Marriott. The new MU education facility is located at 1600 N.E. Coronado Drive, just east of Northeast Adams Dairy Parkway at Exit 21 on I-70. It will open for classes in the fall 2010 semester.

The seminar was part of the development of a new veterans resource center that will be located in Blue Springs. Among the dignitaries present were Mayor Carson Ross, state Sen. Bill Stouffer and Larry Kay, executive director of the Missouri Veterans Commission.

Annette Sobel, assistant to the provost for strategic opportunities at MU and a former Army general, announced a fundraising drive for the Blue Springs veterans center with a goal of \$50,000. Sobel, Warren Parker of Silver Star Construction and a proponent of hiring veterans pledged the first \$5,000, receiving enthusiastic applause from the approximately 100 attendees.

At the seminar for veterans, there were presentations from the University of Missouri (both Columbia and Kansas City), Columbia College, State Fair Community College, the University of Central Missouri and Park University. VETS and the Missouri State Approving Agency also participated.



Left to right: Annette Sobel, assistant to the provost for strategic opportunities; Carol Fleisher, director of the MU veterans center; Beth Fisher, project director for the assistant to the provost.



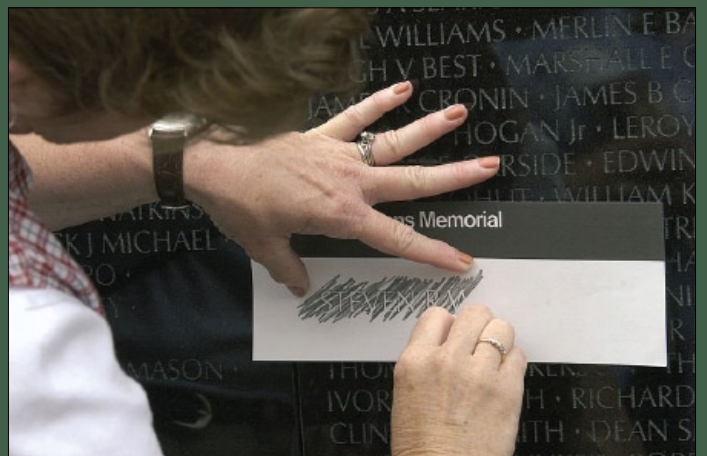
Left to right: Kevin Jones, University of Missouri-Columbia Veterans Association; John Hose, VETS assistant director, DESE; Turner Shipman, VETS supervisor, DESE; and Nick Kundert, University of Missouri-Columbia Veterans Association.

## THE WALL THAT HEALS Free to the Public and Coming to Blue Springs from Sept. 30 to Oct. 3

THE WALL THAT HEALS is a traveling exhibition featuring a 250-foot replica of the original Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Later this year, it will make its way to Blue Springs, allowing those without the resources or means to go to our nation's capital to experience the healing power of The Wall.

Veterans, parents and their children, and all citizens are invited to visit this monumental exhibit and to honor the lives of over 58,000 men and women whose names are listed on The Wall.

The exhibit will be showcased at Pink Hill Park, 2715 N.W. Park Drive, Blue Springs, MO, 64015.



Please visit <http://www.bluespringswallthatheals.net> for more information.

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.