

Student Veterans supporting one another

David: I'm David, I was in the Army. After 9-11 — I come from a long line of firefighter family. It was patriotic, it was doing something big, it was doing something bold, but it was also doing something, making a difference.

We declared war when I was in, basic training, we declared war on Iraq. It was during the troop serge that I was there and we got attacked often and quite heavy.

Once I got out, me and my wife drove across country, relaxed a little bit and took our time doing it, had a good time. And then that fall, I immediately started college. You see the motivation from a son who graduates high school and gets into college and this is their first year away from home maybe and they're in school, as apposed to myself who is 27, married, this is my job was going to school. I took it very seriously because my last job was being in combat, it was being an Army soldier. So I took that same intensity in-into the classroom with me.

I started my own Student—Veterans Organization and quickly it grew because of the students who are Veterans who were there on campus and the fact that there were no other resources. You could tell there was a need there for it. And luckily the college jumped right on board with me and took it and ran with it. Now they have their own resource center. The most important thing it did was bring us together as a group of like-minded people. It didn't matter Army, Air Force, Marines, but the fact that we were military, we were a little bit older, we were feeling our way through the educational system. It brought us all together and with that came the help, emotionally.

I certainly did not have an easy time when I came back and it's not easy transitioning, it's not easy doing the things, getting back into normal civilization. It's easier with a purpose, with a direction to head in. You need to find what you want to do. There is no shame in getting help. Everybody says that, but it's 100% true, it is. You need to do what it's going to take to get yourself back into society, and not progressively going after, making yourself better, it's not going to solve the problem, it's only going to make it worse. Should you need any sort of assistance, just tell somebody. Just speak about and people are there to help.

This generation of soldiers has so many empathetic people around that there's no reason to fall through the cracks.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**