



# The Husky Vet Gazette

~Underway since 2012~



Vol. III, Issue V

January 2016

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## Welcome to 2016!

Whether you are a new student or returning this semester The Office of Veterans Affairs And Military Programs is ready to make the journey with you and ready to help. If you haven't done so already ensure that you file your electronic form D for the Spring semester at <http://veterans.uconn.edu>.

## UConn Community Showing support thru the Annual Care Package Drive



This holiday season UConn Students, Faculty, and Staff expressed sincere thanks to Connecticut Military Members, Veterans, and their family. Over 3000 items were donated to local veterans in need. Additionally over 400 cards were distributed to Naval Submarine Base New London sailors and family members. 300 cards were distributed through the American Legion, and about 75 thank you cards were addressed directly to UConn Student Veterans and were left anonymously by other UConn members in the Veterans Oasis in the Student Union.

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## Welcome Back Pizza Luncheon

When: 29 Jan 11:30AM-1:00PM

Where: Arjona, Rm 339

Have you ever wondered about FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid? Ever had questions like can I apply if I am on VA military benefits, Or other questions? Come get the answers. Daniel Kowalchik, our in house subject matter expert, will be available to try to answer your questions about student aid. The deadline for submitting the FAFSA is 1 March 2016.

**Come eat and ask your questions.**

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**What: UConn Late Night**

**When:**

**Feb 12th @ 9:00PM to 1:00AM**

**Where:**

**Student Union**

The theme of the evening will center around the military and patriotism with movies, events, games and food. There will be something for everyone. As the night draws closer we will share more details.

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### Rivers of Recovery

Rivers of Recovery is a program designed to facilitate a self-sustaining therapeutic activity for combat veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq, empowering veterans to reconnect with nature and each other through a positive experience with fly fishing. They provide an all-inclusive four day experience (two fishing). Meals, equipment, lodging, travel, and guides will be provided at no cost to the veteran. They will be running three trips in the Northeast in 2016 and space is available in all. If you are interested in signing up or have any questions please feel free to email Dan Laffin at [dlaffin1@yahoo.com](mailto:dlaffin1@yahoo.com) or Alex Peck at [apecck1288@gmail.com](mailto:apecck1288@gmail.com).



# Benefits Corner

## **Application fees waived for both Undergraduate and Graduate Programs**

If you are interested in applying to graduate school at the University of Connecticut and a veteran your application fee is waived starting with the 2016 fall semester.

This applies to Active Duty, veterans, guardsmen and reservists. For more information go to <http://veterans.uconn.edu/>

## **Eligible for Educational Benefits?**

In order to be eligible for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (i.e. Post 9/11 G.I Bill ) the veteran must meet minimum active duty service requirements.

For most veterans, this means 24 months of continuous active duty. Non-duty periods that are considered excludable are not considered as a break in service for continuity purposes but are to be subtracted from total time served. Minimum active duty service also includes the full period for which a person was called or ordered to active duty. Except as noted below, a person who does not complete a minimum period of active duty is not eligible for any benefit under any law administered by the VA based on that period of active service.

There are circumstances where the above rule does not apply. One circumstance is when a person who is discharged or released under an early out program or a hardship discharge. Another would be to a person who is discharged or released from active duty for a disability adjudged service connected without presumptive provisions of law, or who at the time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability. A person with a compensable service-connected disability is also excluded.

Other circumstances may apply. When a person does not meet minimum active duty service requirements, and is therefore not eligible for VA benefits, the person's dependents or survivors are also not eligible to receive benefits based on the same period of active duty. As always, please contact our office if you have questions

Phone 860.486.2442 email [veterans@uconn.edu](mailto:veterans@uconn.edu) .

**Form D - Available online!** All students (including the regional campuses) can now access and submit the Form D online. Just go to the [Form D link](http://veterans.uconn.edu/) @ <http://veterans.uconn.edu/> and complete it. Remember, the Form D needs to be submitted for **each semester** you want to use VA educational benefits or the State Tuition Waiver.

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## Veteran of the Month



SFC Bryce Westlake of Waianae, HI, a beloved father of 3 daughters and husband of 22 years, is the Assistant Professor of Military Science for UConn's Nathan Hale ROTC Battalion. Joining the United States Army at age 23 and then serving for 19 years and 11 months as an active duty 11 Bravo infantry man, SFC Westlake has excelled in education and mentoring cadets in the program. This was shown by the superb performance of 11 cadets that participated in the 2015 Ranger Challenge event held at Ft. Dix, NJ. Being a 2013 Ranger school graduate, SFC Westlake not only provided wisdom but motivation. In this national recognized event, Ranger Challenge tested the cadets' abilities to lead and motivate their team members through a 2.5 day tactically and physically tough competition against 41 other Army ROTC programs. The cadets that participated this year received accolades for their superb tactical proficiency and physical stamina. The success of this event was due to SFC Westlake's level of expertise and mentorship. He spent countless hours outside the classroom honing the skills of these cadets. SFC Westlake has stationed in active duty stations all over the country in bases such as, Fort Bragg, NC, Fort Richardson, AK, Fort Benning, GA and lastly Fort Drum, NY. With time of service came countless awards and schooling, such as, Sniper school (2006), Top Gun Sniper in Sniper school, Air Bourne (1996), Air Assault (1999) and even the Expert Infantry man Badge (1998). SFC Westlake has also been deployed to Afghanistan (2003-2004) as Squad Leader and Iraq (2009-2010) as a Platoon Sergeant. He has also been deployed non-combatively to Panama, Great Britain, Australia, and Thailand.

If you would like to nominate a veteran at UConn for "Veteran of the Month," please contact Nikki Cole at [Nikki.cole@uconn.edu](mailto:Nikki.cole@uconn.edu)

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## Army Cadet of the Month



Senior CDT Frantzer Michel is political science major working toward a minor in history. He is a CT National Guard Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) Cadet in the 1-102nd INF. During the fall 2015 semester, he held the PT Officer in Charge (OIC) position, and currently holds the Operations Sergeant Major position in UConn's Nathan Hale Battalion.

During the summer of 2014, he was sent to Dominica for the Cultural Understanding Learning Proficiency program (CULP) where he taught classes to their Cadet Corps and conducted training with the Dominica Special Service Unit and Coast Guard. He was also a cadet cadre member this past summer at Fort Knox for Cadet Initial Entry Training (CIET), working as an officer, trainer, and mentor, developing

younger cadets.

In addition, CDT Michel has been assisting the Military Science department with special projects such as Commissioning ceremonies, recruiting activities and office support.

LTC Tanya Wahlberg, Department Head and Professor of Military Science says "CDT Michel is an outstanding Cadet committed to the mission and mentoring junior Cadets."

# Air Force Cadet of the Month



Air Force ROTC is pleased to announce Cadet Colonel Patricia K. Daudish as our cadet of the month. Cadet Daudish is a senior at the University of Connecticut majoring in Mechanical Engineering. Cadet Daudish was motivated to join AFROTC initially because she was interested in aviation. She stayed with the ROTC program because of its leadership opportunities, strong core values, and the high caliber of character she saw in her AFROTC peers. Patricia maintains superior academic and physical fitness standards while also serving as a member of the mechanical engineering honor society, Pi Tau Sigma, Arnold Air Society and participating in UConn intramural teams. C/

Daudish earned CTA of the Year in 2015. The Cadet Training Assistant (CTA) award honors her leadership and mentorship during Field Training. Cadet Daudish was one of over 160 cadets competing nationally to earn this distinction. In addition Cadet Daudish received the Silver Valor Award at Field Training for saving a life. She employed the Heimlich maneuver on a choking individual. As Cadet Daudish enters her last semester she was selected by cadre and peers to serve the esteemed role of Cadet Wing Commander. After graduation Cadet Daudish will be entering the Air Force as a pilot and will find out her training location later this year. We are honored to select Cadet Colonel Patricia Daudish as Air Force Cadet of the Month.

"AFROTC can be demanding, but it teaches lessons that make you an overall better person. Joining AFROTC is the single best decision I have made through my college career", Cadet Patricia K. Daudish.

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## Staying up to date with Husky Air Force ROTC



Spring semester 2016 will soon be underway for Detachment 115 at the University of Connecticut. We are welcoming 48 returning cadets from UConn, Eastern Connecticut State University, Central Connecticut State University, Trinity College, University of Rhode Island and University of Hartford.

As we head into Spring 2016, we take a moment to reflect on the academic and event successes of Fall 2015.

Last semester, the Air Force cadets had a cumulative GPA of 3.41 while maintaining outstanding physical fitness. We were pleased to award four full three-year scholarships. These scholarships are based on academic, physical fitness and leadership excellence, with the cadets competing nationally for the awards. The semester's events included Career Day held in October when

sixteen Air Force officers visited UConn and spoke to our cadets. The visiting career officers included Fighter pilots, Cargo Pilots, Bio-environmental and Civil Engineers, Security Forces and Behavior Scientists among others. Cadets took part in a leadership and tactile movements training at Matt's Outback and capped the semester off with a formal Dining Out hosting guest speaker, UConn alum, and scholarship contributor, General Joseph Ward.

Lastly, before heading home for finals, senior cadets found out what positions they would fill upon their commissioning in May 2016. Eight seniors receiving rated positions, placing them in pilot positions. Other positions include Cyber Operations, Space, Intel and Nursing.

As Fall 2015 semester closed, and our cadets headed home for a much needed break all look forward to a busy Spring 2016. Our senior cadets will learn the bases they will serve, the University will host an annual awards ceremony highlighting cadet excellence, to include awarding the Major General Joseph S. Ward, Jr. '83 Air Force ROTC Scholarship Fund, and saber to one senior from the Colonel Ronald Burdell Stevens Memorial Award. Lastly, Detachment 115 looks forward to officially commission our graduating cadets in May 2016!

**DID YOU  
KNOW...**

## Employers List . . .

...On the back page of this and every Husky Veteran newsletter is an extensive list of employers and contacts? These employers are dedicated to hiring qualified veterans at every opportunity. The points of contact listed provide you a direct entry point at these companies who's focus is to recruit veterans to their company. Each of these companies has an internal Veterans Employee Resource Group dedicated to providing for the needs of veterans within their companies. These companies care about their veterans. For graduating seniors, now is the time to begin your job search. See Kris Perry or Nikki Cole for any questions. Or feel free to contact the Point of Contact listed on the back page.

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## Are VA Education Benefits Taxable?

**No.** Any veterans' benefits paid under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should not be reported as income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). You will not receive a W-2 from the VA.

### **Per IRS Publication 970:**

*"Payments you receive for education, training, or subsistence under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are tax free. Do not include these payments as income on your federal tax return.*

*If you qualify for one or more of the education benefits discussed in chapters 2 through 13\*, you may have to reduce the amount of education expenses qualifying for a specific benefit by part or all of your VA payments. This applies only to the part of your VA payments that is required to be used for education expenses.*

*Example.*

*You have returned to college and are receiving two education benefits under the latest GI Bill:*

*a \$1,534 monthly basic housing allowance (BAH) that is directly deposited to your checking account, and \$3,840 paid directly to your college for tuition.*

*Neither of these benefits is taxable and you do not report them on your tax return. You also want to claim an American opportunity credit on your return. You paid \$5,000 in qualified education expenses (explained in here in IRS publication 970, chapter 2). To figure the amount of credit, you must first subtract the \$3,840 from your qualified education expenses because this payment under the GI Bill was required to be used for education expenses. You do not subtract any amount of the BAH because it was paid to you and its use was not restricted."*

**For more detailed information go to <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>**



## Veteran Students Organization (VSO)

The Veterans Student Organization (VSO) is a Tier II student organization of UConn undergraduate and graduate students that support veterans at the University. The VSO regularly hosts social events, holds care package drives, and works to ensure incoming veteran students are as welcome as possible. Active duty, family, and non-veterans are welcome as well! If you are interested in participating or helping out with any of these activities, or have ideas of your own, please contact us.

Please let us know if you have any event ideas that you would like the VSO to make happen!

Sean Seipel is the VSO VP of Veteran Outreach . If you're interested in getting involved with the VSO attend our meeting or contact him at [Sean.Seipel@uconn.edu](mailto:Sean.Seipel@uconn.edu).

# Carry On with these employers

It's time to get to work. One of the greatest benefits of completing your college education is securing employment that will aid you for the rest of your life. Each of these companies is veteran friendly—so what are you waiting for?



Company	Point of Contact	Email Address
Access Health CT	Peter VanLoon	peter.vanloon@ct.gov
Aetna	Jill Klepacki	klepackij@aetna.com
AonHewitt Consulting Practice	Mike Walton	mike.walton@aonhewitt.com
Bank of America	Lisa McNulty	lisa.a.mcnulty@bankofamerica.com
Baystate Health	Dennis O'Brien	dennis.obrien@baystatehealth.org
Boehringer-Ingelheim	Jeff Bridges	jeffrey.bridges@boehringer-ingelheim.com
Bravo Delta Consulting	Dawn McDaniel	dawn@bravodeltaconsulting.com
Cigna	Jim Wiggs	jimmie.wiggs@cigna.com
CT Public Broadcasting Network	Michael Komrosky	mkomrosky@cpbn.org
Disney/ESPN	Kevin Preston	kevin.preston@espn.com
EMC	Lou Candiello	lou.candiello@emc.com
Enterprise Holdings	Carrie Smith	carrie.l.smith@ehi.com
Frontier	Karlian Brown	karlian.brown@ftr.com
GE	Joe Beal	joseph.beal@ge.com
Johnson & Johnson	Derek Dalmalin	ddalmoli@its.jnj.com
Marymont	Steve Dumont	sdumont@marymont.com
MassMutual	Toby Proctor	tproctor@massmutual.com
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc.	Douglas Yeager	douglas.yeager@ml.com
Pepsico	Marty Kanengiser	marty.kanengiser@pepsico.com
Prudential Financial	Nadine Krause	nadine.krause@prudential.com
Raytheon	Jeff Lance	jlance@raytheon.com
Sikorsky	John Donovan	john.donovan@sikorsky.com
Stanley Black & Decker	Sally Bartas	Sally.Bartas@sbdinc.com
The Hartford	Brian Fresher	brian.fresher@thehartford.com
Travelers	Casey Neff	cneff@travelers.com
United Technologies	Dan Ward	daniel.ward@pw.utc.com
U. of Connecticut - Human Resources	Robin Lessard	robin.lessard@uconn.edu
US Trust	Doug O'Donnell	douglas.odonnell@ustrust.com
Verizon Wireless	Alissa Belcourt	alissa.belcourt@verizonwireless.com
Wal-Mart	Ron Ealey	ronald.ealey@wal-mart.com