

MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Eastern Kentucky University



Eastern Kentucky University is committed to working side by side with veterans who seek to further their education. The Office of Military and Veteran Affairs is the one-stop-shop for veterans, active duty students, and family/dependents of active duty individuals at EKU.

Veteran's Graduation & Recognition Ceremony

Congratulations to the 126 student veterans who graduated in the spring! In May the Office of Military and Veteran hosted a Veteran's Graduation & Recognition. We were so pleased to have 45 students, along with their family and loved ones, attend. The ceremony included a slideshow with pictures of those recognized as service members and as students. Each student was recognized for their military service and their scholastic accomplishments. They were awarded with red, white, and blue cords, an EKU challenge coin, and a certificate of appreciation for the family and loved ones who supported the graduates throughout their education.



Pictured above: Executive Director of Retention & Graduation, Shelley S. Park; EKU President Michael T. Benson

President Michael Benson attended the

ceremony to award the graduates with their military cords and to conclude the ceremony with an address during which he said that their cords represented the most important accomplishment: Service to our country. He also thanked Shelley S. Park for her service to the university and support of our military community on campus. We wish her the best in retirement!



Pictured above: Graduates at the Veteran's Graduation & Recognition Ceremony

Meet Our Staff

Dr. Bryan Cole has been the Director of Military and Veteran Affairs at Eastern Kentucky University since the Fall of 2015. Dr. Cole is a retired Army Major with active duty experience in Afghanistan and counter drug operations. While serving in Afghanistan Major Cole was awarded the Bronze star Medal in 2002. His 24 year military Career included service as an enlisted soldier, non-commissioned officer, company level and field grade officer.

Prior to serving as the OMVA Director, Dr. Cole was an law enforcement instructor for the Kentucky Department of



Criminal Justice Training. The bulk of his employment was working with juveniles committed to the Kentucky Juvenile Justice System. In the past he was program director of a community based group home for youth transitioning into the community. Dr. Cole has served as an adjunct instructor for The College of Justice and Safety since 1993. He earned a bachelor's degree from Kentucky Wesleyan College in Criminal Justice, a Master's degree in Counseling from Western Kentucky University, a Master's Degree in Science from The University of Louisville in Justice Administration and a Doctoral Degree in Executive Leadership from Lincoln Memorial University. Bryan is married and the father of two girls, Reagan and Madison.

Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc.



The Department of Veteran Affairs recently awarded a Supportive Services for Veteran Families grant to Kentucky River Foothills, a local nonprofit, to assist EKV Veteran students with housing expenses. To qualify, you must be in need of housing now or for when classes start, meet VA Active Duty guidelines, and meet income requirements.

Contact Kentucky River Foothills for more information:
Phone (859) 622 - 2046 ext. 307
Email: SSVF@foothillscap.org
Apply online: www.foothillscap.org/ssvf.htm

Welcome Back Picnic!

Saturday, September 9th

11:30 am

Burnam House

Join us for music, food, and games!

Student Spotlight

James Pettit is the new president of the Student Veterans Club and is excited for the opportunity to support and strengthen the campus community of student veterans. Originally from New Lebanon, Ohio, James moved to London, Kentucky with his family in grade school. James has participated in ROTC since his freshman year in college.

He swore into the ARMY National Guard on March 31st of 2016 and made it to the rank of Private (PV2) before he contracted with ROTC on January 19th of 2017. He is now in the ARMY National Guard as an SMP Cadet (E5).

A Criminal Justice major, James was interested in Eastern Kentucky University because of its renowned Criminal Justice program. James said, "My mother also lived in Richmond at the time, and I'm sure she loved having her boy close to home again."

Though James is currently in the ARMY National Guard, his true passion is flying. Following graduation from EKU, James hopes to commission as an Aviation Officer. He commented, "Regardless of any occupation I may hold, I wish nothing more than to fly until either my heart or my engine gives out." If he stays in the National Guard he plans to begin a career in law enforcement, whether that be with the Kentucky State Police, the Richmond Police, or eventually the FBI.



K.E.E.P VETS is the Kentucky Employment and Educational Partnerships for Veterans, a coalition of colleges and employers in the commonwealth. Job listings, internship opportunities, and university contacts are among the resources that can be found by visiting keepvets.org.