



# Honoring Veterans Ceremony Kicks Off Week of Events

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE – Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Military and Veteran Services (MAVS) launched a series of events, scheduled for Nov. 8-11, honoring military veterans with its Honoring Veterans Ceremony held Monday, Nov. 8 in the Goshen Lounge.

The kick-off ceremony included multiple speakers who shared their “why” as they promoted the resources and opportunities available to student veterans, and honored those who have served.

“We are proud to honor our veterans and military-affiliated individuals this week, and always,” said Kevin Wathen, director of MAVS. “Veterans have a lot on their plate, so our goal is to help ease their transition into higher education and retain them through degree completion. At SIUE, we go the extra mile for veterans. We aspire to continue to grow and develop our services to provide strong support for all those who have served.”

In January 2021, SIUE opened its new MAVS Center on the second floor of the Morris University Center. The space is utilized by student veterans who seek resources, desire to engage with other military-affiliated individuals, and want to get involved in campus opportunities.

Secretary of SIUE’s Student Veterans of America (SVA) Nate Peery underscored the value of helping veterans feel at home in the University setting.

“Veterans who come to SIUE enter at a different state in life compared to traditional students,” Peery said. “The average age of a veteran coming to any university is 26. They may have kids. They may have completed combat deployments. Most have done both. At national conferences, we’ve learned that veterans will often segregate themselves because of those differences. Our goal with SVA is to stop that segregation. If we can bring them in and provide a social space, that support will spread and help more individuals feel valued and welcome.”

Jim Robbins, director of the [Veteran’s Upward Bound](#) (VUB) program, shared the goals of the VUB program and his service history.

“I was on active duty 50 years ago this year,” Robbins shared. “My service means everything to me. Everything I am and everything I have is based on the military. It provided opportunities to do something greater than myself.”

“Veteran’s Upward Bound is a college prep program for veterans,” he added. “Basic education skills sometimes erode amid service and other obligations. We help veterans prepare academically and financially, and all of our services are available virtually.”

During his remarks, SIUE Army ROTC’s Major Eddie Woody announced the ROTC’s new motto: “Winning Starts Here.”

“It doesn’t mean you have to win every time,” Maj. Woody explained. “It means you have to hope to win and believe that you can win. And then, be willing to do the work that it takes to win. Two things you can control are your attitude and effort. Our motto is a matter of having the right attitude, which then shapes our efforts. Life is about learning how to struggle until you win.”

As the SIUE Army ROTC leader, Maj. Woody is setting an inspiring example for his children and others.

“The most important legacy that I hope to leave is one of servant leadership,” he said, “not out of obligation or selfish ambition, but because I am grateful. I’m grateful to live in this nation, to have had military opportunities that offered real life experiences, for the ability to provide for my family and for the opportunity to lead the sons and daughters of America who choose to wear the same uniform as me.”

Also, at the ceremony, were table displays from representatives with MAVS, the SIUE Army ROTC and the Kimmel Student Involvement Center.

MAVS’ remaining events are open to the public and include:

- The State of Veterans in Madison County: A Conversation with the Madison County Veterans’ Assistance Commission (VAC)
  - 11 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9 via Zoom
  - Register at [https://siue.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_dCbRdM6RQdaerB1st7OAWg](https://siue.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dCbRdM6RQdaerB1st7OAWg)
- From Uniform to University: Afghanistan War Veterans in the Community
  - 2 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 10 via Zoom
  - Register at [https://siue.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_bvQWni8rTlelCle9phpHaw](https://siue.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bvQWni8rTlelCle9phpHaw)

Questions on any of these events may be directed to Telisha Reinhardt, coordinator of MAVS, at [treinha@siue.edu](mailto:treinha@siue.edu) or 618-650-3569. For more information, visit [siue.edu/military](https://siue.edu/military).

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](https://siue.edu) provides students with a high-quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.

**Photo:** SIUE Army ROTC Major Eddie Woody shares words of inspiration during the Honoring Veterans Ceremony.