

The Lane Evans Veterans Resource Center is a spot for student veterans to take a break, but it is also a place where they gain momentum.

The center connects veterans and active military members with the resources they need to help them transition into college life.

New Veterans Coordinator



Thomas Reagan, the new Coordinator of Veterans Services, recently stepped into the role after the previous coordinator retired.

Marine veteran Reagan is from a military family. His dad and other relatives also served, and he has two sons currently serving.

When he read the job description and saw that it was focused on serving veterans, he knew he needed to apply for it.

“I’ve got a big heart for veterans,” Reagan said. He also has a history of service to others.

Reagan retired from his position as a police captain at the East Moline Police Department in September and started working at Black Hawk College a few days later.

He works with veterans to help them understand their options through the GI Bill, select an

opportunity and complete the needed paperwork.

“I’m kind of a one-stop shop,” he said.

Student veteran perspective

Reagan also serves as the advisor for BHC’s Military Students and Veterans Club (MSVC). The club is a charter member of the Student Veterans of America.



The center is at the Quad-Cities Campus and includes a lounge area complete with couches, a fridge, microwave, snacks and coffee.

The center has work stations with computers for student veterans and a decompression room. An armchair, art station and a work station are in that room, which is a quiet room.

Lillian Schatz of Rock Island is an Army veteran and the president of MSVC. She is earning her associate degree in nursing (ADN), and said Black Hawk College is a great place to transition from military to civilian life.

“I feel like I belong,” she said, while hanging out in the Veterans Resource Center after a club meeting. “It’s a good place.”

Navy veteran Luke DeMink of Sherrard is earning an Associate in Science and agrees. “This

center is like a second home,” he said.

Upcoming events

With Veterans Day quickly approaching, the club is busy giving back.

The MSVC is hosting a performance of “Letters Home” at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 6 in Building 1, Room 306 (theatre) where the club is kicking off a donation drive for care package items for the troops.



“Letters Home” is presented by the Griffin Theatre Company of Chicago and is sponsored by Quad City Arts Visiting Artist Series. The performance is free and open to the public.

BHC student veterans will be collecting cash donations and [items for troops](#) serving overseas at the event, and then at the Veterans Resource Center and East Campus’ Building A, lower lobby through Thursday, Dec. 6.

A few examples of the needed [items](#) include:

- toiletries (no flip tops, please - body wash, shampoo, razors, toothpaste, lip balm, sun block)
- snacks (beef jerky, granola bars, energy bars, crackers, Slim Jim sticks, packaged cookies)
- drink items (cocoa, tea bags, instant coffee, creamer, water flavoring packets,

lemonade)

- other non-perishable food (peanut butter, jelly, dried fruit, canned/package chicken and tuna, spam)
- entertainment items (iTune gift cards, games, magazines, books, plastic model kits, puzzles).

Two activities are also planned on Veterans Day on Sunday, Nov. 11. Club members will place 100 flags and also do a bell-tolling ceremony.

Club members will participate in the Breakfast Optimist Club's Avenue of the Flags program by placing 100 flags at dawn at participating homes and removing them at dusk.

Bells of Peace: A National World War I Remembrance is a national tolling of the bells happening on Veterans Day, the 100th anniversary of the war ending.

The MSVC will toll the bells 21 times at 11 a.m. at Union Congregational Church, 1811 53rd St., Moline.

Making connections

In addition to community activities, MSVC also does social events together.

Spending time at the Veterans Resource Center or being active in MSVC are ways student veterans can connect with each other.



Reagan's office is on the way into the center, and he is there for student veterans who need a listening ear and can help get them in touch with a BHC counselor.

Having different life experiences and an age gap between themselves and college students who recently graduated from high school can also make it hard to relate or fit in.

At the Resource Center, though, there is always someone they can relate to who can help them navigate college.

Student veteran and student worker Schatz is one of those welcoming faces. "We all have each other's six here," she said.

Veterans Resource Center

Quad-Cities Campus

Building 4, Room 117

Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Other hours as needed.

Thomas Reagan

Coordinator of Veterans Services

Building 4, Room 118

309-796-5501

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Read more about the ways Black Hawk College supports [Veterans and Military Students](#).

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