



OCTOBER 2023

# IN THE KNOW

Newsletter of EIU's Division of Student Affairs

## VPSA VOICE

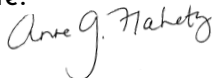
In this special issue, we are recognizing our Student Affairs staff who are veterans. **We want to thank each of you for your service to our country!** Chris Cougill, Assistant Director in the MLK Jr. University Union, served as a guest writer for this month's newsletter, sharing his experience as a member of the Illinois Air National Guard. **Congrats, Chris, on your recent promotion to Master Sergeant!**

All are invited to celebrate our veterans at the EIU Veterans Day ceremony in the Old Main Cougill Foyer on November 10 at 10:30 AM. You may have noticed the similarity in names. The Cougill Foyer is named after Chris's extended family in recognition of a gift his Uncle Max and Aunt Mary gave to the university.

During October, we celebrated Careers in Student Affairs Month. Our academic partners in College Student Affairs hosted the annual Student Affairs 101 Conference, *Be An Influencer*, on October 27, on campus. I enjoyed having the opportunity to talk with attendees (current undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff) about the future of our profession and graduate programs. Jessica Ward, keynote speaker and former Student Affairs staff member, reminded us that while the work we do is not easy, we are given the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of many students. **So true!**

Next month we host my favorite event of the year, the **Student Affairs Awards Ceremony**, on November 15 at 8:30 AM, starting with a hot breakfast. This annual ceremony provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the significant contributions of our colleagues. All attendees will leave with a gift. On November 16, the SA Recognition & Professional Development Committee is hosting a **Student Affairs Social** during the nationally ranked, EIU Women's Volleyball match at Lantz. The match begins at 4:00 PM. Come out to cheer on our Panthers and grab a free snack. I hope to see you at both events!

Namaste!



# DO YOU KNOW...

## Student Affairs Veterans

“We don’t know them all,  
but we owe them all.” –Unknown

Matt Cobble- Army National Guard

Russ Conrad- Navy

Linda Cruz- Army

Greg Harris- Air Force

Lisa Harrison- Army National Guard

Aaron Hite- USMC

Carrie Hite- Army

Tony Johnson- USMC

Bill Karpus- Air Force

Jeremy Morgan- Army

Kirby Moses- Army National Guard

Everett Shores- Army National Guard

Sean Sloan- USMC

Dustin Strader- Army

Ken Trevarthan- Navy

Ron Waggoner- Army

Steven Walker- Air Force

Christy Wingler- Army



James Brummer  
USMC



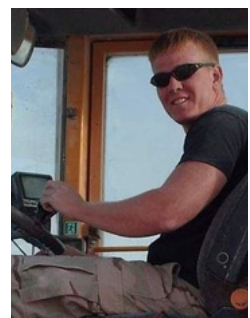
David Titus  
Army



James Guymon  
USMC



Jimmie Smith  
USMC



Brandon Skinner  
Air Force



Gus Lamzyck  
USMC



Linda Napier  
Air Force



David McDowell  
USMC

Our apologies if a veteran was left of this list.  
These are the employees who gave permission to  
be in the newsletter.



# NOW YOU KNOW...

## WHAT DOES VETERANS DAY MEAN TO YOU?

**Guest Columnist, Chris Cougill-  
MLK Jr. University Union**

I was recently asked what Veterans Day means to me. That's surprisingly difficult to answer, and has caused me to consider the question very carefully. To me, as a child, Veterans Day meant drawing pictures to say "thanks" to our veterans;

as I grew older I better understood that that honor applied to my father (an active duty Air Force member), and many of our family, friends, and neighbors. As an adult, it eventually even applied to me after I enlisted in the Illinois Air National Guard. It has never felt like a day that's about me, though; rather, it's an opportunity to formally acknowledge those who laid the foundation for my freedoms (including my freedom to serve). "We stand on the shoulders of giants," as the saying goes.

My father joined the Air Force in 1964, and served from the Vietnam War right up through Operation Desert Storm. He ascended the officer ranks with uncharacteristic speed, and retired as a Brigadier General after the Gulf War. Ever since I was a little boy, knee-high to then-Captain Cougill, I remember him taking every opportunity to sing the praises of his senior enlisted airmen. The "top three" (Master Sergeants, Senior Master Sergeants, and Chief Master Sergeants), he would advise anyone who would listen, "run the Air Force." "Get to know them - listen and learn," he'd advise his fellow officers; "ride their coattails." The message to my young ears was clear: these men and women were superheroes. Our neighbors on the bases I grew up on - the Colonels, Generals, and Admirals - were very nice people, great pilots, accomplished warriors... but the enlisted folks with so many stripes on their sleeves were the truly special ones. The official dinner parties and social gatherings that my parents attended were impressive in their pomp and ceremony, but my father was always most at ease sharing a beer, grilling out, or fishing with his most trusted senior non commissioned officers. I'd sneak out of my room after bedtime to eavesdrop on their war stories, and was amazed at the accomplishments they spoke so casually of; these men and women and my father were (and are) my heroes. This is why I chose to enlist in the Illinois Air National Guard.

I enlisted in the Guard in 2000, at the age of 28. I was happily employed at EIU at that time, but realized after much contemplation that service in the Guard would ease a lingering sense that I was still not fulfilling my true, full purpose. I was trained in aircraft maintenance and spent 12 incredible years working on KC-135 tankers, traveling to places like England, France, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Poland, Italy, Hawaii, Guam, and Alaska (and locations within the continental US as well), and serving with some truly remarkable aircraft maintainers. The subsequent 11 years of my enlistment have been spent with the Chaplain Corps assisting the chaplains in their many duties. The bonds that I formed with the many individuals I have met and worked with are lifelong



# NOW YOU KNOW...

and I cherish them all; they are truly brothers and sisters. To this day I keep in touch with members of other units from all around the world who I have met in my travels, and my "Guard family," as we call it, I love dearly. I like to describe my current career field (with the Chaplain Corps) as the "best job in the Air Force: I get to make friends and be good to people." My role frequently allows me to perform unit visitations during which I simply visit with unit members and get to know them and their roles as military members. This establishes a relationship that goes beyond a casual acquaintance and can lead to a level of trust and respect that puts these friends at ease to discuss the challenges they may be facing. My colleagues in the Chaplain Corps have truly altered the lives of many of our members for the better, and of that I am very proud. Furthermore, the Chaplain Corps exists to accommodate the spiritual needs of those within the armed forces, and that can mean offering chapel services on a drill weekend, obtaining Buddhist literature for a member exploring their spirituality, or counseling an atheist who's experiencing a crisis of conscience, among many other things. The job is incredibly diverse and fulfilling, and I approach each and every interaction with great earnestness and an intention to serve those members as best we can., and that can mean offering chapel services on a drill weekend, obtaining Buddhist literature for a member exploring their spirituality, or counseling an atheist who's experiencing a crisis of conscience, among many other things. The job is incredibly diverse and fulfilling, and I approach each and every interaction with great earnestness and an intention to serve those members as best we can.

I would be remiss if I did not provide a "shout out" to EIU Human Resources and my employers and colleagues at Booth Library and MLK Jr University Union for their unwavering support of my military commitments. The Guard is unique in that it supports both state and federal missions; I have been called upon for everything from flood duty along the banks of the Mississippi River in southern Illinois to marriage enrichment programming with the chaplain corps, and to support flying missions around the globe. Each time, Eastern has been incredibly supportive and my colleagues have truly "stepped up" to fill the gap my absence has left. For that I am extremely grateful!



The day I officially promoted to Master Sergeant. My wife and children were able to "pin on" my new rank during our morning roll call.



An F-15 approaches to refuel from our tanker (refueling boom from our airplane visible in the upper right hand corner of the photo) during air to air combat exercises over Alaska.

# NEED TO KNOW...

## Question of the Month

vpsa@eiu.edu

Last month's question: What advice would you give to your younger self?  
**Mark Hudson**- What are you so afraid of? Taking productive risks is inherent in achieving maximum success. (I am fairly sure I would have had to look up "inherent" 😊)  
Next month's question: When is too early to put up holiday decorations?



## Meet Koji



Koji is a 10 pound Yorkshire Terrier/Poodle mix and is just under two years old. Sergeant/ Detective Andrea Beals plans on accompanying Koji to the Paws and Stripes College

at Eastern Florida State College this December, where Koji will be trained as a therapy dog. As an officer in training, Koji gives comfort to students by allowing him to be petted. "He is already bridging gaps between law enforcement and students, employees, and community members" says Beals. We look forward to seeing Koji earn his badge.

## Student Affairs Celebration

**November 15**  
**University Ballroom**  
Hot breakfast begins at 8:30.  
Remarks and awards celebration begins at 9:30.  
[Click HERE to RSVP](#)

**Please let us know if you are First-Generation and we will feature you on our website.**  
**vpsa@eiu.edu**



# IN THE KNOW...

## EIU'S DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

**EIU.EDU/STUAFF**



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217-581-3221 | [agflaherty@eiu.edu](mailto:agflaherty@eiu.edu)



Do you have an item for the newsletter? [Fill out the submission form here!](#)



### **VISION**

The Division of Student Affairs is committed to being forward thinking and providing transformative life experiences that foster student learning and development, empowering individuals to reach their optimal potential.

### **MISSION**

The Division of Student Affairs welcomes and celebrates our students' commonalities and differences, focusing on development, active citizenship, experiential learning, engagement, leadership, and preparation for a diverse, global society. Collaborating across campus, we ensure student success and retention and are dedicated to cultivating a sense of community on both our campus and beyond. We are committed to the health and well-being of our students and encourage them to lead balanced lives. We advocate for an inclusive environment where students feel safe and secure.

### **ANTIRACISM STATEMENT**

EIU stands in solidarity with all Black, Brown, Indigenous, and racialized members of our communities who are fighting for a more just and equitable society. We resolve to purposefully identify, discuss, and challenge issues of race, color, oppression, white privilege, and power, as well as the impact(s) they have on our community, its systems, and its people.

Racism is dehumanizing to everyone.

We strive to build a community in which all belong, while challenging ourselves to understand and correct inequities we discover. We must examine racism embedded in the very fabric of our society and demand action for positive change from systems of power.