



University of Missouri

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Around the Columns

Eagles and Anchors

As president of a student group for veterans at MU, Dan Sewell was curious about previous groups of former military men on campus.

Although an earlier group folded, Sewell found that today's veterans' needs are similar to those of former generations.

When our boys came back from "over there," they enrolled in college in record numbers. By the time the original G.I. Bill ended in 1956, nearly 8 million veterans had participated in higher education. But Sewell says when soldiers of World War I and II left the battlefield, they found it difficult to integrate in campus classrooms.

Adobe Flash version 8, or higher, and Java Script are required to view the slide show for this feature story.

So in 1944 veterans formed the Eagles and Anchors student group. "Its purpose was to promote the welfare of veterans spiritually, mentally, physically and socially on campus," says Conrad Lohoefer, BJ '49, a former member of the group.

Eagles and Anchors was the first student group for veterans at MU. It began small, but soon grew to more than 800 members in its heyday. As the years passed, fewer veterans came to college after serving on the battlefield. The group waned and eventually disbanded by the Vietnam War.

MU remained without a registered student group for veterans until 2006 when the Mizzou Student Veterans Association (MSVA) formed.

Sewell, BS IE '10, now a past president of MSVA, researched the origins of Eagles and Anchors to learn the history of veterans at MU.

“The group did volunteer work, played intramural sports, held socials and were very visible on campus,” Sewell says. “They were inclusive, they invited the whole campus to all their events.”

The inclusiveness helped paved the way to assimilation and break down the barriers of age and experience between veterans and traditional college students.

But what surprised Sewell the most were the similarities of a student group from decades ago and its modern counterpart.

“Eagles and Anchors is pretty much identical to what we are doing today,” Sewell says. “With more and more veterans going to college after coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, it just makes sense.”

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