

# MIZZOU

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## Around the Columns

### MU veterans wage a new war

For three Mizzou students, renewable energy isn't just a sustainability issue, it's a national security issue. Dan Sewell, Kevin Jones and Billy Froeschner took that message to Washington on Sept. 10, 2009, as members of Operation Free, a nationwide group of veterans whose mission is to secure the U.S. with domestic, renewable energy.

Governments, including the U.S., are recognizing climate change as a threat to peace and stability. Rising water levels and spreading droughts are wreaking havoc on migration patterns and food supply. Wherever turmoil erupts, the possibility exists that a U.S. fighting force enters the picture.

“We’re trying to raise awareness that it’s not just environmentalists that are pushing for this anymore,” said Sewell, junior industrial engineering major and president of Mizzou Student Veterans Association who hails from Columbia.



From left, Dan Sewell, Kevin Jones and Billy Froeschner stand in front of the Capitol building during their lobbying trip to Washington, D.C.

The whirlwind trip began with a small gathering of Operation Free members from around the

nation and speeches from retired military leaders and Operation Free organizers. An event with Carol Browner, director of the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change Policy, followed by a meeting with representatives from the office of Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., completed the schedule.

According to the three, legislators responded positively to the message.

Froeschner, senior environmental studies major, says his service in the military as a convoy gunner in Iraq from 2004 to 2005 taught him the importance of risk assessment.

“I am a soldier, therefore I am an environmentalist,” said Froeschner of Columbia. “As a soldier, my job was to bring threats to a manageable level. It’s the same for environmentalists. Climate change is a national security threat, and we are using sustainability and domestic, renewable energy as a way to manage it.”

Froeschner traveled to Washington again on Sept. 29, 2009, to meet with other veterans and witness climate legislation pass through a Senate committee.

“This is a huge opportunity for us to grow, learn, expand and innovate,” he said. “We need to reevaluate the way we do business, and it’s important for people to know that we are trying to change the system — not cripple it.”

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