

Military and Veteran Education Center Fall 2025 Newsletter

From the Director

Dear Rhody Community,

This fall has been one of the most exciting and impactful semesters we've ever had at the Center for Military and Veteran Education. From welcoming our newest student veterans at Orientation, to advancing real career opportunities in the Blue Economy, to celebrating service and tradition at Veterans Day and the Military Ball, our community continues to grow in strength, visibility, and purpose. We are honored to share some major milestones, including new staffing, national and statewide recognition, and student achievements that reflect the very best of URI.

Thank you for continuing to support our mission to serve those who served.

– Bob Flynn, Director, Center for Military & Veteran Education

URI is now designated as Top Ten Military Friendly and Spouse Friendly as well as receiving the #17 designation out of 357 schools for Best for Vets.



Welcome to URI: Fall 2025 Student Veteran Resource Fair

This August, MAVE welcomed incoming military-affiliated students during our fall orientation program. Veterans, active-duty service members, ROTC cadets, and dependents received a personalized introduction to URI resources including VA benefits certification, academic coaching, disability services, and career pathways.

“The connection to other veterans on day one made all the difference.”

- Incoming Marine Corps veteran, Class of 2028



Ocean Workforce Career Pathways Summit: Blue Economy Meets Veterans

In October, MAVE partnered with the Department of Marine Affairs, NOAA, and industry leaders for the Ocean Workforce Career Pathways Day, connecting military-affiliated students with careers in the ocean sciences, maritime security, underwater robotics, and offshore wind. Veterans from aviation, nuclear, logistics, and engineering backgrounds networked directly with employers and explored pathways to URI graduate programs, internships, and certifications. URI is uniquely positioned to lead Blue Economy workforce development for veterans in Rhode Island — and this year's turnout was the best yet.



URI Honored by Congressman Seth Magaziner

This fall, Congressman Seth Magaziner presented URI with a national recognition award for its service to military-connected students and leadership in higher education access for veterans. This honor reinforces URI's standing as a Top 10 Military Friendly University and supports future partnerships at the federal and state level.



Director Bob Flynn
receiving the Veterans
Leadership Award

Veterans Day at URI: A Tradition of Honor

On November 10th, students, faculty, alumni gathered at URI's Alumni Center for the annual Veterans Day Observance. The ceremony featured the ROTC Color Guard, remarks from University President Marc Parlange, and a tribute to URI veterans past and present. This year also included a special presentation of the Veteran Alumni Excellence Award, posting of the colors by URI ROTC, and a moving musical performance by URI student veterans.



Veterans Day at URI: A Tradition of Honor

Colonel Charon Harmon was our Guest Speaker at the Veterans Day Observance. She began her military service in 1985 and was later commissioned as a Chemical Officer in 1995 after completing Officer Candidate School. Throughout her career, Colonel Harmon served in numerous leadership positions, including Equal Opportunity Advisor, State Equal Employment Manager, Commander of the Joint Force Headquarters, State Family Program Director and Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. Her yearlong deployment to Afghanistan earned her the Bronze Star Medal for bravery and the Meritorious Service Medal for exemplary leadership. In 2022, she made history as the first Black individual promoted to Colonel in the Rhode Island National Guard.



Student Veterans Organization Hosts Military Ball

Following Veterans Day, the URI Student Veterans Organization (SVO) hosted the annual Military Ball – a formal celebration of service, camaraderie, and student leadership. Nearly 100 guests attended including veterans, military families, faculty, administrators, and community partners. Highlights included the traditional Military Branch Ceremony, a moment of silence for the fallen, a table setting for POW/MIA, and an outstanding turnout of student veterans in uniform or formal dress.



MAVE Introduces New Coordinator: Kathy Conlon

MAVE welcomed Kathy Conlon as URI's new MAVE Coordinator. Kathy brings extensive experience working with veterans and military families, and she has already made a major impact streamlining benefits processing, expanding student support services, and serving as the day-to-day operational backbone of the center.

"Everyone who walks through our doors deserves to feel seen, supported, and valued. That's my mission." — Kathy



**Kathy finishing the
Marine Corps
Marathon in DC in
October**

Rhody Salutes – Coming 2026

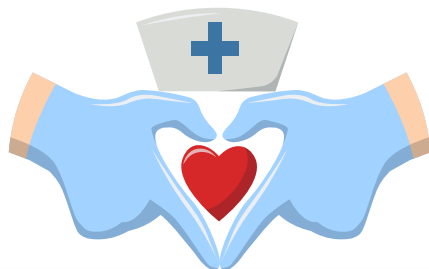
This semester we also launched the branding phase of a new initiative: Rhody Salutes, a campus-wide recognition and support network for faculty, staff, and students who have served in the Armed Forces or are military connected. More information to come — including a formal rollout in spring 2026.

Veteran Alumni Excellence Award

U.S. Air Force veteran and URI alumna Carolyn Spinney was honored Monday with a Veteran Alumni Excellence Award during the University's Veterans Day Celebration. Spinney enlisted in the Air Force in 1951, serving as first lieutenant and nurse specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, and attended URI from 1969 to 1973. Now 96, she remains a proud Rhody alum and a lasting example of compassionate service.



**Mrs. Spinney
receiving the
Veteran Alumni
Excellence Award
from President
Marc Parlange**



Veteran Student Spotlight: Lidell Booysen

Lidell trained as a Sonar Technician on Submarines to meet the needs of the Navy. He was stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for 5 years. He deployed twice in the Western Pacific on the USS North Carolina, completed numerous work-ups and has 137,000 nautical miles sailed on nuclear power. He separated from the Navy in 2022 and immediately began pursuing his academic dreams. In the Fall of 2023, he started his schooling at the University of Rhode Island as a Mechanical Engineering major. has a 3.5GPA. He is active in a few clubs on campus and is a stellar work-study employee at the MAVE Center, where he puts in 25 hours per week while taking 16 credit this semester.





Future Events


On January 21, The MAVE Center is welcoming back all students with an open house from 10am-3pm.. Our school certifying official will be on hand to answer questions. Stop by to mingle with the community and get your questions answered. Start the semester off a with ease and a cupcake!



Stay Engaged

Follow URI MAVE and the Student Veterans Organization on social media:

Instagram: [@uri_svo](#) Website: uri.edu/veterans Email: mave-group@uri.edu



Donate to MAVE

MAVE is on track to distribute over \$100,000 in scholarship money to deserving students. If you would like to send a donation to MAVE to help with emergency funding requests, you can do so with this link:

**Donate to
MAVE**

Student and Staff Activities

MAVE students and staff participated in numerous activities this Fall: Veterans Cemetery clean up, 5K run, campus clean up, tabling at on campus events, resume, fellowship and transfer credit workshops, Marine Corps Marathon, Halloween costume contest, workshops with Health Services, Wreaths Across America, Friendsgiving, blood drive and preparation for the Student Veteran Organization National Conference.



Parting Shot

URI Police k-9's
Riot and Taz visited
the MAVE Center

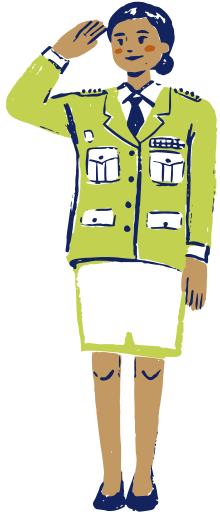


Hale and Farewell

MAVE wants to recognize all of our veterans and dependents who are graduating in December. Congratulations and best wishes to all. Stay in contact with us by filling out the below form. We also want to wish a safe deployment to all of those leaving in the Spring. We will celebrate our Veterans on **December 9 from 11am-1pm** in the MAVE Center so please join us for pizza and a visit from URI's therapy dog, Basil. We can not wait to see you upon your return.



MAVE Alumni Contact Form



MAVE CENTER

Information Sheet

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MILITARY AND VETERAN EDUCATION CENTER

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