



**Standing guard on educational commitments** – Members of SIU Carbondale's Reserve Officer Training Corps detachment stand vigil prior to ceremonies marking Veterans Day last month. Several military-related publications again recognize the university's commitment to ensuring that veterans, active-duty personnel and their families realize their educational goals. *(Photo by Steve Buhman)*

# SIU earns national recognition for helping veterans, active-duty personnel

by Pete Rosenbery

CARBONDALE, Ill. — Southern Illinois University Carbondale continues to be among the nation's top universities for providing educational opportunities to student military veterans, active duty personnel and their families.

In the last few weeks, the university has earned national recognition for its on-campus, extended campus and online support services, flexibility, general support and other offerings from several military-related publications. For the ninth straight year, Victory Media ranked the university as a "[Military Friendly® School](#)" for 2018. For the seventh consecutive year, Military Times Magazine ranks SIU Carbondale among its "[Military Times Best: Colleges 2018](#)" and for the 11th year in a row, "[Military Advanced Education and Transition](#)" magazine awarded SIU Carbondale a "Top School" designation.

In addition, the university recently once again made the top 50 in the [2017 College Choice](#) "Best Colleges for Veterans" rankings.

## Veterans are a vital part of SIU

The recognition reflects the valuable relationship SIU has with its students, Paul S. Copeland, the university's veterans' services coordinator, said.

"This is a two-way street. The university takes steps to assist military/veteran students making the transition to academic life, and the students help Veteran Services to review our own actions and evaluate ourselves to see what's working well and what needs attention," he said.

Students who have served in the armed forces also volunteer their time to mentor other veterans who are transitioning into academic life.

## A commitment to veterans and their families

The university's mission extends to military veterans, active-duty personnel and their families. SIU Carbondale was among the first universities in the nation to offer off-campus academic programs to military personnel, beginning in 1973 at Scott Air Force Base. The university now offers academic programs on military bases in 13 states. In fall 2016, SIU served 446 active military members and 493 veterans on campus. In addition, 362 active duty military members enrolled in off-campus and online programs within the last year.

Copeland noted the university has extended campus and distance education programs that offer opportunities for service and family members to complete a degree while serving. For those who choose on-campus programs, there is a full-service Veterans Center, whose mission is to support students in accessing veteran educational benefits, as well as provide supportive services to assist with academic, engagement or other transition needs.

The [Veterans Center](#) is in Woody Hall C141.