

Veterans Resource Center Grand Opening
Thursday, September 6, 2012
Room 235, Ceddia Union Building

Welcome again everyone, and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to do what can never be done enough — thank our veterans for their service to our country.

In 1961, when I was just eight years old, John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address presented the principles upon which he planned to build his administration. To the world, he said, “Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.”

His idea about the need for our nation to be prepared for its role in the world was borne out of his experience as a PT boat skipper in World War II. But his most important words may have been those he reserved for his countrymen, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”

Today, we dedicate a veterans’ resource center to the men and women who understand well President Kennedy’s statement of the need for a strong defense and, more importantly, who know that service in the military is the answer to his other question.

Shippensburg is proud to support our student veterans as well as our students who are currently serving around the world. That tradition is a hallmark of the university’s history and is a standard we try to achieve every day.

We also recognize that the nature of that service has changed and Shippensburg, like the nation, must adapt to that change. The nature of our military today is such that multiple deployments are common and service can extend for years. This means all parts of our country must rethink how we serve these brave men and women. We are already doing that here.

- We look at our academic programming for ways to deliver content better to this more diverse group of students.
- We look at our support services for new and innovative ways to help.
- And, through such facilities as this resource center, we offer a home to the men and women in whom we take such great pride.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “The history of free men is never written by chance, but by choice — their choice.”

The student veterans who will use this room made their choice to defend freedom and nobly chose to serve others. This facility is just one of the many thanks we owe them.

Thank you again, and I hope this facility becomes one of the busiest and most popular on campus.