



Howdy, Aggies!

There is no doubt that Texas A&M has a rich, deep, and proud history of supporting the military. March 7 marked a special occasion in that history: the 100-year anniversary of the arrival of the first student veterans to campus. On that day back in 1919, Sidney O'Hara of Piggott, Arkansas and H.A. Camp of Emerson, Arkansas, returned from World War I and came to College Station to enroll in classes. By 1922, student veteran enrollment at Texas A&M had increased to over 50. Today, there are nearly 1,200 student veterans on A&M's College Station and Galveston campuses, one of the largest enrollments in the state. Many of these men and women have served their country on the battlefields of Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

Texas A&M is consistently ranked as one of the top schools in the nation for veterans. Texas A&M's Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC), directed by Col. Jerry Smith (USMC, retired), offers student veterans a wide variety of programs and resources including private Academic Success coaching and special links to community resources around the Bryan/College Station area. The Resource Center provides 25 programs to help make our student veterans' time on campus more successful and efficient. These programs are designed to increase the successful transition from military to college life, provide resources to help with the unique challenges of being a student veteran, decrease the amount of time and money it takes for a student veteran to complete their degree, and finally to increase the student veteran graduation rate. For more on the VRSC programs, please click [here](#). A video of Col. Smith's testimony before the state's Defense and Veterans' Affairs committee regarding student veterans at Texas A&M can be found below.

The Association of Former Students also proudly supports student veterans. Through donations via The Association, we fund academic scholarships and the Warrior Scholar Project. In addition, 210 Aggie Rings have been awarded in the past six years to student veterans who otherwise could not have afforded them. Another 35 veterans will get their Aggie Rings in April thanks to Association donors' Aggie Ring Scholarships. Please read this [article](#) for more on this amazing program, and the outstanding generosity of our former students.

Supporting our veterans is, and will remain, a priority for Texas A&M University. We look forward to continuing our work with the Texas legislature so Texas A&M can continue to provide outstanding services and support for our student veterans, and continue to be the college of choice for America's heroes.

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, Texas A&M's student veterans.

Gig 'em.

David Fujimoto '17

Lt Col, USAF, Ret.



### Col. Jerry Smith Testimony Before House Defense & Veterans' Affairs Committee

Col. Jerry Smith (USMC, retired), of the Texas A&M Veteran Resource and Support Center, recently testified before the Texas House Defense and Veterans' Affairs Committee. He spoke about our university's core values and its unwavering commitment to serving the needs of student veterans.

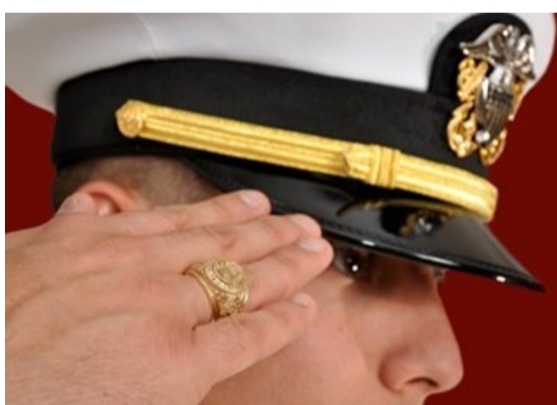
To view his comments before the committee, please click [here](#). They begin at the 58:08 mark, and last for approximately 10 minutes.

### Aggie Ring Scholarships for Veterans

All 19 of the Aggie student veterans that graduated last May, and could not otherwise afford their Aggie Rings, were fully covered by Ring scholarship funds from Association donors.

"There was no way we thought we were going to be able to clear 19 veteran Rings off this list," said Sheila Nelson '92, a fundraising development specialist with The Association.

"That's the longest wait list we've had." Please click on this [link](#) to read more about how Aggies heeded the call to fund Aggie Rings for student veterans.



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*The Texas A&M Advocacy Network is one of the many programs supported by donors to The Association of Former Students.*

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