



CenturyCollege

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[Nancy Livingston](#)

Public Relations

651-779-3222

Fax 651-779-3470

[Century College](#)

3300 Century Avenue North

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Century College Hosts Veterans' Center Grand Opening

Returning American military veterans need to be honored and given every opportunity to re-start their civilian lives, Rep. Robert Dettmer of Forest Lake said Nov. 13 during the grand opening of Century College's new Veterans' Resource Center.

"Our veterans are our nation's heroes," said Dettmer, whose twin sons graduated from West Point Academy and served in Iraq. "They have worked to keep us safe from our enemies, and they deserve our respect and our thanks."

After asking veterans of the Vietnam War and the Korean War to stand, Dettmer asked audience members to thank these men and women for serving in two of our "forgotten wars." People then spent several minutes shaking veterans' hands and expressing their thanks.

Along with State Reps. Leon Lillie and Paul Gardner, who were also in attendance, Dettmer congratulated Century for opening a center aimed at serving the needs of returning veterans. Located off the counseling office on West Campus in the former assessment center space, the Veterans' Resource Center will be a place where veterans can study, socialize and network. A newly formed student club for veterans will hold its meetings there. Century currently has over 240 student veterans.

Entering college after serving in the military is a challenging adjustment, said Century student Kary Bowser, an Air Force veteran. “Opening this Veterans’ Resource Center is the crown jewel of my experience here at Century,” said Bowser, who also serves as the vice president of the Minnesota State College Student Association. “We need to do all we can to help vets find their way through the system.”

Century student Ben Woto of St. Paul, a Navy veteran, said the military experience is so intense that simply learning how to interact with civilians again is challenging. “You have to talk the way that civilians talk,” said Woto.

Century student veteran Kevin Meysembourg of Hugo, who served in the Marine Corps for five years, said the new student veterans’ club is starting to plan some activities such as a paintball competition against the law enforcement club.

In a discussion after the grand opening, Jennifer Iveland of the state Vet Center said combat zone skills and home skills are very different. “A warrior bent on survival can be vigilant, suspicious, angry, insensitive and standoffish,” said Iveland.” That doesn’t work that well back home.”

The grand opening ceremony included a presentation of the colors by members of the North High School Air Force Junior ROTC.



Photo: North High Color Guard members Shannon McNamara, Timothy Betz, Michael Munson and Yang Vang.