



# A Community Dedicated to Serving Those Who Served

The University of Pittsburgh's Office of Veterans Services exists to ensure that veterans, active service members and their dependents are positioned to thrive in the college classroom and beyond.

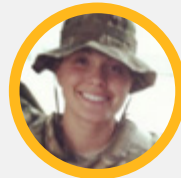
Each year, the University serves more than 700 individuals—connecting Pitt's military community members to personalized outreach, academic and social supports as well as veterans benefits and financial aid.

Unsurprisingly, three-fourths of the team's staff have served in uniform, and the office itself functions as a natural source of solidarity and support for students stepping back into civilian life.

Just ask Jamie Bucher, who entered the U.S. Air Force fresh out of high school and retired as a technical sergeant 11 years later. Today, Bucher is a successful college student

and just a few credits shy of earning her degree in health services. "It's hard to transition from the military to civilian life, and I didn't know anything about how to go to college," Bucher recalls. "Thankfully, Pitt has helped me every step of the way. Its Office of Veterans

Services always goes the extra mile, and I don't think I would be graduating without their support."



Jamie Bucher

## Where Pitt Ranks

**29th**  
Best college for veterans  
- U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

**No. 1**  
College in Pennsylvania for veterans  
- U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

**Silver**  
Status as a Military Friendly School®  
- VICTORY MEDIA



Pitt Vets is the University's own chapter of Student Veterans of America.



# A Hub of Military-Driven Research

*Pitt is home to world-renowned research that is helping members of our military thrive—in both combat and civilian life. Some of this groundbreaking work is now underway at:*

## The Human Engineering Research Laboratories

HERL—a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Research Center of Excellence—operates in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh. It also serves as the national Center for Wheelchairs and Assistive Robotics Engineering.

HERL’s current and founding director is Rory Cooper, a U.S. Army veteran who sustained a spinal cord injury while stationed overseas.

“9/11 changed everything

for me, and I knew in that moment that I needed to use my engineering and scientific talents to help our wounded service members have a better life,” says Cooper, who also serves as Pitt’s assistant vice chancellor for research for health sciences and STEM collaboration.

Today, Cooper is a living embodiment of what happens when the potential of wounded veterans is unlocked, and he’s spent his career trying to give this same opportunity to others.

At HERL, students and scholars work directly with veterans to develop assistive technologies and robotics solutions that help individuals regain their independence after a serious bodily injury. “We’ve changed rehab in this country because of the work we have done at Pitt in partnership with the VA and the Department of Defense,” says Cooper. “Not only for veterans—but for everyone.”

## The Warrior Human Performance Research Center

Pitt’s Warrior Human Performance Research Center has a very specific focus:



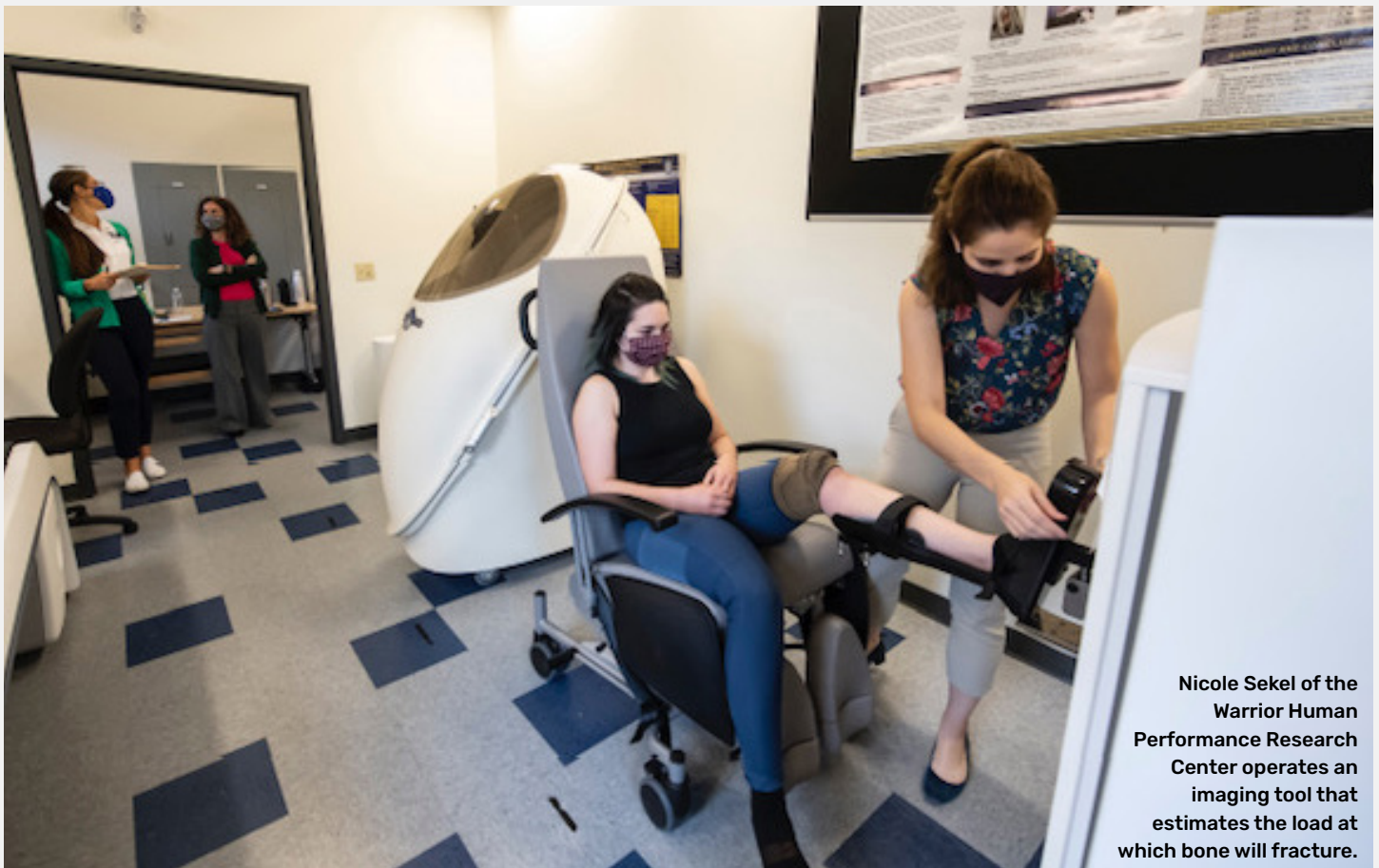
**Rory Cooper**



**Brad Nindl**



**Ron Poropatich**



**Nicole Sekel of the Warrior Human Performance Research Center operates an imaging tool that estimates the load at which bone will fracture.**



helping military members succeed. Its researchers work closely with service members in the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Force and Marine Corps to develop highly technical biological markers of injury risk as well as tools to keep troops healthy and safe during training and combat.

Led by Brad Nindl—an Army Reserve officer, Iraqi War veteran and recipient of both the Bronze Star and Combat Action Badge—the center has more than six studies underway at military sites across the nation.

“It is an exciting time for our center, and the University of Pittsburgh plays a pivotal role in our success,” says Nindl, who serves as vice chair for research in the Department of Sports Medicine and Nutrition in Pitt’s School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. “Our researchers are uniquely positioned to excel, and this is because we have all the right ingredients: a culture that drives innovation and collaboration, a world-class core of biomedical expertise and remarkable partnerships with the United States military.”

### The Center for Military Medicine Research

Pitt’s Center for Military Medicine Research utilizes a cross-disciplinary approach to support the medical research interests of the U.S.



**HERL has led the field of assistive technology research for nearly three decades.**

departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

The center’s director, Dr. Ron Poropatich, spent 30 years working as a pulmonary and critical care physician in the U.S. Army before retiring at the rank of colonel in 2012. Today, he holds the title of professor of medicine in Pitt’s Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care Medicine.

Among the center’s recent innovations: TRAuma Care In a Rucksack (TRACIR), a fully autonomous medical backpack—now under

development for the U.S. Army—that can deliver robotically controlled care to injured soldiers in remote and austere environments.

Poropatich notes that the TRACIR is poised for use far beyond the active combat zone. It could “be deployed by drone to hikers or mountain climbers injured in the wilderness or expand trauma care capabilities in rural health clinics or be used by aid workers responding to natural disasters,” he has said of the technology.

## Caring for Military Minds

As director of Pitt’s Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program, Eric Meyer trains tomorrow’s mental health professionals. He also advances cutting-edge research devoted to helping veterans and emergency responders heal from trauma. This work can be game-changing—and life-saving—for veterans, who are more likely than their general population peers to grapple with certain health issues, such as depression, substance misuse, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

*“Many veterans come home and become first responders,” says Meyer. “People may think they have no contact with the military. But our police, firefighters, EMS workers—they are often veterans. So, when we take care of veterans, we are often taking care of people who are continuing to take care of us even after their military service has ended.”*



**Eric Meyer**

**DID  
YOU  
KNOW**



*In 1914, veterans from the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars convened on what is now the Pittsburgh campus to form one of nation’s first VFW chapters.*

Pitt-Greensburg's ROTC cadets participate in the school's annual wreath-laying ceremony.



## A Commitment on Every Campus

Pitt's regional campuses in **Bradford**, **Greensburg** and **Johnstown** hold designations as **Military Friendly Schools**. This recognition, by VIQTORY Media, signifies an institution's commitment to explicitly serving and supporting veterans.

All four regional campuses—in Bradford, Greensburg, Johnstown and Titusville—support students to leverage their **VA Education Benefits** and the **Yellow Ribbon Program** to pursue and realize their dream of a college education.

## Veterans Helping Veterans at Pitt-Greensburg

*On the Pitt-Greensburg campus, all students who are current and former members of the military can take advantage of priority enrollment, course-scheduling preferences and personalized support. The school is home to an ROTC program, which offers academic scholarships and stipends while training students to become officers in the U.S. Army. It also offers a wide variety of unique veteran-focused programs. This includes:*

**The SITREP program** (Service, Initiative, Transition, Resource, Education and Partnership), which connects student-veterans to staff and resources that can aid their academic journey. Two Pitt-Greensburg employees launched the program—Alum Alex “Red” Bittner, a soldier in the Army Reserve who is now the school’s assistant director of admissions, and U.S. Air Force veteran Lisa Reffner, the school’s VA certifying official.

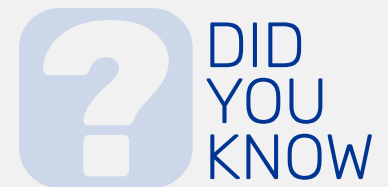
The **Vet2Vet Peer Mentor program**, which pairs incoming military veterans with veterans who are established in the Pitt-Greensburg community to help give the newcomers a go-to resource for navigating campus life.



**Jake Snyder**

**The Veterans Action Team**, which is led by students who served as well as faculty and staff and aims to keep the needs of student veterans front and center.

The school’s veteran-centric approach works. Just ask Jake Snyder, who graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2021 after a 20-year career with the U.S. Army. Snyder majored in history—minored in political science—and finished at the top of his class. He also owns bragging rights for serving as the campus’s first-ever Vet2Vet Peer Mentor. “From the moment that a veteran enters Pitt-Greensburg, they are welcomed, cared for and assisted throughout their academic progress,” says Snyder. “They are not a number.”



*The Johnstown campus is home to The Heroes Memorial, which is believed to be the only memorial of its kind on any U.S. college campus. The memorial pays tribute to those who died on 9/11, as well as service members who were killed in Afghanistan and Iraq.*