

BC3 prof's idea to honor veterans on Flag Day "great," VA official says

May 30, 2019

Thank you for your service and the freedom you provide for this country – Arabelle

You are the reason we are here today, and I cannot thank you enough. God bless – Dominic

Your will to put yourself in harm's way to protect our freedom is something most people could not do – Cameron

(Butler, PA) Eighty greeting cards, each featuring the photograph of an American flag and signed by a Butler County Community College faculty or staff member, student or administrator, will be presented on Flag Day to military veterans residing at a Veterans Administration community living center in Butler and whose service spans from World War II to Operation Desert Storm.

The project spearheaded by Cheryl Macon, a BC3 business professor, honors the sacrifices of the 60 veterans, ages 50 to 99, who are residents of VA Butler Healthcare's Sgt. Joseph George Kusick Community Living Center.

"I have a long history of military in my family," said Macon, a BC3 educator for 30 years whose ancestry includes a Revolutionary War major and two privates. "I was raised to respect the military and appreciate what our current servicemen and women, and our veterans, have sacrificed, and what they are doing for us."



Butler County Community College student Kendra Hile, of Fenelton, signs a card before attending BC3 Professor Cheryl Macon's human resource management class on Thursday, April 25, 2019, on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. The card will be presented on Flag Day to a veteran residing at VA Butler Healthcare's Sgt. Joseph George Kusick Community Living Center. Waiting to sign his card in the background is Reigen Dzama, of Mars.

Macon is a paternal descendant of Maj. James Dougan and Pvts. Jacob Scouten and Theodorus Scowden, who served in the Revolutionary War. Her ancestors include those who fought in the War of 1812, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Her maternal cousin has served in the Navy since 2012.

The community living center provides, among other services, skilled nursing care, rehabilitation, and hospice and palliative care, and, said Maryann Capuzzi, the center's recreation therapist, is home to three veterans who are 99, and 10 who served in World War II – two of whom were prisoners of war and two of whom fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

Macon's idea, Capuzzi said, "is great. It lets them know that people are thinking about them, care about them, that they are not forgotten, and that there are still people out there who have a sense of what they did for the country."

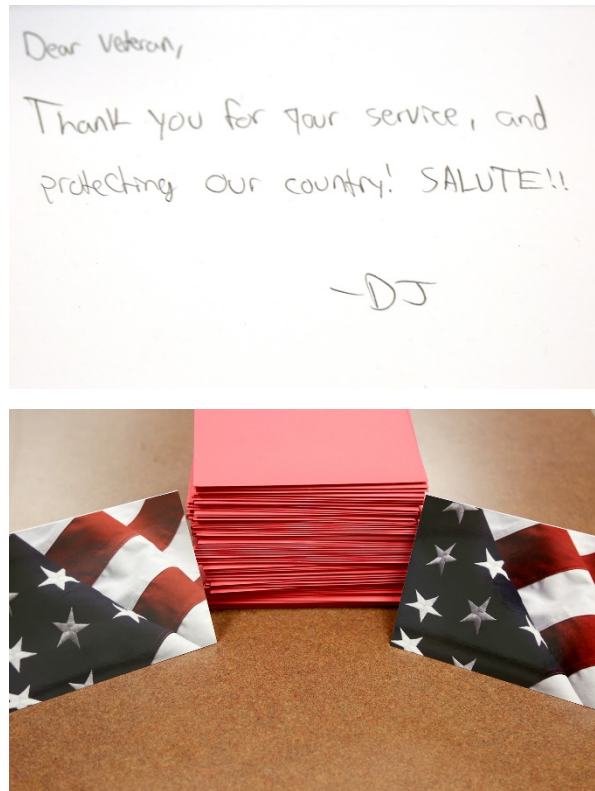
All four main branches of the U.S. military are represented by residents living at the center, Capuzzi said.

BC3 has been named a military friendly institution five times by Victory Media. More than 100 student-veterans in the spring semester attended BC3's main campus, or its additional locations of BC3 @ Armstrong in Ford City; BC3 @ Brockway in Brockway; BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township; BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle; or BC3 @ LindenPointe in Hermitage, according to Stella Smith, BC3's veterans coordinator.

BC3's Class of 2019 included 32 student-veterans.

Kendra Hile and Lauren Broad, students in Macon's human resource management class, joined Arabelle and Dominic and Cameron in signing the cards for the veterans.

"It is important to thank those who served," said Hile, a 19-year-old business management major from Fenelon whose maternal great-grandfather was a prisoner of war. "It's the right thing to do. We wouldn't be where we are right now if they didn't fight for us."



A note written by a Butler County Community College student, top, within a stack of 80 cards to be presented on Flag Day to a veteran residing at the VA Butler Healthcare's Sgt. Joseph George Kusick Community Living Center, is shown on BC3's main campus in Butler Township on Thursday, May 2, 2019.

Broad, 20, a human resource management major from Slippery Rock, said her brother, Ryan, will enlist in the Army following his graduation this spring from Slippery Rock Area High School, and that she decorated her card “with pretty stars and hearts.”

“They gave so much to our country by leaving their family and friends and giving up their freedoms for all of us,” Broad said. “I hope the card will make them happy, that it will make their day, and show that people care.

“I am sure it will be meaningful to all of them.”

Flag Day dates to 1916, when President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation for a June 14 observance, according to va.gov. President Harry Truman signed the observance into law in 1949.



Cheryl Macon, a Butler County Community College business professor, is shown on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township on Thursday, April 25, 2019.