

NEWS RELEASE

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Oct. 13, 2004

New NCSU Libraries Exhibit Shows Transformative Effects of GI Bill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The NCSU Libraries will hold an exhibit in the D.H. Hill Library between Oct. 14 and Dec. 22 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 – better known as the GI Bill of Rights – and to honor the veterans who have attended North Carolina State University. Combining historical materials with testimonies of current students, the exhibit, "Transforming Society: The GI Bill Experience at NC State," documents the local impact of one of the best-loved and most successful public policies ever adopted in the United States.

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the GI Bill of Rights. Over the past six decades, it has provided approximately 21 million veterans and service members with \$77 billion in benefits for education and training. Today, 90 percent of all eligible military personnel sign up for the latest version of the law, the Montgomery GI Bill.

At NC State, the GI Bill led to a dramatic increase in enrollment after World War II. With classrooms overcrowded, the university set up Quonset huts in the Court of North Carolina. By the late 1940s, veterans accounted for about 80 percent of NC State's student body, far higher than the national average of 50 percent. Like classrooms, dorm rooms became crowded as the number of students assigned to each room at NC State was increased from two to three, and then to four.

Drawing mainly on the NCSU Libraries' own rich collections of photographs, campus publications, student essays, letters, and other University Archives and manuscript materials, the exhibit documents how the GI Bill contributed to the growth of NC State and shaped the lives of individual students.

In addition to selecting materials from the Special Collections Research Center, librarian Anna Dahlstein and NC State education professor Robert Serow interviewed NC State graduates and students who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and a number of other arenas before completing their education. Their stories are featured in the exhibit and have become a part of the University Archives in the form of oral history recordings. Alumni also loaned the Libraries artifacts, documents and photographs that help tell the story of the GI Bill – a story that is still unfolding today.

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In addition to the exhibit, the NCSU Libraries will hold a symposium on “The GI Bill Experience” from 1 to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 12, at the Jane S. McKimmon Center. Following a keynote address by Milton Greenberg, who wrote *The GI Bill: The Law That Changed America*, there will be a panel discussion moderated by Serow. Panelists will include Suzanne Mettler of Syracuse University, who is currently at work on a book titled *Civic Generation: The GI Bill in the Lives of World War II Veterans*; Lt. Col. (Ret.) Sion Harrington III, the military collection archivist at the North Carolina Office of Archives and History; and Ted J. Meyer, who served in World War II before obtaining a bachelor’s degree from NC State in 1948. Other veterans, students, and members of the community will have the opportunity to share their stories and perspectives in smaller breakout sessions. The symposium will conclude with remarks by former chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court Burley Mitchell Jr. Greenberg, Harrington, Meyer, and Mitchell all studied under the provisions of the GI Bill.

The exhibit and symposium are free and open to the public. For more information about the events, hours, and parking, visit the Web at www.lib.ncsu.edu/exhibits/gibill or call the D.H. Hill Library at 919/515-7188.

Press kits and high-resolution images from the exhibit are available to members of the media by completing this form: www.lib.ncsu.edu/exhibits/gibill/media.html.

The NCSU Libraries, with more than 3.2 million volumes, over 51,000 print and electronic serials, and hundreds of databases, offers leading-edge resources and services from its central library, the D.H. Hill Library, and four branch libraries. For full information about the NCSU Libraries, visit www.lib.ncsu.edu.