

Allison Barr
December, 2nd 2018
Veterans Week Final
Reporting 1

A Veterans Visit

Lauren Burt was one of the last people to come into the Falling Sky Pizzeria meeting room. The seats on the initial panel were consumed by the six veterans who had beat her to it. Three other veterans scattered themselves among the Falling Sky conference room.

Compared to the other veterans, she differed in the ways of clothes, age, and probably not to anyone's surprise: gender. In her Alpha Phi Omega pink and black sweatshirt, she found a stool to sit on behind the row composed almost entirely of men.

Lauren Burt was joined by one, and later two, other women on University of Oregon's Veterans panel. But, nothing about her confident demeanor separated her from the majority of those speaking.

This was an event put on by the UO's Veterans Center, with the intention to answer incoming military members' questions. In part of a week long military veterans celebration, UO held an hour long panel in the Falling Sky Pizzeria on November, 14th 2018. The panel consisted of ten veterans, sharing a wide variety of their experiences in the military.

Veterans week was honored on campus November, 12-16th 2018, following the nationally recognized Veterans Day holiday on November, 11th.

Around ten students gave an hour of their time to listen to what UO staff member and student veterans had to say, and ask their burning questions.

Most of what incoming cadets asked had to do with what to expect once they join. The veterans answered thoroughly, speaking from their personal experiences. The majority of responses pertained to the lessons they learned while serving.

The ten veterans on the panel answered the students' questions.

Burt was one of three women who spoke. She is a current student at UO, shared her most important lesson she learned.

“Humility is probably one of the biggest personality traits that I noticed while being with new officers; accepting that you don’t know everything,” she said. “Understand yes, you have the rank, but we have the years of experience.”

Burt served in the military for several years before injuring her knee in a snowstorm march, forcing her to no longer serve. To continue her involvement in the military, she currently works at the UO Veterans Center as an office assistant.

Michael Thomas, is a retired Chief Warrant Officer Three and the Veterans Program Coordinator at UO. He was in the Air Force, was an aviator and emphasized lessons he learned of respect and trust.

Thomas’ position often put him in the place of taking care of others in his unit. While many other veterans gave advice on how to handle yourself, he noted that you have to constantly think, “What can I do to help? What do you need?”

Charles Cox, a veteran of 23 years, took part in the panel. Now an accountant for the Computer Science department at the UO, Cox was referred to as the oldest veteran there, and the one with the most experience. He served in countries such as Iraq, Yemen and Korea.

Even though his time in the army was no doubt challenging, he said, “I wouldn’t change a bit, really. It was worth every minute out there.”

The event lasted a little over an hour, filling up more than the time allotted.

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FUTURE STORY IDEAS:

I would be very interested in following up with Charles Cox for a feature piece. I think he had the most interesting life out of everyone on the panel, and he made it evident he loved being apart of the military.

I would love to follow up with Lauren Burt and do a story on women in the army. It is a unique perspective that highlights the people who aren't usually highlighted in this field.

WHAT I REVISED:

For this revision, I focused on what Lori and I talked about in our conference. We talked about focusing on a subject first, then describing the bigger picture after. I wanted to give Lauren more of a personality. This is because I personally care about veterans, and highlighting women in any sort, so I wanted to focus on her. I enjoyed putting a twist in the story that hopefully makes readers more engaged, because I know I was more passionate about writing it. Working with Dani from writing central also helped a huge amount because she was able to point out things from a perspective of someone who wasn't in the class, and who focused on my AP style errors.