



News release

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**Gateway partners with Pritzker
to honor fallen soldiers**

Gateway Technical College students are using the skills they've learned in the classroom and applying them to something much bigger – to honor those who have paid the ultimate price for the United States.

Gateway's Welding students and instructors have partnered with the Pritzker Military Museum & Library on a project that will honor fallen Vietnam War veterans to be installed at the museum's Somers site.

The exhibit, called Above and Beyond, consists of 58,307 dog tags, representing the American fatalities from Vietnam, all suspended from the ceiling. Gateway Welding students are building the metal framework from which the tags will hang.

The college was asked to partner with the museum when the leaders of each organization were at an event and it was revealed that the exhibit needed to be installed at Pritzker, but the format to get it done was still up in the air.

"Gateway has been a great partner with us from the very moment I mentioned to your former college president (Morgan Phillips) that we had a problem and needed it fixed," said Pritzker Military Museum & Library President and CEO Scott English.

“I have met so many folks here at Gateway, from veterans to instructors to students. All of them have been consummate professionals, and are very enthusiastic about working on the project – and I am so grateful for it. It just reinforces what I already know about technical colleges, and that is they provide solutions.”

Arranged chronologically in order of death, each tag includes the name of a soldier, their respective military branch and their date of death. The exhibit also includes one black dog tag to represent all those who died from conditions related to service during the war.

Gateway Welding student Trey Erickson, an Army veteran, said he was “excited and honored” to be able to work on the exhibit.

“My grandfather, and other members of my family, served in Vietnam,” said Erickson. “I am most excited to see it fully installed with all the dog tags hanging from it. I think my heart will be warmed to see it.”

Kyle Worzala, Gateway Technical College Welding instructor, said the students’ gain is twofold – the honor of working on this type of exhibit, and applying the skills they’ve gained to produce a high-quality piece that thousands will see.

“Everything we are doing here with the Pritzker Military Museum & Library project is what a student would experience at an entry-level job,” said Worzala. “It’s like working at a fabrication shop – they all know their jobs, they all know what to do and are working as a well-oiled machine.

“They are very proud to work on this project for veterans. It’s been awesome to see.”

Gateway Welding student Sadie Hua said she's grateful for the opportunity to work on the exhibit. She also said she believes the exhibit has brought out the best work in all the students, who want it to look good because of what it represents.

"I'm honored I have the opportunity to work on something to remember those who have given up their lives to serve and protect our country," said Hua. "It will also be awesome to be able to drive down the road, or to visit the museum, and said I helped build that. I hope it's there for a long time."

Gateway Technical College's mission is to deliver industry-focused education that is flexible, accessible and affordable for our diverse community. The college collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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