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**For Immediate Release**

September 4, 2019

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**Awarding College Credit for Military Training**

By Dr. Linda Clark, Idaho State Board of Education member

Rexburg resident Marjorie Price has had a varied career. She's worked in marketing, in higher education, and she is an Army veteran. "I served two years in active duty and six years in the reserves," Price said.

Now, she is spearheading a State Board of Education effort to see that military veterans are granted college credit for specialized training received while in the service. "It's been known for a long time that there is college-level training going on in the military but it wasn't very well understood that many general education topics are covered during military training as well," she said.

Price has spent the last several months, cataloging the general education course work covered in various forms of military training, creating a crosswalk that aligns those training elements with requirements for college-level general education in math, English, science, oral communication, arts and humanities and social sciences. "This crosswalk will help veterans identify whether they've already completed some of their math, science, English, etc. in the military, and apply that toward college credit needed to earn a degree," she said.

The "Gen Ed Crosswalk" covers over 1,000 military occupations and courses building on work done by the American Council on Education and used in other states to grant college credit to military veterans for their training. Using funds provided by Lumina Foundation, the State Board contracted with Price to develop the crosswalk for statewide use by all eight of Idaho's public institutions.

“Anybody returning to Idaho or coming here after serving in the military will know how their training and education will count toward a post-secondary credential no matter where they want to attend college in our state,” State Board Chief Academic Officer Randall Brumfield said.

The Gen Ed Crosswalk will be considered by the State Board later this year. If approved, it will be reviewed by faculty and implemented first at the College of Eastern Idaho (CEI) in Idaho Falls. “This approach will assure academic requirements are met while recognizing the skills and knowledge a veteran may already have,” CEI President Dr. Rick Aman said. “The result will be helping these prior military students to decrease their educational costs and shorten the time it takes to earn a degree.”

Marjorie Price knows firsthand how important that is for a military veteran entering the next phase of their career after service to their country. “When I left the service, I attended a community college in California that allowed credit for prior learning,” she said. “I was trained as a broadcast journalist in the military and the college gave me 30 credits toward my degree, an entire year’s worth of college.”

Price earned her associates degree, then went on to earn a bachelor’s degree and two graduate degrees. She credits the jump-start given to her by that community college with having enough money and time to finish her baccalaureate. “A lot of working-aged adults who have served in the military avoid going back to college to get their degree because they think it will take so long,” she said. “I got to accelerate completion of my own degree and that is a lesson I’ll never forget.”

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