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MOSAIC and ROTC Honor Veterans with Robert Bennedsen 5K

Daniel Truog, Sports & Opinion Editor

Saturdays at 9 a.m. on the Seattle University campus are a time for contemplative reflection. No classes, no one out and about, just you and your thoughts as you stagger to the dining hall for your fifth Red Hot Rudy's breakfast burrito of the week.

That is the case most Saturdays. But Nov. 9, dozens of students, alumni and community members lined up at the foot of the hill next to the library. It was there that the Robert Bennedsen Veterans 5K began.

Now in its seventh year, the race went north on 12th Ave, past Xavier Hall and the Administration building and down the hill by the library. After five laps on this one-kilometer loop, runners were done.

Anthony Gunsby, an active-duty Army service member and graduate student pursuing a master's in sport and entertainment management, ran the race despite running the previous day. For Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) students like him, the choice to participate was an easy one.

"Being a veteran, it's important to be involved in a race like this to support the veterans for Veteran's Day coming up," Gunsby said. "It's pretty special to be a part of this."



Austin Harper

Runners participate in the Veteran's Day 5k at Seattle University



The SU ROTC poses at the Veteran's Day 5k

The 5K is one of the Meaningful Opportunity for Student Access, Inclusion, and Community (MOSAIC) Center's biggest events of the year for veterans and military-connected students on campus. They also host a Memorial Day barbecue and quarterly events with food for these students. Their Outreach Link space for veterans and military-connected students can be found on campus in the 1103 building.

Linda Taing is a graduate program coordinator with the MOSAIC Center who works to support veterans in a variety of ways. Taing, a Navy veteran, appreciated the support of everyone who attended the race, whether they ran or just came out to watch.

"Visually, this is us supporting our veterans," Taing said. "Showing up really supports them and shows that our institution supports their lives."

The support for student and community veterans was clear. Steady rain could not stop the runners or their excitement as they ran through a cloud of bubbles at the finish line. However, the output of bubbles mixed with the rain created a slightly slippery conclusion.

"I was worried I was gonna slip in those bubbles... I don't think they thought about that," Gunsby laughed.

All participants made it safely across the sudsy finish line.

Darrell Wrightquick, a graduate student working on his master's in sport and entertainment management, emphasized the importance of recognizing veterans. Wrightquick served in the Army for 16 years on active duty.

"Veterans are some of the most overlooked people, probably some of the most... selfless people. Sometimes we give more than we really want and it kind of goes unappreciated," Wrightquick said.

It is not just important for people across the Seattle U community to show up to events like this 5K. Deanne Liu, associate director of the MOSAIC Center, shared how these events also help veterans connect with their community.

"A lot of times we don't know who our veterans and military-connected are," Liu said. "It's not an identity that is easily seen."

This was the fourth 5K Liu helped to organize. Liu, who is military-connected, mentioned that the race started because of the support of Board of Regents member Tom Hove.

Veteran's Day falls on Nov. 11 each year. Sean Nakagomi, a veteran and Seattle U alumni who graduated in 2024 with a degree in mathematics, spoke about the significance of the holiday.

"It's great to have the day off, it's good to go out and run, but it's also good for every holiday to reflect on the history. What exactly are we celebrating?" Nakagomi said.

Honoring veterans is significant for current ROTC students, many of whom are about to go on and serve in the military. Nakagomi noted the race as a passing of the guard moment for these students. He served in the Navy for five and a half years.

Whether you have served in the military, are about to serve, or know someone who has served, Veterans Day is an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made by people in our community. Thanks to ROTC and the MOSAIC Center, the university's support for veterans was front and center last weekend.