Tom Brokaw in his two national best selling books called the veterans of World War II "The Greatest Generation." Some called them the un-selfish generation, others called them the noble generation, and still others referred to them as the heroic generation. Those men who grew up during a devastating depression knew what it was to sacrifice and do without. Also they knew what it was to suffer and see their friends die in battle.

Following WW II the men began to return home to their families, homes, jobs and education, never once thinking of themselves as heroes. Those men mostly thought of themselves as being in the right place at the right time, or the wrong place at the wrong time (depending on your point of view). They believed they were called upon to do a job, and they did it to the best of their ability. However, looking back at the WW II generation through the telescope of time, they were an extraordinary generation.

On August 14, 1945, three years, eight months, and seven days after the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor the war ended. The last Axis enemy had gone down to defeat. In this nation, there was a tremendous mood swing between December 7, 1941, and August 14, 1945. It was a contrast between shock, dread, and near defeat, and relief, thanksgiving and unqualified victory. This poorly prepared nation and its army of citizen
soldiers had risen from the ashes of defeat to achieve total victory against a totalitarian enemy that had been preparing for war for decades. The war had smashed one of the greatest military machines in history and saved this nation from one of the greatest threats its freedom had ever faced. Now this nation had the logistical problem of returning 12,000,000 men conditioned to kill back to peaceful civilian life.

The system of returning 12,000,000 men from the military world to civilian life was called "Redeployment, or "re-adjusting of personnel." Redeployment decided who came home first, and in what order. Of course the wounded were moved back to the states first. To them a system of "point value", and a procedure called a "critical score" was used to determine priorities of discharging the men.

An "Adjusted Service Rating Card" was issued to each enlisted man and woman. Point totals were entered on this card covering four factors that determined who would be discharged first:

(1) **Service Credit** - One point for each month of service between September 16, 1940 and August 15, 1945.

(2) **Overseas Service** - One point for each month served overseas between September 16, 1940 and August 15, 1945.

(3) **Combat Service** - Five points for each additional award for service between September 16, 1940 and August 15, 1945.

(A) Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion
of Merit, Bronze Medal Air Medal, Purple Heart, Bronze Star and Battle Campaign Ribbons.

Also: Navy Cross, Marine Corps Medal, and other corresponding medals.

Credit was also given for medals from a foreign country according to War Department Regulations.

(4) Parenthood Credit - Twelve points for each child under 18 years of age.

CRITICAL SCORE - At first a total of 85 points for men, and 44 points for women were necessary for discharge. The critical point score necessary for discharge quickly was lowered as men and women were discharged. But that system insured a fair and somewhat gradual method of returning 12,000,000 military personnel to civilian life.

Late in 1944 the U.S. Congress passed P.L. 367, referred to as the G.I. Bill of Rights. It provided among other things that returning servicemen must be hired at their pre-war job. Also, they were guaranteed home and business loans and certain unemployment benefits, such as the 52-20 Club. This writer drew $20 a week for about 15 weeks and went to Florida on vacation. I always felt guilty about that but it was a benefit. Also the G.I. Bill provided one year of college tuition and a stipend for every year spent in military service.

The G.I. Bill provided that for all tuition (up to $500 per year) books, and equipment be paid for by the government. Also each G.I. student received a $50 a month subsistence stipend ($75 if you were married). That $500 a year total allowance would
get you into most colleges in this country at that time. In 1944, the tuition at Morehead, Ky. State College was $3 per credit hour per semester. A normal load was 18 hours per semester. Tuition then was $54 per semester, or $108 per year. I’m sure you could have enrolled in many Ivy League Schools then for $500 per year. But if the $500 did not cover costs, the G.I. student had to pay additional expenses.

When the G.I. Bill was passed in 1944 it was met with a great deal of controversy. On one side was Robert Hutchins, the un-orthodox president of the University of Chicago who said it “would wreck American education and convert a frightening number of veterans into educational hoboes.” Dr. Hutchins complained that many veterans would be wasting their time, and he advocated a national aptitude testing program to determine if veterans were capable of learning in college. He said most would be better off getting jobs. He also maintained that “money hungry, greedy colleges would take advantage of the tax payers money”. But other cooler heads prevailed, and although there were some truth to Dr. Hutchins’s statements, by large, veterans were better students than the non-veterans. They were more serious and focused.

With only a small fraction of men discharged by June 1945, and 12,000,000 yet to be released, there were 23,478 already enrolled in the nation’s colleges. That represented only a tiny fraction of those who would later be enrolled in higher education. (In 1945, Morehead [Ky.] State College had 20 veterans enrolled but more would come.)
brought Elwood C. Kastner, the registrar of New York University, speaking for many U.S. colleges to say, "We will admit every veteran who left this University to enter military service. Over and above that we will admit all other veterans who qualify insofar as our space and staff will allow. We will hold classes six days and nights a week, and we don't need students. But we feel an obligation to all veterans." One wonders if that University is one Dr. Hutchins's was talking about when he said, "Some would take advantage of the government."

As veterans were discharged they began enrolling in the nation's colleges. The process for entering college under the G.I. Bill was:

1. Fill out Form 1950 available at all colleges and V.A. Centers.
2. Send form to the nearest Veterans Center.
3. The V.A. investigated the vets service record to make sure that they had an honorable discharge.
4. The Vet takes the certificate of eligibility to any approved college in the U.S. or abroad. The vet was then admitted to the college.
5. Eventually the veterans subsistence check arrived.

With so many men trained and conditioned to kill returning to civilian life, there were those who feared that violence would erupt in the streets and on campuses. Many psychiatrists maintained that veterans involved in sports, might become violent in a
dispute over an official’s ruling, and that might trigger an episode of violent behavior. Also, there was fear that a veteran receiving a failing grade might kill the professor. All of those fears were entirely unfounded and nothing like that ever happened. (But things like that are common in today’s schools.) On the contrary, the veterans were more peaceful, settled, serious and determined. They were a generation of older, “non-traditional” students, with families who realized the importance of a college education, and with “Uncle Sam’s” help intended to better themselves.

That was not to say there was not a great deal of drinking and partying among those single veterans on campus. John Collis, one of the student veterans on the campus of Morehead State College recalled in 1946, that Dean Lappin called him into his office one day. John said that when you were called into Dean Lappin’s Office, you were in trouble. Fearfully he arrived at the Dean’s Office and was ushered into his presence. There the Dean sat behind an imposing desk with a stern look on his face and said, “John, what can we do to stop this on-campus drinking by these veterans?” John responded, “Dean, those men are battle hardened veterans who fought war and they are not easily intimidated.” Dean Lappin said, “That’s exactly what I thought—How’s the football team doing this year?”

The G.I. Bill infused new life into this nation's colleges. Morehead State Teachers College located in the Appalachian Hills of Eastern Kentucky had a pre-war high enrollment of 1,000 in 1938. During the years of WW II their enrollment plummeted.
On October 13, 1945, Registrar Mary Page Milton announced the fall on-campus enrollment was 222. That included 145 women and 77 men. Also there were 84 enrolled at the Morehead Ashland Center. Clearly the College was struggling because of the lack of students. However, there was hope for the future, because in those 222 there were 20 veterans enrolled under the G.I. Bill, and the war had just ended.

When the winter quarter of 1946 opened, the registrar at Morehead State College announced a 76% increase in total enrollment over the previous quarter, and there were 70 veterans registered. By January 1947, when, because of political reasons, Morehead College had been dropped by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredited list, it did not seem to slow down the veterans enrollment. In January 1947, there was a total on-campus enrollment of 567 with almost 274 veterans enrolled under the G.I. Bill, including four women.

By 1947 Morehead State Teachers College had become a cosmopolitan institution. That year the enrollment included 102 out of state students from 7 states. That out of state enrollment was estimated at 16% and were mostly veterans. Many of those out of state students were athletes recruited by Coaches Ellis Johnson and Stan Radjuns. Others returned to Morehead after being stationed here in the Navy. Still others came to Morehead because the colleges in their own states were so crowded with veterans returning to college that even though they had been accepted, they had to wait one or two years just to enroll. One such student that came to Morehead and remained
was Norman Roberts.

In 1946 this nation experienced its greatest housing shortage since the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. For 5 years there had been no civilian construction of homes or apartments. So when the veterans began enrolling in colleges there was very little housing available. Of course, the nation's colleges and the government recognized that, and cooperatively, they set about to remedy that situation as quickly as possible.

For 5 years there had been many military barracks constructed on this nation's military camps and air fields. Now they were empty. So the government began to disassemble many of those barracks, donate, and ship them to college campuses throughout the country. That provided a great deal of work for many men who had been out of work at the end of the war. Many carpenters, plumbers, electricians, laborers and returning veterans were employed in both the dismantling and re-assembling of those old barracks.

One returning veteran and out of state student to find his way to Morehead State Teachers College was Wisconsin native Norman Roberts. Immediately following his high school graduation, Norman entered the U.S. Army. After completing basic training he was shipped to England in 1944. There he was assigned to the 252nd Field Artillery in the 2nd Army. His division landed in France on D-Day plus 30, and soon moved into combat. Sergeant Roberts was trained as a Field Artillery Battery Fire Specialist. His job was to compute those variables that influence the accuracy of their guns, eg. wind direction, wind speed, air temperature and powder temperature. After computing those
variables, he would then direct the angle and degree of fire for several guns.

Following five years of military service, Norman was discharged and returned to his native Wisconsin, and enrolled at the University of Wisconsin. Although he was accepted he was told it would be another year before he could enroll because of the large enrollment of veterans. Since he could not enter college there, he decided to visit his uncle Mort Roberts in Morehead. While in Morehead he got a job as a timekeeper (after the previous timekeeper got drunk and was fired) on the construction of the campus married housing units that became known as "vet village.”

Morehead State College Vet Village was constructed from old Army barracks from Fort Campbell, Kentucky. They had been dis-assembled into pieces, shipped to Morehead on railroad cars, re-assembled and carpenters divided them into one-bedroom apartments. They were poorly constructed with cracks in the walls, floors, and ceilings you could see through. This writer and his family moved to Peabody College's Vet Village in 1957 during my masters degree work. That construction was exactly like Morehead's Vet Village. The units were cold and walls were paper thin. Following our year there, those units were torn down and replaced by more modern apartments.

While building Morehead's Vet Village, Norman Roberts recalled that the laborers all went on strike. Norman and his cousin, Bill Roberts, were the instigators of the strike because they were convinced they were over-worked and under paid. When unloading material from a railroad car, it was decided that the group would sit down at 12:00 noon
and refuse to work.

About an hour before the men were to go on strike, Norman was called to go from
the railroad cars back to the campus building site. While he was there, the men struck.
When the construction boss did not get the materials needed, he went to the railroad
unloading area and found the men sitting down. They were all fired on the spot, and
Norman would have been there.

While Norman Roberts was helping to build those campus married housing units,
he had no idea he would ever be living in one of the apartments. He said if he had
known that, he might have tried to help build them better. However, later he married
Margie Stewart and they lived in Vet Village for 5 years. He later taught Industrial
Education at Breckinridge and Morehead State University. He is now retired and lives
in Rowan County.
On January 4, 1946, a regional veterans center was established on the campus of Morehead State Teachers College. It was located in Room 5-A of the Administration Building (now Rader Hall). It was established by the Veterans Administration and Mr. W.M. Wesley was the director. The center was designed to not only assist the on-campus veterans, but was intended to assist the 75,000 veterans in 25 northeastern Kentucky counties. It helped the disabled, handicapped, on-the-job training and G.I. loan applicants, as well as those with pension claims. That regional center was of great help to the students at the college in obtaining more housing for veterans.

In colleges and cities throughout this nation, there was an acute shortage of dormitory space and off-campus housing following World War II. Because so many returning veterans were married, it was necessary for colleges to provide married housing in order to attract not only veterans, but also athletes. Therefore, adequate married housing became a powerful recruiting tool for athletes as well as students. That was especially true in the case of John and Dot (Cunyus) Collis. Both were veterans and both planned to attend college.

John Collis was an outstanding football player at Oak Hill High School in Ohio. Following high school graduation, he enrolled at Ohio State on a partial football scholarship and played one year before entering the U.S. Navy. Following "boot camp" (basic) training at Great Lakes Naval Base, he wanted to become a pilot. However, he was sent to Radio
School at Memphis, Tennessee. Following graduation as a radio operator, he was assigned to a PB-2Y four-engine Flying Boat in the Navy Transport Command. They flew men, materials and critical supplies such as blood to Pearl Harbor and throughout the South Pacific.

John Collis returned to San Diego after two and one-half years in the South Pacific where he attained the rank of Petty Officer 2/C. While he was stationed at the San Diego California Naval Base, still pursuing his dream to become a Navy Pilot, he began playing basketball on the base basketball team. One day the team went up to play the Galeta Marine Air Force Base (now University of California at Santa Barbara). While there he met a young Marine enlisted woman. Her name was Dot Cunyus and a faint spark of love was ignited. Dot was a Marine architectural drafting specialist that somehow the Marine Air Corps and fate, had placed in the recreation department at Galeta. That was where the two met.

The courtship between the sailor boy and the Marine girl continued mostly through long distance phone calls and the U.S. mail. It was even more long distance when in John appeared to be on his way to becoming a Navy Pilot, and was transferred to Iowa State for pre-flight training. The Iowa State pre-flight football team was one of the best in the nation that year. Their football schedule included Ohio State, Kansas, California, Notre Dame, and some South Eastern Conference teams. The quarterback on that team who was also a player-coach was Ellis T. Johnson. Ellis was a former all-American football and basketball player at the University of Kentucky. He was also the pre-war coach at Morehead State Teachers College.
John Collis soon became a member of that football team and came into contact with Coach Ellis Johnson, who begin to talk to John in an attempt to interest him in coming to Morehead after the war. But the young sailor had his heart set on becoming a pilot, and when the war ended in 1945, he intended to make the Navy his career. In the meantime, John and his Marine fiancee were planning to marry. After a long distance romance and only five actual dates, the couple were married on August 2, 1946.

When the war ended there was less demand for pilots and John's pilot training was delayed. While awaiting assignment to advanced training, the Navy kept John and several other potential pilots busy mowing the gigantic parade grounds. That was not so bad since they were driving large tractors and mowing. But John said, "The straw that broke the camel's back and drove him out of the Navy, was when one day a 'chicken' (strictly military) captain stopped them and 'chewed' them out for not mowing in formation." Following that incident he elected to leave the service and was sent to a separation center at Camp Wallace, Texas for discharge.

Following his discharge he hitch-hiked to the University of Arkansas where he had been offered a football scholarship. Knowing he would need married housing the first question he asked was if they had married housing for veterans. The answer was no, so John remembered Ellis Johnson's offer to come to Morehead. Since Ellis had already been discharged and was back in Morehead, he called him and found out that Morehead State Teachers College did have housing for veterans. That was what brought him and his new bride of one month to Morehead in time for the 1946 football season. Both Dot and John
enrolled at Morehead in the fall of 1946 under the G.I. Bill. However, Dot soon became pregnant with their son, Rick, and had to withdraw from college.

Their first "apartment" was one room in Fields Hall. Then they moved to a small apartment in Mays Hall near the Army Barracks that had been moved from Fort Campbell, Kentucky and converted into apartments. John's wife had maintained she would never live in one of those "monstrosities" but she changed her mind when one became available.

Those old barracks apartments were located on a white gravel road that was dusty in dry weather and muddy in wet weather. They were hot in summer and cold in the winter. The walls were paper thin, and the floors had cracks that a marble would drop through. The gas pressure in Morehead was so low that the pilot light would sometimes go out in their stove. John recalled one cold winter night after the pilot light went out, he used one of his "dog tags" (metal military name tag), bent it and put it over the pilot light and it kept it from going out. Soon every one of the veterans had another use for their "dog tags". Also, many times the electricity would go off and blow a fuse. When that happened the men would sometimes put pennies behind the fuse to restore power to the apartment (a very dangerous fire hazard).

Those apartments were un-furnished except for one refrigerator for eight apartments. Those students living there brought their own furniture or rented from local furniture dealer, Parnell Martindale. Parnell was himself a graduate of Morehead and he furnished many of those apartments on a rental basis.

Later on several quansett huts (buildings with rounded metal roofs) were moved from
the Atomic Energy Plant in Southern Ohio to the MSC campus. Those were converted into 20 apartments located farther up the hollow behind the Band Building. That collection of apartments was called "Riceville" in honor of the College's Maintenance Superintendent "Hony" Rice. Also during that time, Mays Hall contained some housing for married students. Therefore Morehead State College had successfully reached out to this nation's veterans by providing living space in order for them to attend college under the G.I. Bill.

The student occupants of Vet Village were all like one big family. They all were struggling to get by on the G.I. Bill. Much of their social life consisted of inexpensive events such as playing cards, going on picnics and cookouts together with an occasional movie. No one had any money and they were all in the same boat. Everyone was poor but didn't know it. Their goal was to get their college degree, and most of them focused on that goal.

Nationwide statistics released by colleges throughout this nation in May, 1947, showed veterans average grades were higher than non-veterans. That statistic was surely true at Morehead State Teachers College when the registrar announced that the grade point average of non-veterans was 1.38, and the veterans G.P.A. was 1.55 (on a 3.0 scale).

John and Dot Collis came to Morehead because housing was available through the Vet Village. In 1950, John graduated from MSTC. During his college years he was an outstanding football player (center). That was during the college's most successful sports era. Following his graduation, Mr. Collis was appointed the director of the bookstore and post office (then located in the basement of Rader Hall). He also was the supervisor of Vet Village where he and Dot lived for 13 years. John and Dot chose to remain in Morehead
where they have been active in church and civic organizations. He retired as director of the University Bookstore in 1988. The couple currently live in Morehead, and have no desire to move.

Looking back at the G.I. Bill through the telescope of time, it must be agreed that it was one of the most important pieces of legislation in the history of this nation. It not only provided for advanced education and training for our veterans, but it also helped the colleges to provide housing for those veterans. Both were essential to the success of that legislation. The veterans proved worthy of the investment placed in them, and went on to become leaders in almost every area of business, education, clergy, social work, professions, industry and technology. Naturalists tell us that WW II veterans are dying at the rate of 1,000 per day. Economists tell us that with their death comes the greatest transfer of wealth from one generation to another that this nation has ever seen. Historians tell us that those veterans were the ones that kept this nation free. Those of us who received our education under the G.I. Bill will forever be grateful for the opportunity it provided us for an education, and for the Vet Villages where we could live during that time.