

# Local veteran heads back to school thanks to Vets Office

February 18, 2024 | Profiles/features

**Tom Vincent graduated high school in 1972, and then went into the service and served in Vietnam. Decades later, he's thrilled to be taking college classes**

Tom Vincent with the scooter gifted to him by Quinsigamond Community College Veteran Affairs (photo courtesy of Tom Vincent)

WORCESTER—It has always bummed Tom Vincent out that he did not continue his education after graduating high school and joining the military.

But it's never too late, and 50 years later, Vincent is taking the plunge into the higher education pool and is now a new student at Quinsigamond Community College.

Vincent is thankful for the support of QCC's Veteran Affairs department, which he says made all the difference in his confidence and academic success.

"Before I was in school, I was depressed," Vincent said in an announcement sent from the school, "but the staff and students in Veteran Affairs took me out of that depression and got me excited about school. The atmosphere in the Veterans Affairs Office is fantastic. We've all been through similar experiences, no matter which branch of the military we were in."

Vincent enlisted in the Army during the Vietnam War upon high school graduation in 1972. He wasn't deployed to Vietnam, but spent years in training. When Vincent finished his service, for him, the "obvious" choice was to head to work immediately. It was a "family thing."

After decades of working in multiple industries, Vincent wanted to go back to school so he could pursue a career as a virtual bookkeeper. His mobility limited, he thought the career choice would allow for him to work from home and take the necessary breaks.

According to the announcement, Vincent had attempted to enroll in college a few times before the fall of 2023 but often backed out. Last September, he made the leap and started classes, but withdrew. He wasn't ready to navigate the system quite yet, but signed up again this spring. This time, he's determined.

Since starting at QCC, the Veteran Affairs office has become a source of community. After telling QCC's Director of Veteran Affairs, Matthew Casaubon, that he was having issues walking to his classes, Casaubon secured a scooter for Vincent to make it easier to get around the campus.

"No one has ever done anything like that for me before and I'm not used to accepting help," said Vincent in the press release. "But the joy it gave me...I smiled so hard my cheeks hurt [when the scooter was delivered]."

While Vincent said they even helped him find an agency to install new rain gutters on his house, it is the friendly people he talks to on campus that make him feel like part of a community.

According to Casaubon, the Veteran Affairs office has also provided food, clothing, laptops and other assistance to QCC's veterans.

"We are building a community where veterans can feel they are valued and supported," Casaubon said in a statement.

“I would never have come back to school if it wasn’t for the Veteran Affairs office,” Vincent added.