

A Brief History of University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Veterans

by Keith Dover

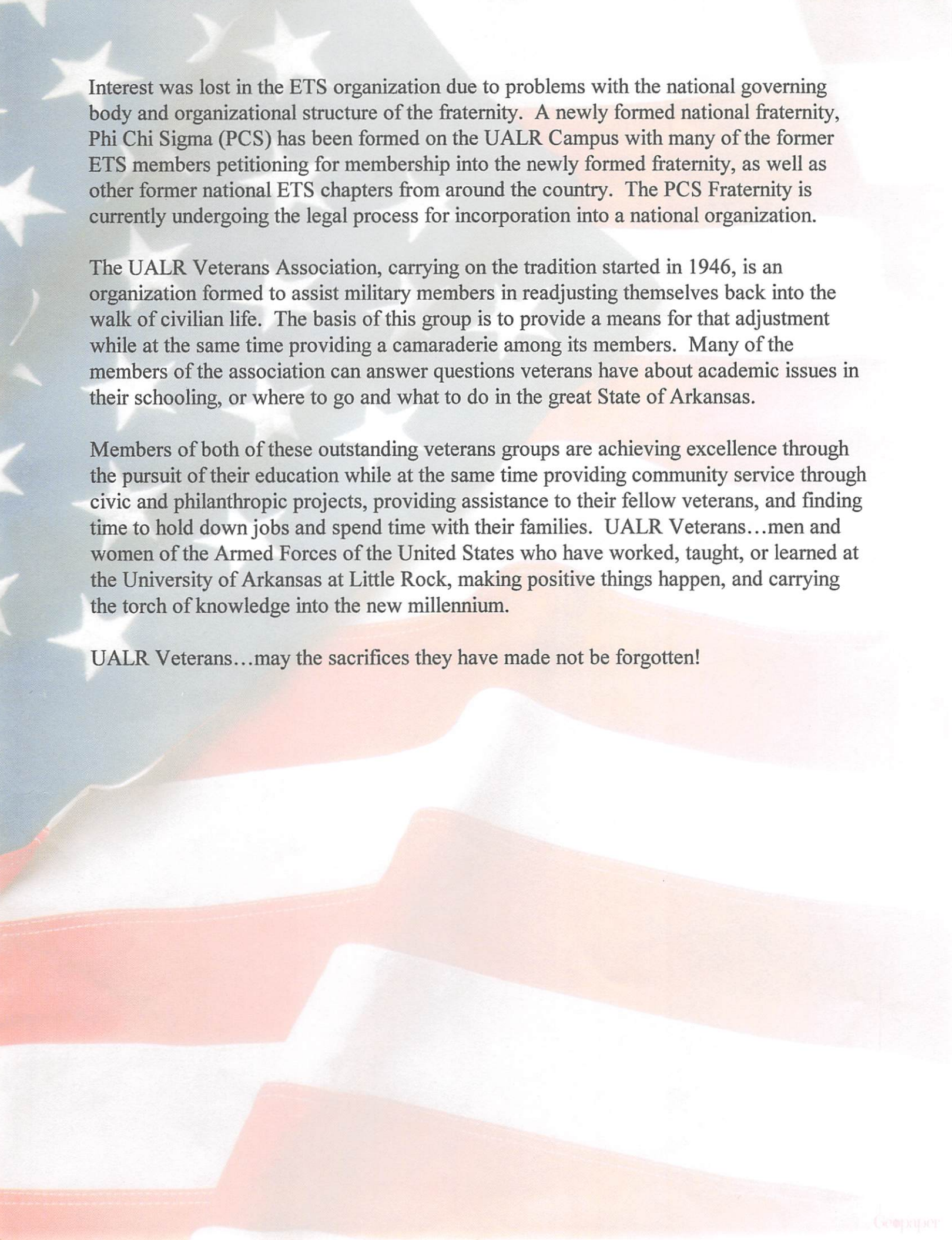
Shortly after World War II, many post-war veterans found themselves embarking on the path of pursuing an education. In 1946, the Little Rock Junior College (now UALR) found itself with a new organization on campus. The Junior College Veterans' Organization was formed and began with 143 members. Since then, membership has fluctuated, but the organization (now the UALR Veterans Association) is still active on campus today.

In the fall of 1996, an additional organization called Epsilon Tau Sigma (ETS) was formed when a group of non-traditional students began talking about what they had in common, and formed a national coed veterans' fraternity of like-minded veterans. Since none of them met the criteria of the traditional rites of acceptance into fraternities and sororities, they found that the military was their common bond of socialization.

The ETS fraternity had received recognition at Purdue University in January of 1991. A national board was formed in the spring of 1994, and ETS was nationally recognized later that year. The UALR Chapter of ETS was founded in the fall of 1996 by David Dubois, a former UALR student who was also at the time a member of the UALR Veterans' Association.

For four consecutive years, both veterans' groups have participated in a Veterans Day flag raising ceremony. UALR Chancellor Charles E. Hathaway participated on Veterans Day, 1996 shortly after the ETS group was formed. Both groups became active in community involvement, including participation in the "*Paint Your Heart Out*" Program, and relief efforts to tornado victims in March of 1997. The groups also sponsored Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Clarence E. Sasser to speak on campus in the fall of 1997, where several members of both groups attended the Medal of Honor Banquet later that evening.

Both groups planned their 1998 spring semester project by assisting the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 184, Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR, with the "Wall that Heals" Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall Tour at Fort Roots in North Little Rock from March 5-8, 1998. Members stood vigil at the "Wall" on March 6, 1998, and other members of the groups assisted in the planning and coordination of the event. The groups participated in the Annual POW-MIA Ceremony, and provided a helping hand during "*Operation Santa Claus*," both held at the Arkansas State Capitol in the fall semesters of 1998 and 1999. They also sponsored Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Nick Bacon to speak to UALR students on Veterans Day 1998.

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Interest was lost in the ETS organization due to problems with the national governing body and organizational structure of the fraternity. A newly formed national fraternity, Phi Chi Sigma (PCS) has been formed on the UALR Campus with many of the former ETS members petitioning for membership into the newly formed fraternity, as well as other former national ETS chapters from around the country. The PCS Fraternity is currently undergoing the legal process for incorporation into a national organization.

The UALR Veterans Association, carrying on the tradition started in 1946, is an organization formed to assist military members in readjusting themselves back into the walk of civilian life. The basis of this group is to provide a means for that adjustment while at the same time providing a camaraderie among its members. Many of the members of the association can answer questions veterans have about academic issues in their schooling, or where to go and what to do in the great State of Arkansas.

Members of both of these outstanding veterans groups are achieving excellence through the pursuit of their education while at the same time providing community service through civic and philanthropic projects, providing assistance to their fellow veterans, and finding time to hold down jobs and spend time with their families. UALR Veterans...men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who have worked, taught, or learned at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, making positive things happen, and carrying the torch of knowledge into the new millennium.

UALR Veterans...may the sacrifices they have made not be forgotten!